

# Cuisele

*The voice of  
the members*



# A Slightly Jaundiced Look At: The Government Backbencher.

Looking at them, you're reminded of that classic 1950s science fiction movie "Invasion of the Body Snatchers", where aliens secretly start replacing humans with exact duplicates who start doing the opposite of what they used to do. It's like they arrived in Leinster House on the first day, strolled into their offices and said "Hey, that thing in the pod looks exactly like me! What are you doing with that ray gun...noooooo!"

There they are, two years in, with that glassy look in their eyes when talking to supporters. They remember her on the doorsteps, full of passion and integrity. She was THEIR woman, who was going to go to Dail Eireann and shake up the place and bring in A New Politics and all that stuff. Now, as she brings them into the Dail bar, she can barely look them in the eye.

The saddest thing is that she hasn't cheated them. When she now votes for cuts and against things she campaigned for in the constituency, she's mortified. She knows she's letting them down, and they know she knows too. They can see how tired she looks, the bags under her eyes, the fact that when someone walks up to her in the constituency and berates her, an almost daily event, she just stands there and takes it like a scolded dog, ashamed.

She's not even sure what happened. I mean, when they made those promises about burning the bondholders and Labour's way and not one more cent for the banks, they did mean it, didn't they? What other excuse is there? Or is it that they didn't actually know, that they had prepared for government with the assistance of over 70 taxpayer-funded researchers and they actually did not check if they could actually implement their policies? Surely someone in the party was thinking about the day AFTER the election? Is it possible? That they didn't know, for example, that when they made a

promise to reduce the Dail by 20 seats that there was this thing called "the constitution"?

It would be better if they actually had been taken over by aliens. At least the aliens would have a plan.

What's worse of course is that in the age she lives in, all the promises she and her party made are all on Youtube and Facebook and Twitter and all that stuff. It's not fair that people keep playing back speeches you made before polling day. That's what you do in elections, as a great man once said. RTE in particular, who had done such a good job before the election, have now shown terrible bias by running speeches made by her party leader before the election. Surely that shows bias against the party, broadcasting her party leader in his own words?

In the back of her head a tiny voice asks "why are you doing this?" She was never on the radical wing of the party, just a pragmatic problem-solver, and so the idea of rebelling goes completely against her nature. But the little voice tells her to look at the polls and recognise that she and dozens of other silent obedient backbenchers are slowly marching towards a humiliating ejection at the next election, and for what? So that the time-servers get to be ministers and save their seats and get pensions? Whilst she gets humiliated at the count? Whilst she gets talked about for years later by her friends and neighbours as "Wasn't she a TD once? Yeah, but she wasn't very good. Went up to Dublin and we never heard from her again." She is actually willing to trade her dignity for the careers of her party betters, which is a certain form of selfless nobility, in a way, and almost certainly the first time in history a human took a bullet for a Rabitte.

Jason O'Mahony is an independent commentator and holds all parties "in equal disregard"! He blogs about politics, books and other things that excite and irritate him at [www.jasonmahony.ie](http://www.jasonmahony.ie)



## HELP WANTED!

Have you a strong opinion on a Fianna Fáil related issue? Would like to see a particular current affairs or political matter covered? Have you some photos involving Fianna Fáil members or would like to highlight a recent membership event?

If so please get in touch with Cuisle. We are constantly looking for more people to write articles, more photos and most importantly your ideas. This is your magazine. So if you want to make a suggestion for how the magazine should be put together or you'd like to become a contributor please email us at [cuisle@fiannafail.ie](mailto:cuisle@fiannafail.ie)

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## Comment

### Spancil Hill

There's a line in the folk song Spancil Hill that talks of "the young, the old, the brave and the bold" coming together "their journey to fulfil". It's an apt line to describe the process that has happened within Fianna Fáil this past year or two.

For the first year of that process we rightly concentrated on the internals, getting the house in order from inside out. Many features of that time were fundamental though perhaps evaded media analysis or public attention. Firstly we saw the phenomena of re-joining members. Rather than the mass exodus predicted in some quarters, every constituency across the country saw growth or at least changed faces as returning members, many of whom had lost faith in the past, now reengaged. Driven by the desire to renew the party of old, they now put their hand up to join the renewal and seize the opportunity to put the party back on the right road once more. Those re-kindled members joined party stalwarts in organising renewal meetings and taking those first tentative steps forward.

Coupled with that, the activity and energy displayed by the new, emerging, younger members of the party has given everyone inspiration for the future and confidence in the next generation of leaders to drive the party forward. Involved at every level, this new cadre of Local Area Reps, Ógra Activists, and new Office Holders across the country are winning new support, and winning back old support, everywhere they knock on doors, and at a level still missed by the media but not by the people.

The local elections of 2014 could be the most critical in our party's history. People are looking around for inspiration. Looking for leadership. Looking to be challenged and looking to be impressed. There is much talk on the doors about a new party. However our core values of republicanism, social justice and equality of opportunity remain as valid today as they were when this party was founded, also at a time of turmoil and uncertainty. With new members in the ranks, new candidates on the tickets, and new proposals to meet the problems of today there is every opportunity for Fianna Fáil to be that 'new party'. With a reaffirmation of republican values, energetic new activists and a remodelled party "fit for purpose", like Parnell we know that "no man can set a boundary to the march of a nation". We love our party, we love our nation, now together let's make them great.

### Renewal

The renewal project must surely be regarded as a success. Great credit is due to both the leadership and the membership in this regard. While many hurdles remain, and there is much road still to travel, those first faltering steps taken in Spring 2011 have turned into strides and many more runners have taken up the baton as the race has moved forward. But how do we measure renewal?

By many metrics the party has performed very well. Rising 10+ percentage points over the past year to a level where opinion polls now place us routinely in the mid 20s and back vying for 1st place.

In real votes, an extremely credible 2nd place in two by-elections in a row, testament to the local organisations in Meath East and Dublin West and the national members that travelled to them.

Is success to be measured in membership figures? Again, if it is, we fare well. Over 15,000 members signed up to the new OMOV system at time of going to print and another 40,000 associates on our books. We remain the largest party in Ireland in national membership and in the third level colleges. All good, all highly encouraging that those that want to drive the project forward remain committed.

But renewal must first and foremost be about achieving our goals. Seeing our policies implemented. Advancing our vision for all on this island to enjoy a better future. And within the party all those reforms adopted in the last year must be bedded down and continue. A democratic party. One that values its members and facilitates their input. One that derives policy from its core principles and member conferences over and above polling samples or populist appeal. We are well on the way to being that party. We have the talent within our ranks. We have the committed membership. We have an organisation in every constituency in this state. Let us drive it on and be true to our ideals.

### Cuisle 3

Welcome to this third edition of Cuisle. I hope that you enjoy it and find it informative, entertaining and thought provoking at times. With OMOV now up and running, regular editions of this magazine are one of the ways the party can offer its members a forum for discussion. It is the magazine of you the members and your submissions will always take priority over our own in editorial selections. Not long after this Ard Fheis, the planning will begin again for Edition 4. Remember to keep sending in contents, be it letters, articles, photos, anything you feel will be of interest to other members.



James Lawless, Cuisle editor





# ONE MAN'S HOARD IS ANOTHER MAN'S TREASURE...

**C**llr. Cathal Crowe (Clare) talks about his collection of old political memorabilia.

My interest in collecting started as a youngster - my father collected coins and once or twice a year I would pour the collection out onto the sitting room floor and imagine all the pockets and hands in far flung countries that had once held this currency.

In my teenage years I started collecting match programmes. I've a stack of old GAA, rugby and soccer programmes at home that I like to rummage through and reminisce over every so often.

My interest in collecting went a completely different direction when I signed up as a member of Ógra Fianna Fáil during my first year at the University of Limerick. I studied political science & history so a lot of my course material centred on the history and origins of Ireland's various politics parties. I found this to be fascinating! A few neighbours at home passed some old Fianna Fáil paraphernalia my way and it wasn't long before I was hooked!

