

UNITY NEWS

NUAHT NA HAONTACHTA

JUNE MEITHEAMH 2023

#TIME4UNITY
#AM LE HAONTAHT

ABAIR LEAT
HAVE YOUR SAY
HAE YER SPAKE
THE NEW IRELAND IS FOR EVERYONE

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HAVE YOUR SAY
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THE NEW IRELAND IS FOR EVERYONE

DUBLIN YOUTH ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY 28TH JUNE, 10.30AM - 1PM
COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION
575 NORTH CIRCULAR ROAD, DUBLIN

DAOINE ÓGA
NA HEIREANN
HAVE YOUR SAY



THE COMMISSION ON
THE FUTURE OF IRELAND

Sinn Féin
www.sinnfein.ie/futureofireland

BELFAST WOMEN'S ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 27TH JUNE, 7PM
EUROPA HOTEL, BELFAST



MNÁ NA HEIREANN HAVE YOUR SAY

THIS IS A WOMEN'S ONLY EVENT | CHILDCARE IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

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THE FUTURE OF IRELAND

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BELFAST WOMEN'S ASSEMBLY AND DUBLIN YOUTH ASSEMBLY TO TAKE PLACE NEXT WEEK

Sinn Féins Commission on the Future of Ireland will host two events next week in Belfast and Dublin.

The Commission on the Future of Ireland seeks to facilitate a structured conversation among the citizens of Ireland and beyond on the future of our island.

'The New Ireland is for Everyone – Have Your Say', are the main pillars of the Commission. The Belfast Women's Assembly will take

place in the Europa Hotel on Tuesday 27th June at 7pm. The following day the Dublin Youth Assembly will take place in the Communication Workers Union at 10.30am. In addition to People's Assemblies and sectoral events, the Commission is asking everyone who is interested to make a written

contribution.

These can be made through the dedicated Commission on the Future of Ireland page on the Sinn Féin website - www.sinnfein.ie/futureofireland

Alternatively, you can email your views to commission@sinnfein.ie

#Time4Unity **Am d'Aontacht**

TIONÓL NA mBAN DE CHUID BHÉAL FEIRSTE

DE MÁIRT 27 MEITHEAMH, 7PM
ÓSTÁN EUROPA



MNÁ NA hÉIREANN ABRAIGÍ LIBH

AN COIMISIÚN UM
THODHCHAÍ NA hÉIREANN

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MNÁ NA hÉIREANN ABAIR LEAT

The Belfast Women's Assembly will take place in the Europa Hotel on Tuesday 27th June at 7pm.

This event will be chaired by Eilish Rooney, an academic and member of the Constitutional Conversations Group. Vice Chair of the Commission Senator Lynn Boylan will give the main address on the night from Sinn Féin.

There has been a significant interest in this event with it becoming over-subscribed soon after registration opened. A cancellation list has now been set up to try to cater for other women interested in attending.

This event is an opportunity for women from all walks of life in the Belfast area to share their views on Ireland's Future. The high numbers registered is evidence of the growing momentum in the conversation about that future. Despite the pivotal role women have played over the course of Irish history, too often their voices have not been heard.

In the new Ireland women must have an equal place in society.

That is the spirit in which we hold Belfast Women's Assembly. Iarrtar ar gach éinne, idir óg agus aosta, a dtuairimí a chur in iúl faoin saol comhroinnte atá amach romhainn agus na himpleachtaí a bheadh aige seo do mhna ar fud na hÉireann.



Eilish Rooney



Senator Lynn Boylan

Beidh Tionól na nÓg Bhaile Átha Cliath ar siúl an tseachtain seo chugainn

The Dublin Youth Assembly will take place in the Communications Workers Union on Wednesday 28th June from 10.30am – 1.00pm

This event is open to young people aged between 16-26.

Community & youth groups, campaigning organisations and others have all expressed an interest in attending and becoming involved in the conversation.

The lead facilitator for this session will be renowned national and international youth worker Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien.

This week Uachtarán Shinn Féin Mary Lou McDonald made a call to young people across Dublin to take part in the event, as young people have a vital role to play in the discussion around a new Ireland.

