

PLANS WELL ADVANCED FOR BELFAST PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY

Plans are well advanced for next month's Belfast People's Assembly which is part of the 'Commission on the Future of Ireland' initiative announced by Uachtarán Shinn Féin Mary Lou McDonald.

The Commission is a unique and ambitious initiative. It involves a series of Peoples' Assemblies across the island, and with the diaspora, under the broad slogan - 'The New Ireland is for Everyone – Have Your Say.'

The Commission is extending an open invitation to all citizens and sections of society to submit their views on the future of Ireland. The opinions of those with alternative visions for the future are also welcome. There will also be Women's Assemblies, Youth Assemblies and Assemblies in Gaeltacht areas. The intention is to widen the current

conversation through public, sectoral and private discussions. The Commission will seek to engage with the protestant and



WATERFRONT HALL WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 12th 7pm-9pm

THE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF IRELAND



Commission on the Future of Ireland are also

open at www.sinnfein.ie/futureofireland

unionist sections of our people. Our neighbours with a British identity, and the unionist, Protestant and loyalist members of our community are especially welcome to participate. So, the inaugural People's Assembly will take place in the Waterfront Studio, in the Waterfront Hall, Belfast on 12 October between 7 and 9pm. There is limited space available and already almost 100 people have signed up to attend. If you want to join in the growing debate on Irish Unity register for the Belfast Peoples' Assembly at: Commission on the Future of Ireland - Belfast People's

Assembly Tickets, Wed 12 Oct 2022 at 19:00 | Eventbrite Submissions to the



We are seeking views from all sections of our community. Multi-lingual graphics and leaflets have been produced to reach out to new Irish communities who have made Ireland their home.

Join the conversation on unity

Hardly a week passes now without politicians, bloggers and columnists writing about unity and calling on the Irish government to establish a Citizens' Assembly to discuss constitutional change. The number of books and informed academic publications examining supporting constitutional change have also dramatically increased. A recent opinion poll found that 41% of people in the North would vote for Irish Unity immediately while another 10% said they 'would or may' in the future. Perhaps most telling 57% of 18-24-year-olds said they would vote for a united Ireland immediately. Almost a third of Alliance and Green voters support unity.

UNITED IRELAND Unity Banner on IS FOR display in ERYONE Downpatrick Head, Ballycastle, Co Mayo



IRELANDS FUTURE TOGETHER WE CAN

Under the banner 'Together We Can' Ireland's Future is busy promoting their major conference in the 3 Arena in Dublin on 1st October.

Billed as the largest gathering in recent memory to discuss Unity Referendums as contained in the GFA and a new and united Ireland, the audience will also hear performances from Planxty, the Bothy Band and Moving Hearts, among others.

Ailbhe Smyth and Jimmy Nesbitt are the latest speakers to be announced and will join up to a dozen politicians, commentators and figures from the world of entertainment at the event.

Tickets for Ireland's Future's Together We Can are available from ticketmaster.ie



Irelands Future were also in Donegal this week as they hosted an event in Letterkenny. Pearse Doherty TD represented Sinn Féin on the panel.



TIME FOR UNITY

Thousands came from all over Ireland to take part in the national Hunger Strike march and rally in Belfast on 21st August. The overarching theme of the event was 'Time for Unity'. The families of the hunger strikers had pride of place and many former blanketmen, wearing their grey blankets and Armagh Women POWs led the event.

At the Republican Plot in Milltown Cemetery former hunger striker Pat Sheehan gave a moving personal account of his time on the blanket, of his decision to go on hunger strike and he reflected on the courage of the hunger strikers who died and of the enormous political impact of the hunger strike.

He reminded us that the criminalisation policy of the British was to defeat Irish republicanism. He asked; "So how has that worked out? The Orange state has gone. Unionist domination has gone.

Sinn Féin is the biggest party in the North and on the island of Ireland.

Criminalisation was defeated and the injustice of partition and the British state in Ireland was exposed to international scrutiny as never before. By their heroism and sacrifice the hunger strikers ensured that the cause of Irish freedom was renewed and that now in 2022 we are closer than ever to undoing the injustice of partition and reuniting our country. Their bravery set in train a series of events that makes the momentum for political and social change unstoppable and irreversible.