That was 13 years ago and since then I've amassed a large collection of what some might consider to be a heap of old political junk - to me it's treasure. Some of this treasure has been passed on to me by Fianna Fáil members in my home CDC, other items by family members and friends but I have also bought some interesting items on eBay auctions and the Donedeal website.

Some of my prized items include an original election poster and canvas card for Dan Breen, National Collection posters dating back to the 1930s, an original copy of the Free State Constitution and signatures of former Taoisigh including Eamon De Valera & Jack Lynch. I also have two old posters which were published by the opposing sides on the Anglo-Irish Treaty debate.

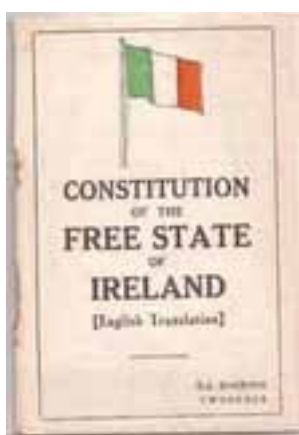
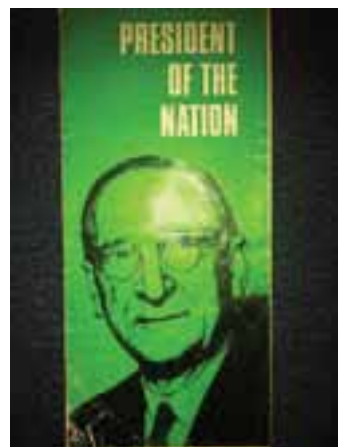
The Clare County Museum currently have a large portion of my collection on display and the remainder is either hanging on the walls of my office or in storage boxes on shelves. During the last Seanad campaign I had many candidates calling to my door and took great pleasure in showing them my items.

As a young councillor I think it's important to have a sense of place and history but equally I feel that our party should not be shackled to the past. I have a healthy respect for other political parties and opponents and sincerely hope that Irish politics has moved well beyond the old Civil War divide.

My collection is continuing to grow - my soon-to-be wife Maeve is obviously a very patient woman.. The posters and pamphlets used by Fianna Fáil candidates in recent election will soon become artefacts and historical ephemera in their own right.

Ar aghaidh le Fianna Fáil!

*NOTE: If anybody would like to donate items to Cathal's collection please contact him on 0871368883 or cathalcrowe@yahoo.ie*



# CHASING THE DUBLIN VOTE: WHAT WE MUST DO

**I**t should be now be accepted that the Structural Re-organisation of The Fianna Fáil Party in Dublin has been completed. All constituencies have held Annual or Special General Meetings. New officer boards are now in position. The final push is underway to have all willing members sign up by the March 31st deadline. Members now understand the significance of the One Member One Vote rule as it applies to voting at the Ard Fheis, voting at Constituency Annual General Meetings, voting at forthcoming Candidate Selection Conventions in preparation for the Local Elections due to take place in June next year.

Candidate Selection Conventions are scheduled to convene from mid-June 2013 onwards. Therefore, it is of vital importance the Fianna Fáil Party in Dublin moves on to its next phase of political activity, namely the development of a massive, sincere and genuine re-engagement with all local communities. It should be noted that during the Re-organisation Consultation Process throughout Dublin, the growing disconnect between all levels of the Party and local communities was highlighted repeatedly by Party members. This was one of the reasons advanced as to why local community activists do not join Fianna Fáil in order to become Election Candidates.

Members demanded this must change and that the required change can be achieved if the Party re-engages with local communities and local organisations.

What does re-engagement with local communities and local organisations really mean and how can it be achieved by the Fianna Fáil organisation in Dublin?

*It is of vital importance the Fianna Fáil Party in Dublin moves on to its next phase of political activity, namely the development of a massive, sincere and genuine re-engagement with all local communities.*

It is essential that all Fianna Fáil Councillors be extremely active on behalf of all local communities and organisations within their electoral area. Where at all possible they should attend all council meetings raising local issues and reporting back to their electorate. Councillors should ensure that the facility for utilising council agenda to highlight local, regional and where appropriate, National issues should be availed of to the maximum possible extent.

Importantly they should find ways to communicate the results of their efforts back to their electorate by using modern communication methods and also by leaflet drops, door knocking, telephone calls, letters, emails, personal home visits etc.

It is hugely important that where public meetings are called by local communities or organisations, these should be attended by local public representatives and/or local area representatives where they are in place. C.D.C members should also attend and support our representatives.

This level of visible local Fianna Fáil activity will help to ensure that when canvassing for

the next local elections, voters will not have cause to state they have not heard from Fianna Fáil in a long time. In support of the forgoing, the Dublin Organisational Steering Group at its meeting on March 13th last, called for the holding of a Dublin Policy Convention. Such a policy convention will enable all members in the Dublin area to discuss the development of a range of suitable policies appropriate to the Nations Capital.

The challenge now confronting the Dublin Organisation across all constituencies and local electoral areas is to dramatically increase the level of visible political activity. All C.D.C members and party supporters must provide practical support to Councillors, Area Representatives and Local Election Candidates when chosen. You call them - do not wait for them to call you. Practical support can be provided through, distributing leaflets, knocking on doors, attending public meetings, writing to or emailing local media, directly participating in community, local, sporting or social organisations. "Fly the Fianna Fáil Flag at all times".

There is a very important duty resting on C.D.C organisations to be ready to fight the next local elections under headings such as:

- Availability of sufficient activists to support the election campaign and all election candidates for which it has responsibility.
- The continuous recruitment of new members to the party.
- The development of a fighting fund to support its local election campaign.

A successful outcome to the local elections of 2014 in Dublin will ensure the Fianna Fáil organisation can turn its attention to the next general election from a position of strength in the greater Dublin area.

*Chris Flood, Chairman  
Dublin Organisation Committee*

## INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING IN CUISLE?

For future issues Cuisle intends to include advertisements. If you'd be interested in taking an ad which will be seen by practically all the members of Fianna Fáil please contact us - [cuisle@fiannafail.ie](mailto:cuisle@fiannafail.ie)

### INTERESTED IN FIANNA FÁIL'S HISTORY AND HERITAGE?

Cuisle is looking for people interested in researching Fianna Fáil's rich past. If you'd like to help please drop us an email marked 'History' to [cuisle@fiannafail.ie](mailto:cuisle@fiannafail.ie) or write to us at Cuisle PO Box, c/o Fianna Fáil Headquarters, 65/66 Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2.



# ORGANISATIONAL UPDATES - MEMBERSHIP RENEWED

Prior to last year's Ard Fheis meetings were held throughout the length and breadth of Ireland where the One Member One Vote initiative was explained by members of the Parliamentary Party and the Ard Comhairle.

The new party structure proposed a change whereby fully paid up members would enjoy many benefits:

- Members may vote at candidate selection conventions.
- Speak and vote at the Árd Fheis.
- Attend and speak at Policy Conferences.
- Receive invitations to make their views heard and to interact with public representatives.
- Receive regular issues of Cuisle and the weekly emailed Fianna Fáil Bulletin newsletter.
- Receive text notifications about important Fianna Fáil events.
- The opportunity to avail of special members' offers and discounts.

- Automatic membership of Ógra Fianna Fáil if the member is under 30 years of age.

At the Árd Fheis the proposal was debated and members voted unanimously to implement the new system. Cumann meetings were held and membership lists were updated and forwarded to Headquarters by 30th June 2013.

Since the process began the party has witnessed very positive response. Members are engaging with party headquarters on a range of issues and the current membership is in excess of 15,000 and increasing. Many view this new initiative as an opportunity to refocus, rebrand and rebuild our party.