Registration is still open. Please click here if you would like to attend:

Dublin Youth Assembly - Have Your Say Tickets, Wed 28 Jun 2023 at 10:30 | Eventbrite



Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien



TIONÓL NA nÓG BHAILE ÁTHA CLIATH

DÉ CÉADAON 28 MEITHEAMH, 10.30AM
CEARDCHUMANN NA NOIBRITHE CUMARSÁIDE
575 AN CUARBHÓTHAR THUAIHDH, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH

DAOINE ÓGA
NA hÉIREANN
ABRAIGÍ LIBH



AN COIMISIÚN UM
THODHCHAÍ NA hÉIREANN

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AN COIMISIÚN UM THODHCHAÍ NA hÉIREANN

Upcoming events

Sinn Féin's Commission on the Future of Ireland is planning ahead for events in Autumn/Winter 2023. Dates have now been set for a People's Assembly in Waterford and a Gaeltacht Assembly in Connemara.

We will also host an event at the National Ploughing Championships as we are eager to hear voices and opinions from rural communities and farmers.

SEE ALL THE DETAILS
TO THE RIGHT.

SAVE THE DATE SÁBHÁIL AN DATA

ABAIR LEAT
HAVE YOUR SAY
HAE YER SPAKE
THE NEW IRELAND IS FOR EVERYONE

TIONÓL GHAELTACHT CHONAMARA

DÉ LUAIN, 27 SAMHAIN 2023
AN CROMPÁN,
AN CHEATHRÚ RUA

MUINTIR CHONAMARA ABRAIGÍ LIBH!

AN COIMISIÚN UM
THODHCAÍ NA hÉIREANN


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ABAIR LEAT
HAVE YOUR SAY
HAE YER SPAKE
THE NEW IRELAND IS FOR EVERYONE

RURAL COMMUNITIES IN A NEW IRELAND

THURSDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER 2023
PLOUGHING CHAMPIONSHIPS
SINN FÉIN MARQUEE
11AM



HOSTED BY SINN FÉIN'S COMMISSION
ON THE FUTURE OF IRELAND


www.sinnfein.ie/futureofireland

ABAIR LEAT
HAVE YOUR SAY
HAE YER SPAKE
THE NEW IRELAND IS FOR EVERYONE

WATERFORD PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY

THURSDAY 12TH OCTOBER 2023
TOWER HOTEL,
7PM

HOSTED BY SINN FÉIN'S
COMMISSION ON THE
FUTURE OF IRELAND


www.sinnfein.ie/futureofireland

#Time4Unity **Am d'Aontacht**



Tá idéil na nÉireannach Aontaithe ó 1798 fós ábhartha inniu

United Irishmen ideals of
1798 remain relevant today

EOCHAIRFHOCAIL KEY WORDS

- ➔ Poblachtachas ➔ Republicanism
- ➔ Frithsheicteachas ➔ Anti-sectarianism
- ➔ Comhionannas ➔ Equality
- ➔ Neamhspleáchas Náisiúnta
➔ National Independence
- ➔ Caitliceach ➔ Catholic
- ➔ Protastúnach ➔ Protestant
- ➔ Easaontóir ➔ Dissenter
- ➔ Cath ➔ Battle

IRELAND HAS ENTERED A DEFINING PERIOD OF OUR HISTORY

BODENSTOWN 2023

Mairéad Farrell TD was the main speaker at the annual Wolfetone commemoration in Bodenstown, Co Kildare. This is a key date in the Republican calendar and large crowds from all over Ireland gathered to commemorate Theobald Wolfetone.

Speaking at the graveside of Wolfetone Mairéad Farrell said, "I believe Ireland has entered a defining period of our history. Our best days lie ahead & that future is the vision of Wolfe Tone: Unity & independence, national reconciliation & a fairer Ireland.

"The legacy of the United Irish rebellion is the legacy of the Irish people whatever their background.

"Tone's objective of a 'cordial union' between different traditions in Ireland and the construction of a United, independent Ireland remains our objective."

#Time4Unity **Am d'Aontacht**

‘Agus muid ag druidimh le céim nua den chúis s’againn, deireadh leis an gcríochdheighilt’ - MacManus

Dúirt FPE Shinn Féin do Lár na Tíre-larthuaisceart go bhfuil muid ag an gcéim dheiridh den chríochdheighilt, agus é ag labhairt leis na sluaite a bhí bailithe i mBaile Bhuadain mar chomóradh ar Theobald Wolfstone.

Ag labhairt leis an slua, dúirt MacManus:

“Is meabhrúchán suntasach é an comóradh seo ar an streachailt leanúnach ar son Éire nua, Éire Aontaithe, Éire a d’fhéadfadh a bheith ina háit do chách agus is teist é ar an spirad dobhriste atá ionainn mar phobal.