That momentum will carry us forward to the realisation of an Irish national democracy. A Republic where the rights and identity of all our people, of whatever persuasion or background, will be accommodated and cherished."



CONSTITUTIONAL CONVERSATIONS AT FÉILE AN PHOBAIL - by Jim Gibney

The first real sign for the supporters of Féile an Phobail that the pandemic was really receding was the arrival again of the political tourists to West Belfast in the month of August. This was an important 'weathervane' because the pandemic had forced Féile to go virtual.

Although that experience had been very successful everyone was pleased that this year the zoom lens was turned off and Féile was back live, face-to-face, with it is equally irrepressible audience. At the end of its ten day run the conclusion was clear - Féile on Phobail was a triumph. The organising committee and the hundreds of activists who made it all possible by their hard work, deserve congratulations and well done for another amazing year.

I am part of the 'Debates and Discussions' group which plans the summer school - the largest in Ireland. This year there were 80 debates and discussions on offer. Many focussed on aspects of the conflict and on the need for constitutional change. Four specifically examined constitutional change from the perspective of women and others discussed the need for women to be written back into the history of struggle going back one hundred years.

Of foremost interest in terms of gender-proofing was the constitutional debate titled, 'Border Poll and Referendum'. The audience discussed a report from the Ulster University Transitional Justice Institute, titled, 'Gendering Constitutional Conversations - A report of women's inclusion through constitutional Discussion'.

The comprehensive report made a number of observations and recommendations arguing that stakeholders should 'prioritise and actively facilitate the inclusion of women in constitutional debate; locate debates on constitutional change within the sphere of peace building and that gender expertise in the area of constitutional change should be viewed as an important resource for policy makers'.

Andree Murphy, Director of 'Relatives for Justice', writer and commentator and Martina Devlin award winning journalist discussed with Robbie Mc Veigh, author, writer and commentator the need to create a 'without fear climate' of respect and tolerance around the debate on a future constitutional referendum.

'Preparing for a new Ireland' drew an all-female panel from the Oireachtas which included, Louise O Reilly Sinn Fein TD and Seanadóirí Erin McGreehan of Fianna Fail and Marie Sherlock of Labour. The trio agreed that the conversation about the future had to



Our Ireland also event Liz Gills, Lorcan Collins, **Clíodhna Nic Bhranair and Tom Hartley**



Gaels Event- Gerry Adams pictured with Cork camóg Aisling Thompson & Limerick hurler Darragh Border poll and referendum event O'Donovan



Gaels Event- panel Aisling Thompson, Sambo Mc-Naughton, Brendan Crossan, Paddy Cunningham, Jane Adams

be national and inclusive of all opinions.

A new campaign was launched under the banner of 'Our Ireland Also.' It challenges the partitionist policies of successive Irish governments; the media and the southern state institutions which present the 26 county state as the 'nation'. This excludes almost two million people from the north; especially those from a nationalist background who are Irish and who see themselves as an integral part of Ireland - the nation. Three historians, Liz Gills, Lorcan Collins and Tom Hartley together made a compelling case against the state-sponsored exclusion of the North and its population.

Gaels le Cheile brought together around 100 Gaels to discuss the need for the Irish government to plan for Irish Unity. The attendance reflected a cross section of GAA members. Since Antrim Gaels first wrote to An Taoiseach Micheál Martin in May 2021 over 12,000 Ulster Gaels have now written to him urging him to establish an All-Island Citizens' Assembly "reflecting the views of citizens North and South to achieve maximum consensus on a way forward" toward an



Frank Connolly book launch



Andrée Murphy leading a discussion





Preparing for a New Ireland event with Louise O'Reilly, Sinn Féin TD and Seanadóirí Erin McGreehan of Fianna Fáil and Marie Sherlock of Labour

"agreed shared Ireland."

The letter states: "It is the responsibility of the Irish government to ensure that the democratic rights of all citizens are respected and protected, regardless of where they live on the island ... " Thus far An Taoiseach Micheál Martin has refused to comment on the initiative or respond to the many letters he has now received.