The Árd Comhairle is committed to continuing this great work. Our next step following registration of existing members is to plan a major recruitment drive to source and encourage new members to join this great movement. We have more than 1500 members in our colleges, the biggest youth political party in the country and we need to build on that.

Registration and Recruitment have allowed

us to go back to our roots and give greater democracy and a voice to party members. We have improved communication at every level and even though our funding has been reduced due to a reduction in the Leader's Allowance personnel in party headquarters have looked at innovative ways to engage with members. We have embraced the technology that is the internet and social media and members receive a weekly bulletin by email. Recently the party purchased printing equipment and this will enable us to communicate our message in a more cost effective way.

We have fundamentally changed how our party operates by increasing participation and making our party more democratic. The OMOV initiative has been exciting and reinvigorating. We look forward to the next steps in the process. Please feel free to contact party headquarters if you would like to assist us in this work.

*Margaret Conlon is from Cavan / Monaghan and is chair of the membership committee and honorary secretary of Fianna Fáil*

## FIANNA FÁIL MEMBERS AND THE IRISH DIASPORA MUST BE GIVEN A VOICE IN ELECTIONS

Fianna Fáil is undergoing a process of renewal as we attempt to clarify what we stand for and what it means to be a member of Fianna Fáil, while consolidating our relationship with the Irish people.

In terms of policy and party structure, we have introduced OMOV, banned corporate donations, lobbied on behalf of introducing gay marriage, along with other measures to ensure our path to recovery. However, more can be done.

In order to drive Fianna Fáil forward as Ireland's main political force once more, we must look to our biggest asset, our members, who embody what Fianna Fáil is about. We are a party that supports Republicanism, nationalism and that promotes our unique Irish cultural identity. Other defining factors include our promotion of equality of opportunity, support for hardworking people and a sense of common purpose towards enhancing society and creating a national identity as part of developing our links with Britain and the European Union.

This last year has been a pivotal one in the renewal of Fianna Fáil thanks to the vital role played by members - and not just in Ireland. For instance, in 2012, grassroot Fianna Fáil

members launched two new cumainn - one in London and another in Brussels, that will ensure that our party faithful living overseas can maintain their strong links with Ireland.

Both London and Brussels have strong connections with Ireland, given that the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed in London while Brussels is the hub of European Union activity. Already our new cumainn are serving, not just as political networks, but as social networks for members who have secured employment in both cities. As they grow more established these new cumainn can also play a significant role in shaping party policy and giving a voice to our diaspora, while highlighting a sense of Irish identity overseas.

**Irish diaspora vote amounts to 2.6 million**  
Over 2.6 million Irish people live abroad yet they do not have a mandate. The vote of the Irish diaspora is a critical issue and one that Fianna Fáil must consider. Ireland however continues to disenfranchise emigrants abroad and is one of four of 33 members of the Council of Europe to do so.

The cumainn abroad have represented Fianna Fáil and the Irish diaspora at many Irish interest events, integrating with other Irish groups invited by host nations and in so doing, have been strengthening Anglo-Irish relations

in London and Irish-European relations in Brussels. This highlights the significant role that Irish people can play in terms of developing our relationship with Europe.

**As Irish citizens it is our democratic right to vote**

Although we live abroad, I would argue that it is our democratic right, as Irish citizens, to have a say in how some aspects of our country are run. We would welcome, for instance, the opportunity to vote for some panels of the Seanad as well as a vote in the Irish Presidential elections.

The cumainn members and the Irish abroad have an important role to play as they witness first-hand new practices and policies being implemented in other countries which may be of relevance and that could be implemented in Ireland to serve the greater interest in areas such as health, education, and local government. Their voice must be acknowledged in order to bring real change to Irish society.

It is the members of Fianna Fáil, in Ireland and around the world, who have the ability to return our party to centre stage in Irish politics.

Sinéad Lucey is a founder member and secretary of the London Fianna Fáil cumann. By Sinead Lucey

# “THE LAST MAN TO LET YOU DOWN”

After 9 busy years at the top table, Cllr. Shane P. O'Reilly steps down from the Ard Chomhairle at this Ard Fheis. Always colourful and often controversial, Cuisle's Tim Lavery caught up with Shane to hear his thoughts

Shane P. O'Reilly has been a Member of Cavan County Council since 2004 and hails from village of Mullagh in the southeast of Cavan. He is married to Elisha and has four children under 8. Shane has a broad experience within Fianna Fáil from the grass roots to poll-topping county council candidate and member of the Árd Chomhairle. In this short interview Shane gives us his personal perspective on his career in politics to date.

**How, in your opinion has Fianna Fáil helped shape the Cavan we see today?**

Fianna Fáil has absolutely had a massive, positive impact on Cavan and one of the main reasons for it is the fact that we have had such amazing representatives in Dáil Éireann who have provided support to every corner, every parish in the county and the constituency of Cavan-Monaghan.

Take for example Paddy Smith, the longest serving TD in the history of the state (almost 54 years) who served as Minister for Agriculture and several other senior portfolios. Paddy was a rural Cavan man and he believed in looking after his county and the agricultural roots that held the community together.

As for tangible examples of how Fianna Fáil has had a positive and lasting impact on Cavan, look no further than the National Schools, for when the late, great John P. Wilson was Minister for Education he did so much for Primary Education in this county.

Then, moving on to the current Dáil Deputy, Brendan Smith, a former Minister for Agriculture and also serving as Minister of State for Children; there is no doubt that at the time when the Department of Health and Children were providing funding for Playgrounds and other such facilities, Brendan Smith was to the forefront of ensuring that his own county was “first up, best dressed”. This is something that Fianna Fáil must be acknowledged for, we have left a positive mark on every corner of Cavan as far as I am concerned.

I said in my Vice-Presidential campaign (for the Árd Comhairle) that we are “the party of the crossroads” not “at the crossroads”. Sometimes there can be a lot of emphasis on Dublin and increasing party performance there.



Cllr. Shane P. O'Reilly is to step down from the Ard Chomhairle.

Fair enough, it is the nation's capital and we need to represent the people of the capital but it must be remembered that Fianna Fáil has done so much for rural Ireland. It galls me to see Fine Gael and Labour and the attacks that they are making on rural communities now, trying to undo the positive achievements of Fianna Fáil.

**What makes a good County Councillor?**

The Ability to listen. You have to listen to all sides and when you are dealing with community groups there are persons there with their own agendas and there are persons representing different political parties. Sometimes as political representatives we can go in to meetings and we can see for example the chairman of the local Fine Gael or Sinn Féin branch and it could colour our view immediately, that this is a politically run or controlled organisation.

As a Councillor you just can't approach things this way. I am a person who believes that if you come to me for help, whatever your viewpoint, political affiliation, religion or race, it is incumbent on me to look after you and to see if I can find a resolution to the problem you have come to me with.

I have never turned anyone away from my door, remember I was not elected to look after only Fianna Fáil supporters, I was elected to look after everyone. This is how Fianna Fáil will make their comeback.

**Who is your political hero and why?**

I have such time for this man, he is a man from rural Ireland, a worker and understood what made us tick. He has never been given the praise and accolades that he deserves for his role in the Good Friday Agreement, my hero is Albert Reynolds.

I always found it wrong how people tried to diminish his legacy by referring to the “Country & Western” Taoiseach. Albert Reynolds was no cowboy, he was a genius that was looked up to like a god in Longford, Roscommon, Cavan and Monaghan. The simple fact of the matter was that Albert was a man who put his money where his mouth was. He was a “nuts and bolts” type of politician, an entrepreneur who had come up from nothing and reached the highest office in the Government.

Thomas Byrne's excellent campaign in the Meath East bi-election shows significant support for FF, what lessons have been learned from the campaign that can be applied to the local elections in 2014.

Engagement and listening. Door to door, back to the tea in the flask, the egg and onion sandwiches! It is time to go back to drinking the mugs of tea with Mary and John in their kitchen.