“I mbliana táimid ag comóradh 225 bliain ó Éirí Amach 1798. Chomh maith leis sin is ionann é agus 100 bliain ó cuireadh deireadh leis an bhfrith-réabhlóid a bhí sa Chogadh Cathartha.

“Céad bliain ina dhiaidh sin, agus muid ag bogadh ar aghaidh go dtí an lá sin d’Aontacht na hÉireann, féachaimid ar Éirinn ina bhfuil Pobhlachtachas na hÉireann chun tosaigh agus Sinn Féin ar an bhfórsa polaitiúil is mó ar fud ár n-oileán. Tá 300 ionadaí tofa ag Sinn Féin ar fud na 32 contae in Éirinn a bheidh ag tabhairt ceannaireacht phoblachtach gach lá de gach seachtain de gach bliain.



Mar fhocal scoir dúirt MacManus gurbh ionann an chéim nua den streachailt agus deireadh leis an gcríochdheighilt.

“Agus muid ag druidim le céim nua den chúis s’againn, deireadh leis an gcríochdheighilt, tá Sinn Féin ar tí an rialtas a threorú ó thuaidh agus ó dheas agus ní mór dár ngníomhaithe a bheith réidh chun cabhrú linn an t-athrú sin a

bhaint amach agus a sholáthar.

“Mar sin fágaimis go léir an áit seo spreagtha. Bímis spreagtha ó na mothúcháin i bhfocail Tone ‘Bíonn go leor ag fulaingt ionas go mbeadh eolas ag muintir na hÉireann ar fad ar an gceartas agus ar an tsíocháin lá éigin.’ “Ná déanaimis dearmad choíche go seasaimid ar ghuailí fathach ar nós Theobald Wolfe Tone.



Time 4 Unity Am d'Aontacht

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT DÉANAIMIS LE CHÉILE É

The Uniting Ireland Banner was in Kerry this month. The banner is available for use across the country. If you would like the banner for your area please get in touch irish.unity@sinnfein.ie



POBAIL NA TUAITHE

NÍOS LÁIDRE IN ÉIRINN AONTAITHE

The Cork Summer Show took place this month. Irish Unity was a key topic of conversation at the Sinn Féin stall. The multiple challenges confronting the agri food industry and rural communities arising from Brexit and the climate and biodiversity crises can best be met with all island strategies

and structures.

A Rural Communities leaflet has been produced for use at agriculture shows throughout the country. The leaflet includes a survey on Irish Unity. If you need copies of this leaflet for local shows please get in touch irish.unity@sinnfein.ie

THE NEW IRELAND HAS TO BE BUILT UPON A WILLINGNESS TO MOVE BEYOND WHAT HAPPENED IN THE PAST

- JOHN FINUCANE MP

I was 18 years-old in 1998, voting for the first time in my life for the Good Friday Agreement. The Good Friday Agreement provided a peaceful and democratic pathway to constitutional change and created institutions, inclusive of all communities.

It addressed the many causes and effects of conflict and allowed us all to consign conflict to the past and to move forward. While there is still work to be done, particularly in relation to legacy issues, the last 25 years of relative peace is a truly remarkable achievement.

As recent elections have shown, the democratic and peaceful pathway to constitutional change has been enthusiastically embraced and built upon by proud and committed republican communities, among them the indomitable Irish republicans of South Armagh.

I am wholeheartedly committed both personally and politically to reconciliation and healing the wounds of the past and am focused on the future.

Thankfully we have celebrated 25 years of peace and the transformation of our society.

I, as someone of the Good Friday Agreement generation, am looking towards building on that progress, and building a better society for us all to live side by side on this island.

And our responsibility to achieve that, as political leaders, as political activists, as political communities, needs to be focused on the future, on tackling the many challenges that our people face on a daily basis and, critically, on building a better society in a new Ireland based on respect, inclusion and tolerance, in which all our people, all our communities are welcome and celebrated.

The new Ireland has to be built upon a willingness to move beyond what happened in the past. Reconciliation and generosity should be embraced as the foundation for managing the constitutional change which is now fixed on the political horizon.

Our commitment must be to put reconciliation at the heart of all political and civic institutions in a new national constitutional framework.

The Ireland of today is however a very different place, thankfully. An Ireland where the signs of change are all around us, but an Ireland where the signs of further change, the demands and desires for further change, are very much all around us too.