In the introduction to his new book, 'United Nation: The case for integrating Ireland' the prolific author, writer, commentator and leading trade unionist Frank Connolly wrote about how he had 'engaged with influential figures in the unionist community who are open to discussion about Irish unity but who are also concerned about their identity, traditions and rights are respected in any such process as guaranteed by the GFA'.

These are just some of the very interesting and informative debates on constitutional change that took place during Féile. It is clearly a debate that is growing in strength.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF DERRY GASYARD FÉILE

This year marked the 30th Anniversary of the Gasyard Féile. Several events focused on Irish Unity.

The Feile began with a screening of the Wind that Shakes the Barley in the Nerve Centre introduced by UI Co-ordinator Cllr Conor Heaney and Mayor of Derry and Strabane Sandra Duffy.



The Martin McGuinness Peace Foundation held an excellent, packed-out debate on 'Building a New Ireland' with a panel including Mitchel McLaughlin, Rev David Latimer and Mary Durkan.

Next up Frank Connolly was in conversation with Freya McClements titled: United nation; The case for Integrating Ireland, where Frank launched his book and addressed the calls for the establishment of a Citizens' Assembly on constitutional change.

A highlight of the Féile was an event were Professor Colin Harvey of Queens University delivered a presentation on 'Where now for Human Rights' which dealt with the protection of human rights in a new Ireland.

Time4UnityAmd'Aontacht

UNITY WEEKEND

Events for 'Unity Weekend' took place across the island of Ireland and further afield this month. Young and old organised events in their local areas to show their support for Irish reunification. The events were positive, full of colour, positivity and energy.

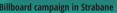
Partition has failed generations of Irish people.

It's time for change, it's time to plan. The conversation on Irish Unity is growing every day- everyone should have their say. Working collectively, we can build a new Ireland together. Here's a snapshot of some of the events and demonstrations that took place.



Abbeyfeale, Co Limerick







Blanchardstown roundabout demonstratior



County Clare



Lifelong republican Hannah McMahon leads the way in County Clare





Dublin North West Unity picker



Cork City and County soccer tournament.



emonstration at mural in Dublin North East Inner City



Demonstration at the GPO



Time 4 Unity Am d'Aontacht

Dublin contingent on top of a mountain



Fermanagh climb up Knockinny



Eiffel Tower, Paris

UNITY WEEKEND



Flying the flag for unity at a recent Wolfe Tones concert



Limerick City unity walk



Walk for Irish Unity at Ballycastle Strand



Waterford demonstration



Mont Blanc



Newry Armagh mountain climl



Dublin South West Hellfire club



Rathdown unity walk





South Down walk

Rue Bobby Sands



UI hockey tournament held by Gorja Govt. College hockey club in Pakistan in support of the UI campaign. Run by principal Rafiq Saqib.





Spire, Dublin



Survey and discussion outside GPO



Cup winners were Countess Markievicz Tadgh Barry Cumann Cork North Central



WHY I'M NOW FOR IRISH UNITY - former unionist Ben Collins

Ben Collins' forthcoming book, Irish Unity: Time to Prepare, is due out in early October. Ben is a former Unionist who worked with the UUP and spent time as a British government press officer. In a platform piece with irishborderpoll.com Mr Collins said,

"My conversion to the New Ireland cause was not an overnight decision and predates Brexit. I have always felt Irish and while initially this was in addition to feeling British, my thinking has changed over time. During The Troubles as someone who was raised in a Unionist and pro-British background, I was aware that there were people who were Irish, wanted a United Ireland. "As the peace process progressed, I was an interested observer, rather than a participant. "The beauty of the Good Friday Agreement was that you could be Irish, British, European, or all three. Borders were increasingly irrelevant. It allowed me to think about the aspiration of a United Ireland, in a way I couldn't have done during The Troubles.

"For me sovereignty is not about a flag on a pole, it is about food on the table and a roof over the head.