We can all talk about the advantages and importance of social media, Facebook, Twitter and the like but Mary and John with three

(cont'd on page 10)...

# Political Scorecard

Cuisle asked key commentators for their take on what the party has got right and wrong over the past 12 months. The jury's in and here are the results:

## DR. EOIN O'MALLEY, Lectures Irish Politics At Dublin City University.

“The recent polls showing that Fianna Fáil's support is in the mid-20s will be a relief for those in the party who may have felt that the party was in terminal decline. That it managed to get 17 percent of the vote in 2011, in fact, could be regarded as remarkable given the context of the election. So we might have assumed then that the only likely direction was up. And if it is up, the party will obviously have a much better return on its vote as it'll be much more transfer friendly.

If we are to point to what Fianna Fáil has done well in the last two years to bring about a recovery it's hard to point to highlights. The Irish political system makes it hard for opposition parties make an impact. The party isn't as excitable as some of the others in opposition and some members, such Michael McGrath, have given competent performances. But many others are just treading water.

But I'd be reluctant to think that Fianna Fáil is on its way to a full recovery. These are mid-term polls which normally overegg government party losses. What the polls really reveal is a general disaffection with all the parties. Many are still undecided or plumping for independents, which usually happens when none of the parties are making an impact.

The good news is that this includes Sinn Féin, which should be doing much better than it is, given that it's the only party that can really oppose the government. It has its own legacy issues, which turns off an electorate which is essentially quite conservative. And come the next election the party with incumbent ministers will look like a safe pair of hands.

But no party is going grow dramatically by offering opposition alone. There are a number of groups that see little hope in their future. One is the group probably aged between 35 and 45 who bought houses at the top of the market, and spend most of their income on their mortgages. The other group is younger, don't have a house, but feel also they've no

*If we are to point to what Fianna Fáil has done well to bring about a recovery it's hard to point to highlights. The Irish system makes it hard for opposition parties make an impact.*

prospect for a job. In other European countries new parties, such as Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement are emerging to represent these groups.

In Ireland it is more difficult for new parties to emerge. Any party that offers these groups solutions could lead the next government. If none are offered, assuming no accidents happen, Fine Gael will be the biggest party at the next election. Fianna Fáil should be thinking of being the party that comes up with these solutions.”

## FIACH KELLY, Political Correspondent, Irish Independent

“You aren't whooping like you would be if Thomas Byrne had won the recent by-election in Meath East.

But neither are you pondering the very survival of your party as you were at last year's Ard Fheis. It may be a bittersweet place you find yourself at the RDS this year, dear Fianna Fáil delegate.

It shouldn't be. As a party, Fianna Fáil should still be pinching itself. It is in possibly the best place it could wish to be right now.

Getting there on the road to recovery, but not there yet. Enough done to reassure the troops, but enough left to do to guard against complacency.

So, even though Thomas Byrne didn't win, his relatively narrow defeat is possibly the best thing that could have happened the party.

A win so soon into the party's recovery process would have led to an assumption success was assured which, incidentally, is a view shared by many in the parliamentary party.

With Mr Byrne taking just under 33pc of the first preference vote, around 6pc behind eventual winner Helen McEntee, it proved the recent opinion poll trends and confirmed the improvement since the doldrums of the last general election.

It will spur on next year's candidates in the local and European elections and, the party would hope, lay the foundation stone for a steady momentum leading into the next general election.

Sinn Fein's march seems to have been halted too, with the collapsed Labour vote dispersing widely. Even some public sector votes are returning to the FF fold.

But challenges remain for Fianna Fáil. It may sound tiring to hear the Government repeat ad nauseum that your party wrecked the country, but they aren't going to stop saying it anytime soon.

And the more successful Fianna Fáil becomes, the more they'll keep at it. People haven't entirely forgotten or forgiven Fianna Fáil for where they brought the country in November 2010.

*The recent opinion poll trends and confirmed the improvement since the doldrums of the last general election.*

Another problem relates more to the here and now. Micheal Martin has done a good job in bringing the party from its knees and restoring it to a fighting force.

Responsible opposition seems to be working as voters shy away from the shrill socialism of Sinn Fein, although they apparently remain unmoved by the theatrics on the Independent benches.

But a couple of decisions have been ducked, most notably taking a position on abortion. Fianna Fáil spokespeople have twisted and turned without taking a position on this and other issues.

They will only get away with this so long, and the heat of heavy examination is never too far away.”

## GARY MURPHY, Associate Professor of Politics, Head of the School of Law & Govt at DCU

“WHen Micheál Martin became the eighth leader of Fianna Fáil on 26 January 2011 he faced a gargantuan task. The eight days between Brian Cowen on 18 January placing a motion of confidence in himself before a meeting of the party's TDs to the time of Martin's election had been among the most momentous in modern Irish history.

Thrust immediately into a general election campaign Martin faced an electorate who to be frank were sick of Fianna Fáil. How sick was only discovered once the votes were counted. There can be no doubt that the scale of the 2011 general election defeat shocked Fianna Fáil to the core. Notwithstanding the party's dismal showing in the polls prior to the election there continued to be a belief held within Fianna Fáil that the quirks of the Irish electoral system would lessen the inevitable seat losses and that local factors would save a decent number of TDs.

While the eventual losses were staggering the fact that Fianna Fáil could gain over 380,000 first preference votes on the back of presiding over the worst economic crisis in the history of the state, and that it could attract such support despite its negative reputation on issues of trust and competency says something about its resilience. Two years on from the general election and with Fianna Fáil support increasing in the opinion polls it is time to take stock of where the party stands now.

*Thrust immediately into a general election campaign Martin faced an electorate who to be frank were sick of Fianna Fáil*

Fianna Fáil has a long and proud history and a lot of achievements to its credit. From de Valera's 1937 Constitution to Lemass's opening up of the economy, and entry into the EEC under Jack Lynch it has embraced an outward looking Ireland that has stood the country in good stead. Its commitment to social partnership also provided the state with macroeconomic stability in the years from 1987 to 2007. It is unthinkable to look at the ending of the troubles in Northern Ireland without marvelling at the role that Bertie Ahern played in bringing such a situation about. The bailout and subsequent general election routing should not take away from these facts or this proud history.

Micheal Martin has claimed that the party lost its way in recent years by forgetting its radical



Micheál Martin in Queens University Belfast (© Joe Ó Néill)

roots and that it can recover both its zeal and purpose by returning to the original progressive policies of Eamon de Valera and Seán Lemass, although he does not really tell us what these are in the Ireland of 2013. He should do so. Take property tax for instance. Fianna Fáil signed

up to it as a prerequisite of the bailout deal. It now opposes it on the seemingly reasonable grounds that people cannot afford it. But there a lot of other taxes that people also cannot afford but yet have to pay. The Irish people deserve a statement from Fianna Fáil on whether property tax in and of itself is an appropriate tax for a modern functioning democracy. By its current opposition to the clearly unpopular tax Fianna Fáil is running perilously close to a type of populism that while popular in the short term has grave long term implications and has got the party into trouble before. A retreat to populism would be a terribly pity as Fianna Fáil has performed admirably since the trauma of the general election.

There is a fine line to be drawn when in opposition. The temptation is of course to

just give the government a good kicking and pretty much oppose everything but that is the opposition of the lazy and the damned. Fianna Fáil to its credit has produced a number of detailed policy studies and legislative proposals including extremely valuable approaches to such diverse but crucial topics as personal insolvency, debt settlement, and suicide prevention. It has also acted in the public interest through its forceful campaigning for a yes vote during the fiscal compact treaty referendum.