The Good Friday Agreement shows how much can be achieved when we act with common purpose.

We have built the peace.

Now, we look to write the next chapter - the reunification of Ireland. I

Now, we look to write the next chapter - the reunification of Ireland. I believe that we will see unity referendums within this decade.

believe that we will see unity referendums within this decade.

To win these referendums, and win them well, republicans will have to reach out, create space for others and build alliances right across society. We want to create a nation home for all the people who live on this island, where the rights of everyone are protected and advanced.

There is no room for trading one form of discrimination for another. We want an end to second-class citizenship in all its forms. To build opportunities for everyone.

A new Ireland based on the vision of Tone, an enduring reconciliation and a real union of all the people who call this island their home, and between every community on this island.

To those who remain unconvinced of reunification I say to you, this is your future too. Your culture, your traditions, your history matter. Your voice, your opinions, and your ideas matter. Be part of what is an exciting, positive, and engaging discussion.

And of course, the very best forum now for the Unity conversation is a Citizens' Assembly. An inclusive and positive forum, promoting positive discussions on what a new, united Ireland would look like.

Let's also be clear on this, if this government refuses to establish a Citizens' Assembly on Irish Unity, a Sinn Féin government will.

The change sweeping across Ireland is led by ordinary people. By workers, families and communities determined to achieve a new Ireland. An Ireland that is fairer, stronger, and better for everyone. A united Ireland of equals.

This is the rising of a new generation. A rising fuelled by the enduring values of the Irish people - community, compassion, togetherness, and kindness.

We seek to build the Irish nation anew. To end partition in our time.

To unite our people and our country. For the United Ireland which republicans seek is one built on equality, pluralism and inclusion. A stronger Ireland. A fairer Ireland. An Ireland fit for all her people.

A United Ireland that will be a fitting tribute to the patriots we remember every Easter and at our local commemorations. The challenge for republicans now is to build and broaden support for Irish unity.

**It is to win an inevitable
unity referendum.**

Time 4 Unity Am d'Aontacht

UNITING IRELAND ROUND UP

IRELAND'S FUTURE

A Sinn Féin delegation met this month with board members of Ireland's Future. They updated them on plans for their biggest ever event which they will host next June in the SSE Arena, Belfast. Tickets will be released in September 2023.



IRISH BORDER POLL ONLINE EVENT

Earlier this month Irish Border Poll organised an online event 'Making Sense of Irish Unity' with guest speaker Professor Brendan O'Leary. Hundreds of people attended the meeting with over a thousand tuning in since. *You can catch up on the event here: Making Sense of a United Ireland: Q&A with Professor Brendan O'Leary - YouTube*



'OUR SHARED WAY OF LIFE' BOOK LAUNCHED

'Our Shared Way of Life' book was launched by Clones Resource Centre and Denzil McDaniel this month. People living along the border are already exploring what a new Ireland may mean to them, a community project has found. Around 40 people from both nationalist

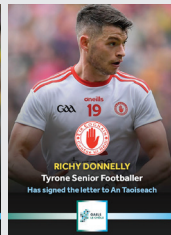
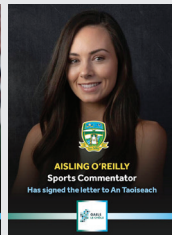
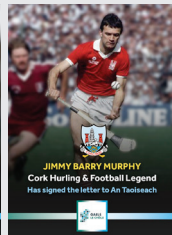
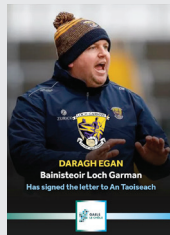


and unionist backgrounds were interviewed for 'People on the Border - Exploring Our Shared Way of Life', on topics including identity, faith, history and the border question. Anyone wishing to obtain a copy of the book can collect one at the following locations:
Impartial Reporter

office, Enniskillen, Fermanagh County Library, Enniskillen, Fermanagh County Museum, Enniskillen, Fermanagh Trust office, Fermanagh House, Enniskillen, Monaghan County Library, Clones & Clones Family Resource Centre.

GAELS LE CHÉILE

Gaels le Chéile have written again to An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar seeking a meeting to discuss their campaign and their call for the establishment of a Citizens' Assembly on Irish Unity. Gaels recently met with representatives from the Taoiseach's Office and the Shared Island Unit in Belfast. However, many high profile Gaels have asked An Taoiseach to afford them the opportunity to meet with him directly in Dublin. High profile Gaels such as Cork legend Jimmy Barry Murphy, Kerry Gael Paul Galvin, Tyrone County Player Richy Donnelly, GAA Go Presenter Ashling O'Reilly and Wexford Hurling Manager Darragh Egan have all signed the letter this month in support of the campaign.