"While I was not surprised at the Scottish independence vote result in 2014, I never thought that people would vote for the madness of Brexit. A large vote in England meant that the rest of the UK had to leave the EU, even though Scotland and Northern Ireland both voted decisively to remain. My desire for Irish Unity moved from being a long-term aspiration, to one which now held an urgent necessity for me. I had family members and close friends who voted for Brexit but I still hated everything that it represented. It felt like part of my identity was being stripped away. The Irish passport application which had been sitting in a drawer for years was filled in and sent off by post.

"There are many people like me who come from a Unionist and British background, who want to be part of the European Union and are now open to the idea of Irish Unity. They want to know what Unity means for the health service, pensions and the economy. We have to provide a pathway for the Protestant Unionist and Loyalist community into the New Ireland. They need to be reassured that their rights will be protected. I do not believe that the continuation of the Stormont Assembly is the answer. There is no such thing as a kinder, gentler form of partition. To ensure that all who live across the island of Ireland benefit from Unity, we need to have one economy, one health service and one legal system, firmly embedded in the European Single Market, which is the largest economic bloc in the world.

"We now have a scenario where the UK Government refuses to state how Scotland can legally leave the UK. At the same time they won't set out the criteria which would trigger a border poll in Northern Ireland. This does not feel like a voluntary union to me. It is another reason why I want to see Irish Unity and I believe this is achievable within the next decade." Ben will debate with politicians and answer questions about his book, Irish Unity: Time To Prepare, on Monday October 10th, 7pm in Westminster.

'I won't enable the unravelling of the Good Friday Agreement' Michelle O'Neill

"Brexit has been a catalyst for constitutional change, because of the actions of this Tory government. There's a conversation afoot that hasn't been witnessed before. "The Tory government are attacking the Good Friday Agreement at every turn. Whenever your agreement is under attack, you have to be very, very mindful of opening up the door to changes that could help it unravel. When you pull a thread, sometimes you can unravel the whole thing. What I won't allow is the unravelling of the Good Friday Agreement."

"Brexit's a good case in point as to how not to do a referendum.

"What does the health service look like, what does education look like, in an all-Ireland context? Our focus is on the Irish government and the fact that they need to plan for constitutional change.

"Let's have all these conversations now. Everyone comes with their own perspective. I think you can convince people of something better by your every word, by your deeds, by how you govern. "I definitely think we'll be having a vote on Irish Unity in the next 10 years. It will take as long as it takes. I'm a committed Irish republican. I'm not going to give up on Irish Unity."



CORSICAN SELF-DETERMINATION DISCUSSED IN STRASBOURG AS MEP MACMANUS MEETS CORSICA'S EXECUTIVE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Sinn Féin MEP Chris MacManus has reaffirmed the Irish republican principle to national self-determination at a conference about Corsican self-determination. The keynote speaker at the European Parliament event was Gilles Simeoni, President of the Executive Council of Corsica and leader of Femu a Corsica.

MacManus met Mr. Simeoni and also received an update on the situation in Corsica. Corsican nationalists currently hold a sizeable majority in the Corsican Assembly. Speaking after the event MacManus said:

"It was a pleasure to meet with Gilles Simeoni at the event where several topics were discussed. Prominent of course, was the right to self-determination.

"I emphasised that the concept of such a right is one that has gained both prevalence and momentum in recent years. In Ireland, the conversation around a referendum on Irish reunification has become a matter of when rather than a matter of if.

"The same should be true for other countries and regions who wish to have a say on their futures. Therefore, I reaffirmed our support for the right to national selfdetermination."



Chris MacManus MEP with Gilles Simeoni, President of the Executive Council of Corsica and leader of Femu a Corsica



Cross-Canada Irish Unity roadshow continues

Following Sinn Féin's historic Assembly election victory in May, Friends of Sinn Féin kicked off their Cross-Canada Irish Unity Roadshow with stops in Québec City and Montréal.

The hugely successful roadshow will now be followed by visits from Sinn Féin Senator Niall Ó

Donnghaile and Michelle Gildernew MP. Niall will cover Western Canada where he will attend events in Vancouver and Calgary. Michelle will cover Atlantic Canada and her stops include Charlottetown, Halifax, Nova Scotia and St. John's Newfoundland. As the momentum for Irish unity continues to grow, members should encourage anyone they know living in western and Atlantic Canada to come out and hear Niall and Michelle's update on the Irish unity campaign and find out how they can get involved.