So where stands Fianna Fáil now? Its recent surge in a variety of opinion polls is heartening for the party and has made it a credible force in Irish politics again. There was no guarantee of that after the 2011 general election. The party needs to continue to produce well developed and costed proposals and provide an opposition that is constructive in its criticism. Facing into the local elections next year Fianna Fáil needs to present a team that is vigorous in its approach to the campaign and can serve their communities on election. If it can achieve that it will be well on its way to presenting a case for a return to government at the next general election.”



## FIANNA Fáil BRAND NO LONGER TOXIC IN FINGAL

STEPHEN O'BRIEN, Political Editor With The Sunday Times

“The most recent Behaviour & Attitudes poll for The Sunday Times, shows Fianna Fáil down one point to 23%. That is not a number that places the party on the threshold of government; but it is six points higher than the 17% Election 2011 result and nine points clear of the 14% low water mark in October 2011 in the B&A/ST series (adjusted figures).

Both party and leader have enjoyed significant momentum in the opinion polls since the dark days of 2011 and, indeed, much of 2012.

The recovery in the polls can be tracked back to the autumn of last year, when Fianna Fáil adopted a notably more aggressive stance toward the government in the Dail.

The party bounced up and down in the mid- to late-teens in terms of support through most of 2011 and 2012, then suddenly shot from 16% last September just before the Dail reconvened to 22% in November and 24% in January.

No-one invited Fianna Fáil out of political purgatory last September; the party leadership clearly decided to abandon the penitential robes and return to more familiar battle-dress.

The decision to attack James Reilly, the health minister, with a confidence motion in October seemed rash at first but Billy Kelleher and his front bench colleagues got lucky. The move

brought to the surface the serious tensions between Dr Reilly and his junior minister Roisin Shortall.

She resigned her post citing lack of support from her own leader, Eamon Gilmore, among her reasons for departing. FF got a political scalp, though not the one it had gone looking for.

In a new and effective parliamentary tactic, the party has used Freedom of Information legislation effectively to keep the pressure on Dr Reilly both in the media and in the Dail.

Micheál Martin, as leader, has had good days and not so good in taking on Enda Kenny across the floor of the Dail, but he has shown a deft touch on a number of key internal party matters.

His decision not to appoint a deputy leader for now, and to rotate the leaders' questions slot on a Thursday among his front bench has been successful in keeping everybody on their toes.

Demanding the resignation of Éamon Ó Cuív from the front bench over his stance on the fiscal treaty allowed Mr Martin to exercise his authority in defence of a position that has become one of the party's core values - Ó Cuív's scepticism not withstanding.

Re-appointing the former minister as agriculture spokesman four months later was an olive branch gesture that saw Ó Cuív to a more appropriate portfolio, where he has run a strict rule over Simon Coveney on his

stewardship of the horsemeat controversy and the renegotiation of CAP.

But the party needs to balance the strategy of robust opposition against the perception of cynical opposition. Ireland is in crisis, and a party playing politics with the national interest risks the wrath of a volatile electorate.

Fianna Fáil voted for the emergency legislation to liquidate IBRC, and played an effective part in the fiscal treaty debate with Mr Martin and Tim Dooley to the fore.

A low profile in the subsequent children's referendum did the party little credit, however, its opposition to property tax - “now is the wrong time for a new tax” - has lacked credibility.

And the party has appeared cautious and calculating in the debate over the impending X case legislation. Any hint of political opportunism on this issue could be very damaging for a party seeking to rebuild the trust of the Irish electorate.

Fianna Fáil has been visibly happier in its own skin over the past six months of favourable poll numbers. But if the by-election result in Dublin West gave the organisation a shot of optimism, the outcome in Meath East delivers, perhaps, a dose of realism.

The road back from the brink will have several twists and turns. Hard work, challenging policy and political honesty could be the virtues most rewarded in the long term.”

...(cont'd from page 7) "THE LAST MAN TO LET YOU DOWN"

children who are finding it hard to put bread and milk on the table, they want to talk to you.

They want to hear what you have to say, they want to be assured, that before they give you their votes that you are the candidate, representing your political party that is going to ensure that when you get elected that you will not forget about them.

We have to become the party of the people again, by sitting and listening to the concerns of people and one thing about Michael Martin's leadership of Fianna Fáil is that he has a listening ear, there is no doubt about that.

You have experienced the party from the heady days of Bertie Ahern's tenure to the new leadership of Michael Martin. Does FF need to re-invent itself or can we still hold true to the founding Córú?

We do not need to re-invent ourselves in my personal opinion, Fianna Fáil, the Republican Party is something we should be proud of, we have done more good for this country than bad, and a few apples can not rot the entire cartload. We need to be proud of ourselves, and remind dissenters of what we have achieved.

What is the most unusual thing you have encountered on a canvass? I pulled a calf once canvassing. I went into a farmer's yard, “there's not much point standing there with your shirt and tie”, the farmer said, “if you want me vote, you'll pull the calf”, and I did, I got the vote and a fine Belgian Blue heifer as well!

You have said that you owe sincere gratitude to your family, your wife and parents, in particular your father for supporting your political career. What made you decide to

follow the particular path you have travelled?

Jude Daly was the long serving Chairperson of the Cumann in Mullagh. Jude brought me in to the fold at the age of 11 to put up election posters because none of them were nimble enough to go up a ladder, that was my baptism into Fianna Fáil! Jude was the local councillor in all but name, he passed away in 1999 and it was a pity that he never got to see me elected but I don't think I would have ever gone into politics if it were not for Jude Daly. I can only hope to be half the man that he was.

What one piece of advice would you give any aspiring Ógra members who are interested in a political career? Just listen and remember that you won't change the world on your own.

By Tim Lavery

Incoming Chairman of Dublin Fingal CDC, Paul Moreland, delivered a ‘rousing speech’ to members at the recent AGM. Rallying the troops for some busy political times ahead, Mr Moreland stressed that the 2014 local elections will prove a major test for the party. An edited version of Mr Moreland's speech follows here:

“The first test of any political party is its willingness to work. The outgoing Officer Board has been working closely with our Public Representatives and Area Representative, canvassing and leaflet dropping for the past few months in a number of areas in the constituency. Surprisingly, we are getting a very positive reaction from the public. We are not the toxic brand some in the media rant on about. In fact it is the very opposite. People want to talk to us. They are in fact shocked when we explain to them the impact some Government decisions are having on the local community.

“In particular, I refer to the ludicrous situation regarding the local HSE ambulance cover and the devastating effect the cuts to this vital service may have on our families.

*For our renewal to be complete we must be prepared to change the way we operate both locally and nationally as a political party. We need to put aside the scoring and the sniping.*

“The main focus of our work as Comhairle in recent months is, and must remain, for the next two years, the Local Elections 2014 and ensuring our sitting Councillors get re-elected

*Surprisingly, we are getting a very positive reaction from the public. We are not the toxic brand some in the media rant on about. In fact it is the very opposite*

and increasing our representation on Fingal County Council.

“Let me put our potential local election candidates on alert. You must leave no stone unturned to achieve our goal of increasing Fianna Fáil seats on Fingal County Council. Remember, winning demands self-discipline, focus and accountability. Let's leave the politics of resentment and division to others.

“For our renewal to be complete we must be prepared to change the way we operate both locally and nationally as a political party. We need to put aside the scoring and the sniping. We must be constructive, not destructive, remaining firmly focused on our goal, success for our candidates in 2014.

“The candidates cannot do this alone however; we the people in this room must be prepared to put our shoulder to the wheel to assist them. We must focus on the party's interests and

not on the interests of individual candidates. We may all have to make sacrifices to ensure that we are out and about selling the party's message to the electorate if we are to fully embrace the spirit of renewal.

“So my message to this AGM is to leave here tonight thinking positive, looking forward. Let us again strive to make our Fianna Fáil team of Candidates in the local elections a winning Fianna Fáil Team.

“The task of the incoming Officer Board is to look ahead, learn from the mistakes of the past and acknowledge that we did make errors.