SHARED ISLAND INITIATIVE

€56m has been committed by the Irish government from its Shared Island fund to a number of all-island projects. These include plans to complete the tender for the Narrow Water Bridge, a respite and therapeutic centre for children with cancer and their families, a new all-island Youth Forum and the construction of two bio-economy demonstrators. Capital investment of €45 million will go towards helping to build a new student and teaching building at Ulster University's Magee campus. Michelle O'Neill has welcomed the announcement and said this investment by the Irish government shows the potential of what can be done to deliver on the huge economic opportunities when governments and parties work together.

AN GHAELTACHT IN ÉIRINN AONTAITHE

Conradh na Gaeilge have announced plans to host a 'Tionól Gaeltachta' on the theme of 'Éire Nua agus an Ghaeilge' Le **Mairead Ní Mhaonaigh, Seosamh Ó Ceallaigh, Naoise Mac Cathmhaoil & Niall Comer.**



Beidh Áine Ní Bhreisleáin sa Chathaoir 8pm Aoine 30/6/2023 An Chúirt, Gaoth Dobhair Cláraigh: cearta@cnag.ie

PODCAST RECOMMENDATIONS

More and more podcasts are referencing or focusing on the issue of Irish Unity. See our recommendations for this month below.

BBC Redlines- United Ireland: For richer or poorer?
Red Lines - United Ireland: For richer or poorer? - BBC Sounds

The David McWilliams Podcast: The Unionist strategy against Irish Unity: Poverty: The David McWilliams Podcast: The Unionist strategy against Irish Unity: Poverty on Apple Podcasts





‘The Taoiseach should roll up his sleeves and get to work around the preparation and planning for constitutional change’ - Michelle O’Neill

Speaking this week, Leo Varadkar has said that Irish unification could fall off the agenda for a long time if a border poll was held and defeated.

He said, “I don’t think it’d be a good idea, certainly not at this point in time. I think the difficulty with the border poll is it would certainly be divisive in Northern Ireland, but it would also probably be defeated in Northern Ireland. “If you look at what the Good Friday Agreement says, it makes provision for a border poll, makes provision for a referendum on unification, but it says in the Good Friday Agreement that it should only happen when there’s actually a stage (when) Northern Ireland has formed the opinion that it might pass.” He said that recent Assembly and local election results in Northern Ireland and opinion polls “don’t show a majority for unification”.

He added: “The biggest difficulty of a referendum or a border poll that would be unsuccessful, would be that it would probably take the issue off the agenda for a long period of time. So once lost, you have the division that’s caused by the referendum, and then you don’t have the outcome you want. So I really think that if we’re ever going to have a border poll, or when there’s a border poll, it should be done at a time – first of all, when we believe that there’s a good chance of succeeding both north and south, but also secondly, when we’ve worked out the proposal as to what’s being put to the people.”

Responding to the comments, Sinn Féin vice president and First Minister elect Michelle O’Neill said that his energy would be better placed in preparing for the possibility of unification and repeated the party’s call for a citizens’ assembly on the issue to be established.

“I think the Taoiseach should roll up his sleeves and get to work around the preparation and planning for constitutional change.

“Let’s have a really healthy, informed debate around what the future could look like, how it could be better for everybody who shares this island.

“I would encourage the Taoiseach to actually take a roll of responsibility in terms of planning for constitutional change, have the Citizens’ Assembly, let’s talk about the health service in the event of constitutional change, let’s talk about what education looks like, what the economy looks like, the benefits that it could bring, I think that’s where his energy should be better placed.”



REACHTAÍOCHT AN ÚDARAITHE TAISTIL LEICTREONACH AG DÉANAMH DOCHAIR DO THURASÓIREACHT AGUS D’EACNAMAÍOCHT UILE AN OILEÁIN

D’Éiligh Órfhlaith Begley MP gur cheart go gcuirfí deireadh leis na riachtanais ‘Údarú Taistil Leictreonach’, tar éis cruinniú leis an gComhghuaillíocht Turasóireachta.