Uachtarán Shinn Féin Mary Lou McDonald will visit San Francisco this month for a number of engagements to build support for the Irish Unity Campaign. For more information visit Friends of Sinn Féin USA | United States.United Ireland. (friendsofsinnfein.com)

A Decade of Opportunity: Building a New and United

Ireland

An Evening with Mary Lou McDonald



September 7, 2022 7:00 PM-8:00 PM PT University of San Francisco -McLaren Conference Center 2305 Golden Gate Ave San Francisco, CA 94117

THE PAST AND FUTURE MEET

BY CIARAN QUINN NORTH AMERICA & CANADA REPRESENTATIVE

This month, the past and the future met with two significant commemorations and a new poll on Irish Unity. The leaders of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael jointly spoke at the 100th Anniversary of the ambush and killing of Michael Collins. The major parties in the current Irish Government share a common interest in excluding Sinn Féin. Both have attacked Sinn Féin in recent weeks for commemorating the Republican Dead.

Both stood shoulder to shoulder to commemorate Michael Collins who had been a leading IRA member. He fought in the GPO in 1916, was jailed and when freed became one of the leaders of the resurgent and re-organized IRA. Following the truce in the Tan war with the British, he was part of the negotiations and passionately advocated for the treaty. He would claim that it provided, "the freedom to win freedom". He was killed by the IRA in the subsequent civil war.

The Michael Collin Commemoration was afforded the pomp and ceremony of a state occasion. A platform for the two parties that have governed the state for the best part of 100 years and yet failed to honour his legacy of "the freedom to achieve freedom".

Commemorating the past while refusing to honour its legacy is a hollow gesture. A performance for cameras devoid of substance.

On the same day in Belfast, thousands lined the streets to remember the 1981 Hunger Strike that claimed the lives of 10 Republican Prisoners. While the killing of Michael Collins would herald a new and brutal phase of the Civil War, the Hunger Strikes would change the course of history. Activists from across Ireland gathered to not only honour their memory but to commit to achieving freedom. A freedom that would be celebrated as Bobby Sands said, "by the laughter of our children".

The following day a new poll was published that showed a tightening of the gap between those who wanted Irish Unity tomorrow and those for continued partition. The same poll



found majority support for unity over a 15–20-year time frame.

No one is advocating for an immediate referendum on Irish Unity. Sinn Féin has called for an inclusive, informed, and respectful discussion and to then let the people have their say. Meanwhile, the leaders that commemorated Michael Collins refuse to plan for and advocate for Irish unity. The hypocrisy of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael was clear for all to see.

Our history is not solely about commemorating the past. It should inspire and inform the present and shape the future. We will see a united Ireland and we will hear the laughter of our children. That is the most fitting tribute to all who came before.

Tullamore St

'Seize the moment- Time for Unity' was the theme at the Sinn Féin stand at the Tullamore Show. Irish Unity themed literature including a leaflet on the Commission on the Future of Ireland were given to those who visited the stall. If you are hosting a stall at any upcoming agriculture shows, get in touch for Irish Unity themed literature and play your part in spreading the message.







Ógra Shinn Féin - Dublin South Central held a demonstration this month in support of Irish Unity

CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO SEANAD INITIATIVE FAST APPROACHING

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee initiative on the constitutional future of Ireland is a very welcome step and is a positive development at a time of growing conversations across all communities about how a new Ireland can come about.

This consultation brings these important issues into the heart of the Oireachtas and creates a crucial platform for discussion of pertinent issues such as the economy, environment, education, social issues and healthcare. We are also encouraging the broadest possible input from communities, including our unionist neighbours.



including our unionist neighbours. This is a growing conversation, and this is a crucial opportunity to make your voice heard about Ireland's constitutional future

The closing date for submissions is Monday 12th September at 3pm. The e-mail address for submissions is: seanadpublicconsult@oireachtas.ie



RESOURCE FOR ACTIVISTS

All of the recent articles and significant contributions on the United Ireland theme are available on the Sinn Féin website. Log in to **www.sinnfein.ie/irish-unity** for all of the news on uniting Ireland.



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