“The introduction of One Member One Vote is the mechanism through which we the members can have our voices heard at both local and national level. The renewal of the local organisation is an inclusive journey with every member taking part.

“We have a lot of work to do, and little time to do it. I appeal to all members to leave the divisions of the past where they belong in the past, think positive, look forward to success in 2014. Let us again become a party of Winners.

“To conclude, permit me to quote some simple words from our late friend Brian Lenihan, who addressed us here on so many occasions in the past

“Onwards and upwards”.

By Paul Moreland  
Thanks to Clara La Combre, secretary of Dublin Fingal CDC, for supplying copy of the above ‘rousing speech’ by incoming Chairman, Paul Moreland, ‘as an example of how a Comhairle Chairman can rally his troops.’

Cairde Fáil presents

# The President's Dinner

Guest of Honour: Uachtarán Fhianna Fáil, Micheál Martin TD

Saturday, 5th October 2013

Burlington Hotel, Upper Leeson Street, Dublin 4  
Informal Dress

Enquiries to anne@fiannafail.ie  
01-6761551



**FIANNA FÁIL**  
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

# THE NEXT 18 MONTHS ARE KEY - DARA CALLEARY, MAYO FIANNA Fáil TD

Whatever about the huge workload, one of the plus points for our 19 TDs working so hard to represent the party in Dail Eireann every week is the fact that most are now readily recognisable by the Irish public. Michael McGrath, Sean O Fearghaill, Niall Collins, Timmy Dooley and Billy Kelleher are some of the star turns among this grouping who give winning performances for Fianna Fáil on TV and radio stations on a regular basis and whose personal popularity has grown as a result.

Their consistent on-message quality contributions over the past two years have been instrumental in changing the fortunes of the party while simultaneously turning our front bench representatives into quick-thinking, seasoned politicians. For this, party members must be extremely appreciative, although at the same time, slightly trepidations. Can our 19 TDs keep up the good work in promoting Fianna Fáil until the next general election without their energies flagging? Will our deputies survive another two years of intense political dealings without encountering some major setback?

One of the 'Golden 19' who knows all about the hectic work schedule is Fianna Fáil TD, Dara Calleary, sole Dail representative for the party in Mayo, a constituency of over 130,000 people split across a county 100 miles in diameter. Like other rural TDs, Deputy Calleary travels to and fro between Dublin and his hometown (Ballina) each week, on top of driving hundreds of miles from one end of the county to the other to attend meetings and hold constituent clinics. Interestingly, Deputy Calleary did manage to fit in a special wedding in Summer 2012 (his own! - to Siobhan). Given the job spec however, it is unlikely he will be 'settling down' to full-time married life anytime soon.

*Cuisle's* Joan Geraghty caught up with Deputy Calleary twixt meetings one busy Monday night recently to check out how exactly life in opposition can be worked around our 24-hour news and politics culture. Despite a heavy workload, Deputy Calleary remains decidedly upbeat.

"Yes it's busy, for sure. Last week for instance, I left Dublin on Thursday, getting home from the Dail at 11pm. On Friday morning I had to be in Ballina, then in Crossmolina for 11am and back into Ballina for a clinic; then at 6pm I was in Belmullet for another meeting, a one hour drive away and from there I had to be in Ballyhaunis,



Westport Cumann.

two hours away, for 9pm. I got home at 11pm.

"On Saturday morning I had a clinic in Westport, then one in Castlebar and then I had a monthly meeting of the School Board of Management in Bonniconlon. I went on then to a Comhairle Ceantair meeting in Crossmolina that night. I also had to go to Foxford on Saturday. Sunday, I was off. We had a walk on the beach in Enniscrone!"

Dara Calleary has been working the circuits in this manner ever since he first got elected as a TD in 2007. However, the intensity has definitely increased since election 2011.

"Mainly, it's the geography of it that eats in to time. It's 45 miles from Ballina to Belmullet on one side and 45 miles Ballina to Ballyhaunis the other way, so you're spending hours on the road.

"But this is a nice constituency. It's both rural and urban and it is an honour to serve as a TD here. I don't play football. I never did sports, so it's great to be able to wear the green jersey for the sport of politics."

Geographically, Mayo ranks as the biggest constituency in Ireland and boasts some major towns - Ballina, Castlebar, Westport, Claremorris - as well as a number of highly successful commercial stories. Some of the multi-nationals in the county include Coca Cola, Baxter and Allergan Pharmaceuticals while Ireland West Airport Knock provides a massive piece of infrastructure.

"The jewel in the crown is Knock Airport, which had 700,000 passengers last year. We are keen

to grow and protect it, particularly considering what may be an unfair advantage conferred on Shannon by the government recently. We would like to see some investment now in Ireland West Knock and this is an issue we will be lobbying strongly on."

## Other issues

"Unemployment is of course the biggest issue for Mayo. We are a county that has been blighted by emigration over the years but this time the distances are much further. It is appalling when you see people who have scrimped and saved to put their kids through college and then, have to wave them off at airports as they leave for New Zealand, Australia and Canada. It is heartbreaking for parents. We have to do our best to create employment in the county and one way forward I see is our renewable energy resources which have tremendous potential if we can develop our wind and wave power."

## Tourism boost

Tourism provides a major boost for those involved in enterprise in Mayo and the phenomenal success of the Achill-Westport 42km long greenway is something Dara hopes to see extended right through the county.

"The success of the Greenway has shown what can be done with very little investment and the community coming together. Landowners along the way willingly gave of their land and deserve enormous credit. I don't think anyone expected it to be as big as it is. Fianna Fáil supported the Greenway from its infancy but then it was hijacked by other parties.

"We are hopeful now it will be extended right around the county, to include the North West

*"Unemployment is of course the biggest issue for Mayo. We are a county that has been blighted by emigration over the years but this time the distances are much further."*

road and the Ceide fields, and provide access to some undiscovered gems such as the Moyne Abbey monastery just outside Killala and the spectacular Rosserk Abbey on the Moy Estuary."

## Doorstep reaction to Fianna Fáil

On the face of it, Fianna Fáil is doing well in the polls right now, but on the doorsteps, are public representatives meeting faces just as welcoming?

"The reaction we are getting now is very different to what it was two years ago", says Dara. "It was so bad during the election I have to ask myself now, did that really happen? Thankfully, the hostility is gone - substantially so. It hasn't changed in regard to what support we are getting but people want to hear from us now and they are very questioning of us. They are looking for us to be part of the debate and to hear our solutions. We had a lot of feedback on our budget submission for instance.

"We have spent two years looking in at ourselves and now we must go out knocking on doors again and working with people on their issues. I am not saying people have brass bands waiting for us; they're not rolling out the red carpet either, but they do want to see us and so we have to get out there."

## 2013

Dara sees 2013 as an important year for the party and 2014 as even more important. "This is a big year for us. We are starting the process of selecting candidates for 2014 and are initiating the One Member One vote system, which should prove really interesting at the upcoming conventions and the Ard Fheis. There is huge policy demand on us also because we have to give people things we believe in. I am really enthused about it all and look forward to developing policy in my own special area of enterprise and job creation."

## Mayo politics

The big issue in Mayo politics at the moment is the abolishment of Town Councils, according to Dara. "This is a disaster, when you consider the great work local councillors have done over

(cont'd on page 21)...

# FOSTERING A LIVING LANGUAGE

People don't often feel relieved when they see election promises being broken, but that was certainly the case when Fine Gael went back on its promise to remove Irish from the core Leaving Cert curriculum. This cynical, populist move was met with unprecedented levels of opposition from the outset, and possibly to Fine Gael's surprise, the vast bulk of this came from young people. Standing on a cold January morning in protest outside Fine Gael HQ, just one of thousands, most of them still in the education system, united by a deep commitment to the Irish language, was my first introduction to political activism.