Dúirt MP Thír Eoghain Thiar,

“Tá mé ag iarraidh ar an Oifig Gnóthaí Baile deireadh a chur leis na moltaí um Údarú Leictreonach Taistil (ETA) a chruthóidh bacainn do thurasóirí agus do chuirteoirí ag teacht ó dheisceart go tuaisceart na hÉireann.

“Cuireann moltaí an ETA bacainní nua ar an teorainn do chónaitheoirí neamhÉireanna-cha agus neamh-Bhreataineacha agus do chuirteoirí a thagann ó thuaidh. Má thugtar isteach iad, beifear ag súil go gcuirfidh siad siúd atá ag iarraidh isteach sna Sé Chontae iarratas ar MTE – daoine ar mian leo a bheith ag obair, dul i mbun turasóireachta nó i mbun staidéir

“Léiríonn an polasaí seo ag rialtas na Breataine easpa tuisceana ar an tionchar dochrach atá ag an reachtaíocht seo ar thurasóireacht na n-oileán ar fad. Tá na moltaí seo contrártha don Chomhlíonmisteáir Taistil agus do Chomhaontú Aoine an Chéasta.

“Faoi láthair timpeall 70% de na turasóirí ó thuaidh a thagann go hÉirinn trí Bhaile Átha Cliath, tá an reachtaíocht seo ag bagairt go díreach ar £250 milliún a chaitear sa gheilleagar áitiúil.

“Beidh tionchar ag an doiciméad um tharscaoileadh víosa do thurais trasna na teorann ar níos mó ná leathmhilliún turasóir gach bliain agus déanfaidh sé dochar do thurasóireacht uile-Éireann.

“Bhuail mé le déanaí leis an Chomhaontas Turasóireachta agus le grúpaí fáilteachais eile atá i gcoinne tabhairt isteach na reachtaíochta seo. Ba cheart don Oifig Gnóthaí Baile na moltaí áiféiseacha seo a tharraingt siar.”

A NEW, RIGHTS-BASED, NATIONAL DEMOCRACY IS THE WAY FORWARD

By Sinn Féin National Chairperson Declan Kearney

It's now a month since the council elections in the north of Ireland. This was another watershed election. Sinn Féin has become the largest party of local government; winning 144 seats and 31% of the vote. The DUP held its number of seats and is still blocking the restoration of power sharing, but unionism's overall political and electoral position has been further weakened.

Support for those political parties which are pro-Irish unity is now significantly higher than those parties which support the union with Britain. The north has changed irreversibly, and that process is set to continue. More elections are scheduled north and south for 2024 and 2025. The DUP cannot reverse what is happening all over Ireland. The popular ambition for change is what is fuelling the surge in support for Sinn Féin as the largest party on the island. This would be a sensible moment for the DUP to change its negative political position and to agree to share power properly. Perhaps the DUP leadership has a plan to do just that, but there's no evidence publicly or privately to indicate this is likely in the short to mid term. That's an absolutely unacceptable situation in the midst of a deepening cost of living emergency, and an endemic crisis in public finances which is further undermining health, education and other services.

Two elections have now occurred in the north since May 2022. The democratic will of the people continues to be defied. The rest of us should not have to wait for the DUP. The Good Friday Agreement (GFA) and power sharing must not become casualties to its wrecker's agenda. A dangerous drift is taking hold within the political process. In these circumstances, the British and Irish governments are obliged to act as co-guarantors of the GFA. That is what is needed at this time. The GFA is an international treaty, which defined the terms of the peace accord in Ireland. It recognised the contested nature of the northern state arising from partition, and the legacy of institutionalised sectarian inequality and the dominance of a one-party state since 1921. That is why the Agreement provides for the exercise of self-determination through the mechanism of a unity referendum to be held concurrently in the north and south of Ireland.

The decision to set a date for such a poll should flow from a process of direct engagement and planning between both governments on managing constitutional change in Ireland. That presupposes an acceptance by both governments on the need for a pragmatic change in policy to plan and prepare for the eventuality of Irish unity. Neither the current coalition in Dublin or the Tory government in London are minded to do so at this time – even though there is a recognition by officials within both state systems that is an unrealistic attitude. It is an unsustainable position particularly for the government in Dublin, which has a constitutional responsibility to promote the achievement of Irish unity. Refusing to accept the need to plan and prepare for a transition to unity makes no sense.