While we can happily add this to the unending list of broken election promises, it is not a closed matter. There is broad agreement on the necessity of reforms on how Irish is taught. Fianna Fáil initiated *Straitéis 20 Bliain na Gaeilge*, a strategy for the Irish language with the radical aim of increasing the number of daily Irish speakers to 250,000 in twenty years. It recommended dividing Irish into two subjects, one based on learning to speak, read and write Irish, and the other which would be open to those with a high standard of Irish which would focus around the wealth of Irish literature, poetry and folklore, much like the English course. Since Fianna Fáil left office there has been no indication of the implementation of its innovative proposals. The present government's record in terms of the Irish language is shabby; Last summer the government refused to allow proper debate on the *Gaeltacht Bill*, which abolished elections to *Údaráis na Gaeltachta*, prompting Fianna Fáil to lead opposition deputies out of the chamber in protest. When Dónal Ó Cnáimhsí, a gardener in Glenveagh National Park, spoke out against the bill on behalf of Guth na Gaeltachta, he received a letter from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht threatening to terminate his employment.

As a party, our history represents a deep commitment to the Irish language. "To restore and promote Irish as a living language of the people" is a central aim of Fianna Fáil as a movement. Fianna Fáil in 2011 was the only party to put forward credible policies regarding the teaching of Irish. Fianna Fáil has also actively supported TG4, Raidió na Gaeltachta, Radió na Life and Raidió Fáilte in Belfast. The presence of Irish in diverse media outlets has revolutionised its image. Irish is now driven by this vibrant, youthful community of people who, through some way or another, have discovered something that's worth holding on to. The notion that

young people hate the Irish language, or fail to see its value, is a hangover from the past, and it is fundamentally untrue. Fianna Fáil also secured Irish as a working EU language, improving employment prospects hugely for those with a qualification in Irish.

The Irish language should not be a politically divisive issue. The Gaelic League on its foundation received strong support from several unionist politicians who saw themselves just as culturally Irish as their Catholic nationalist neighbours. As we know, the concept of Irishness as a shared identity has all but evaporated in the North, however there is still hope for us, as republicans, that Irish cultural identity will not be determined by creed or political views; this August, for the first time ever, Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann will be held north of the border in Derry. Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Director, Senator Labhrás Ó Murchú, was instrumental in securing this bid. Ten years ago, who would have imagined that Peter Robinson and Martin McGuinness would co-sign a letter in support of Derry's bid to host the largest traditional Irish music and dance festival in the world? The Irish language is not the monopoly of any group, and should never be seen as such. Every man, woman and child on this island has an equal stake in the future of this language, and every opportunity should be given to them to help them claim it.

While some Leaving Cert students might fail to see the value in learning Irish, anybody who has learnt it themselves, including myself, will be adamant that it is something which will open up countless doors of opportunity. It is never a waste of time learning a new language, least of all the language of your own country. Generally, one of the largest obstacles is that people are afraid of speaking Irish in case they make mistakes. Fianna Fáil, as the republican party, has a huge role to play, both internally and externally, in giving everybody the opportunity to discover their national language and traditions; Cumainn can arrange Irish conversation groups, where members who wish to improve their Irish can help each other learn. Irish can play a greater role in party business, and assert itself as a living language of the party. The party could even produce a simple handbook with useful, day-to-day phrases which could be distributed to the public to promote *Seachtain na Gaeilge*. Fianna Fáil's commitment to the Irish language is a genuine one, rather than an appeal to a particular section of society. As a party, it remains a core belief that all Irish people should be enabled to claim their own piece of the cultural identity which binds us together as a nation.

Feidhlim Mac Roibin is a member of the party in Blessington, Wicklow and is also an active member of the Kiltel Geomhantas Group.

by Feidhlim Mac Róibín



# MODERNISING THE PARTY'S APPROACH TO ELECTORAL STRATEGY: FIANNA Fáil AND CAMPAIGN 2014

Stephen Quinlan and Conor McGarry examine some of the key tactical issues the party needs to address to ensure electoral success in 2014 and beyond.

In mid-May 2014, voters will go to the polls in the local and European elections, in what will be Fianna Fáil's first nationwide electoral battle since the historic landslide defeat of February 2011. Twelve months out from these contests provides a golden opportunity to members, candidates, and strategists to reflect on the party's current position and to consider the electoral strategy Fianna Fáil should adopt going forward.

Undoubtedly the party's position has been improving in recent months, with Figure 1 illustrating an upward trend in popular support. The figure tracks the level of support for parties since the 2011 general election, illustrating the trend using three period averages, with data from the series of RedC monthly polls. At the time of writing, Fianna Fáil is currently averaging a score in the low to mid 20s, a considerable improvement on the 17.4% of the vote won by the party in the 2011 general election. But while this recent movement upwards in popular support may provide some solace to party members, it is important to keep it in perspective. If this performance was borne out in a general election, it would still represent the party's second poorest election result. An additional concern is that support in the crucial electoral region of Dublin remains significantly lower than the party's national rating. And in terms of the forthcoming elections, Fianna Fáil is averaging just below the level of support the party achieved in the elections of 2009 (24%), an electoral drubbing, which foreshadowed the party's 2011 landslide defeat. In sum, with the levels of support at the time of writing, Fianna Fáil has a battle on its hands to maintain and increase its current levels of representation. And while the party's task at local level has been helped by the government's decision to allocate a greater number of seats to each electoral ward, seat gains on the current levels of support, particularly in urban areas, will be a monumental challenge for the party.

Fianna Fáil would also be well advised to learn from the experiences of other parties cross-nationally in terms of legacy. Take the recent US Presidential election. When voters in 2012 were asked who they held responsible for the economic difficulties that the US was facing, a majority blamed George W. Bush, and not the incumbent Barack Obama. This was in spite of Bush having left office in 2009. This feeling among the electorate

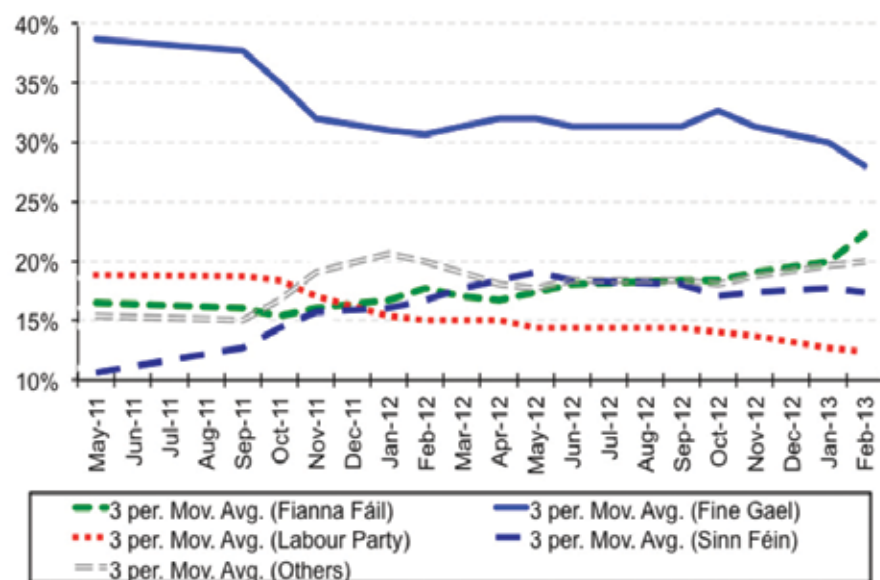


Figure 1

undoubtedly handicapped Republicans in 2012 and demonstrates that voters' have long memories and don't easily forget a party's past performance. In sum, the pre-2011 legacy is still likely to be a factor come 2014 for Fianna Fáil, notwithstanding voter disappointment with the current government. Considering the above circumstances, we outline below three propositions that the party needs to adopt to ensure long-term electoral success.