The last two elections in the north, and successive polling north and south, all indicate that the popular debate around Irish unity has a fast-growing momentum. It is ironic that the original catalyst for the dynamic realignments happening in the north, and for changed relations between Britain and Ireland, began with the election of the Tories to government in 2010. From that point, the British government has negatively disengaged itself from the peace and political process: a clear reflection of how little investment the current generation of Tory politicians have in the peace process or the GFA. Then came the catastrophe of Brexit and the attempts by both the Tories and DUP to make it as hard as possible. Brexit, ongoing demographic change, and electoral realignment north



and south, have all combined to create a new political and societal landscape.

As a result, and 25 years after the GFA, there is now a powerful demand and ambition for change in the north. New realities are dawning across society; citizens are making new choices.

That is a clue to understanding the watershed significance of Sinn Féin's electoral successes in May 2022 and then becoming the largest party of local government. This particular election result is a game changer. The northern state was structurally engineered through a process of gerrymandering to perpetuate inequality and second-class citizenship. However, the majority of votes cast on 18th May were for new, progressive, positive and inclusive politics.

I recently attended a reenactment of the Battle of Antrim 225 years ago. The event marked the iconic 1798 United Irish Rising led by women and men who took inspiration from the ideas of the American and French revolutions. They laid the foundations of modern Irish Republicanism with the timeless principles of anti-sectarianism, equality, national independence, and the unity of 'Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter'.

I was really proud to be accompanied by three of our newly elected councillors. It was another little piece of history being made. More evidence of the tangible change that is happening in plain sight, all around us. I like to think Henry Joy and Mary Ann McCracken, Jemmy Hope and Roddy McCorley would be proud and pleased.

As for the immediate term, we have much work to do. A new, pluralist, progressive Ireland is possible, but not inevitable. The monolith of political unionism is no more. The ability of the DUP and others to permanently veto the process of change has been ended. That's why it makes sense for them to get involved in discussions about managing future transitional arrangements. Refusing to talk won't make the conversation go away.

Workers and families in Ireland, north and south, want a better society for themselves and their families. They have been failed by partition, and by unionist and gombeen politicians. We can do better, and we deserve better. Constitutional change and Irish unity are on the political horizon. The future is bright. A new, rights-based, national democracy is the way forward. That prospect is now within touching distance. So, whether you are 'Catholic, Protestant or Dissenter' or none of those, get involved and help make even more change happen.

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- Sinn Féin National Chair Declan Kearney on the recent local government election results, and the growing demand for Irish reunification
- QUB Professor Colin Harvey writes on the need for the Irish Government to take a hands on approach to preparations for a Referendum on Irish Unity
- Cllr Bróna Haughey, Cllr Paul Boggs, Cónall Ó Corra and Mairéad Farrell TD reflect on what the Good Friday Agreement means to a new, younger generation
- Joe Dwyer writes on the British Tories relationship with Ireland, and the perpetual crisis that follows

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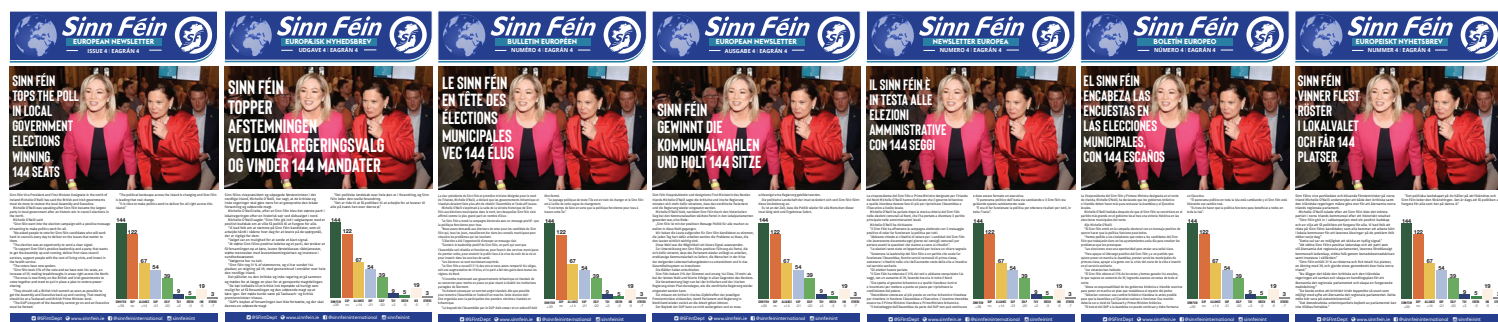
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