The first proposition, and perhaps the most difficult one for some party members to accept is the need for campaign professionalization at all levels of the organisation. By campaign professionalisation, we mean a greater

involvement by professional strategists and consultants in decision-making, ranging from how many candidates should contest to who the candidates should be. In practical terms, this means Party Headquarters having more involvement in all elements of election strategy. While campaign professionalization is nothing new, it has not been embraced by all Fianna Fáil members, and has in many cases led to serious divisions emerging between local activists and Party HQ, and the development of an "us" versus "them" mentality with respect to Mount Street.

We maintain however, that it is essential to look at the reasons why elections and campaigns

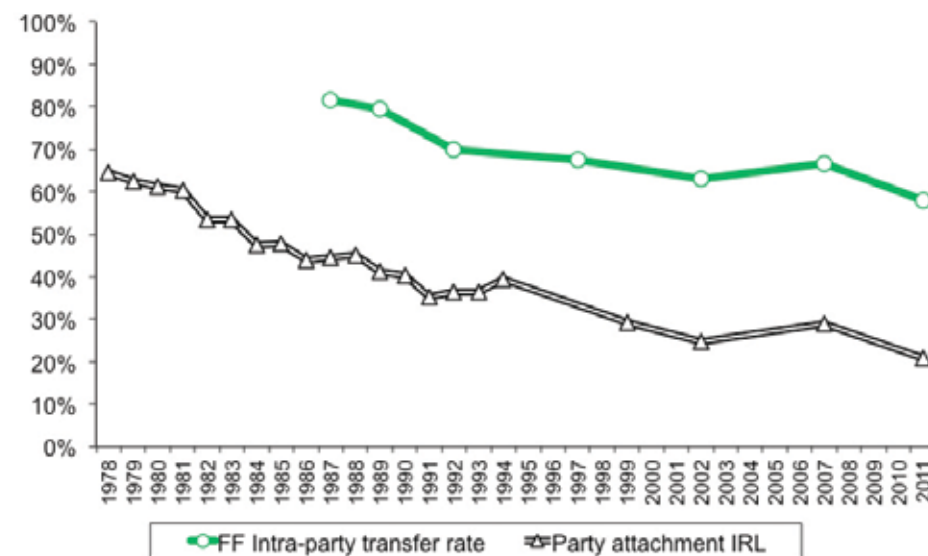


Figure 2

need to embrace professionalisation. Politics in the 21st century has evolved: today's electorate is particularly volatile, with Figure 2 illustrating that just over 1 in 5 voters today identify with a political party, a big shift from the past, where more voters were anchored to parties. Consequently, there are more swing voters than ever before and there is a need to embrace modern methods such as polling and focus groups to understand the needs, concerns, and wants of today's electorate. Professionalisation aids this.

Party activism has also changed: members today are unlikely to be as reflective of the general electorate as they once were. This development is not unique to Fianna Fáil but the key point from a strategic standpoint is that party members' judgements with respect to electoral strategy, however noble and well intentioned, may not actually reflect the optimal strategy for Fianna Fáil to take given today's electoral dynamic. This is not to suggest that professional politicians call decisions right all of the time. Merely, we argue that all levels of the organisation need to be cognisant of the reasons behind the adoption of a professionalisation and to resist the temptation to disengage and oppose all suggestions from Mount Street. Instead, local organisations need to be open to adopting new means of fighting elections and to work in conjunction with Party HQ to devise the optimal strategy for the party. This strategic approach is likely to produce the greatest dividend for Fianna Fáil in 2014 and beyond.

Our second proposition is that Fianna Fáil needs to ensure that its current internal structures are pre-eminent to fight elections. We argue the creation of a Party Chairperson, who would be responsible for party organisational matters, particularly all dimensions of electoral strategy would aid this. There are two key advantages to this idea. Firstly, it would allow the Party Leader and parliamentary party to focus on devising policy and fighting elections, rather than being preoccupied with internal strategic matters. Secondly, it would ensure that the party has an identifiable and qualified individual in place all year round whose sole responsibility and thinking would be geared towards election planning and strategy.

This proposition may at first appear radical to some members. But many European parties have similar structures in place where the Party Chair, as distinct from the Party Leader, is responsible for intra-party matters. There are many models Fianna Fáil could adopt, ranging from our sister party the FDP in Germany to the Democratic Party's leadership structure in the United States. And while space permits us from evaluating each of these systems, they

*Today's electorate is more volatile and the party needs to be more strategic to take account of this. Running too many candidates has perils attached to it:*

key point is that we maintain Fianna Fáil's capacity to fight elections cohesively would be strengthened by the creation of this position.

Our third proposition, and perhaps the most controversial is the pressing need for the party to adopt appropriate candidate selection strategies. There are two dimensions to this: how many and who? These two questions are related but the "how many" is perhaps the most vexing facing the party nationwide. Returning to Figure 2 above illustrates why. We have already drawn readers' attention to the fact that Fianna Fáil and other parties today cannot rely on the wealth of diehard supporters it once had, as the number of citizens expressing a solid preference for one party over another has declined and now stands at just 21%. Consequently, today's electorate is more volatile and the party needs to be more strategic to take account of this. Running too many candidates has perils attached to it: the party vote has potential to split unfavourably and result in votes being wasted. Consequently, candidates are less competitive on the first count. Research has shown that it is crucial for candidates to be successful that they occupy a winning position after the first count. Running too many candidates can put this into jeopardy. Running too many candidates also can result in a resource drain, with canvassers and finance being wasted on non competitive candidates. Add to this, Figure 2 reveals that the level of transfers between Fianna Fáil candidates in national elections has been on steadily declining, reaching an all-time low of 58% in 2011. Linking this to candidate selection is that votes for Fianna Fáil do not always come back to Fianna Fáil. Taking all of the above observations together brings the issue of the number of candidates Fianna Fáil should run into sharp focus. In 2009 and 2011, the party ran too many candidates and it needs to avoid making this mistake again.

After extensive research examining the party's candidate selection strategy in 2011 conducted in conjunction with fellow party members Patrick Hynes and Pat Joyce, we argue that the crucial criteria in determining the number of candidates in elections should

be the expected first preference vote in the ward/constituency/region and the number of seats available in the ward/constituency. All other considerations such as geography and transfers are secondary and should only come into play if there is convincing evidence to support them. We contend by applying these indicators offers Fianna Fáil the best options in terms of determining the numbers of candidates it runs.

Many members will challenge our model, arguing that geography in certain cases will necessitate the addition of an additional candidate on the ticket in order to "hoover up votes", even if the party's expected vote share does not justify it. We maintain that empirical evidence demonstrating that geography matters in determining the number of candidates is slim and that if this factor is to come into play, compelling evidence will be necessary to justify it. This is not to say that geography is unimportant in candidate selection: rather it is more important in determining the who, rather than how many.

We contend that there must be sound evidential basis for including multiple candidates on a ticket. We also challenge the idea that incumbency alone dictates the necessity of a multiple candidate strategy and that the number of candidates to run in a ward/constituency should be on the basis of solid evidence and that two metrics, the expected first preference vote in the ward/constituency/region and the number of seats available in the ward/constituency provide the soundest strategy for the party to adopt.

Campaign 2014 represents a crucial contest for Fianna Fáil as it offers the first nationwide test of the party's popularity since the 2011 landslide defeat. While recent opinion polls suggest a swing towards the party, we argue that the Party has much to do to experience a return to electoral triumphs of the past. Here, we have advocated a modernist approach needs to be taken by the party to ensure the best electoral return and have put forward three propositions with respect to electoral strategy that the party should consider namely: an embrace of campaign professionalization at all levels of the organisation, the creation of a Party Chair to oversee electoral strategy, and the adoption of appropriate candidate selection strategies. Taking on board these suggestions will greatly enhance the party's potential of electoral success going forward.

*Dr. Stephen Quinlan is a Research Fellow at the University of Strathclyde's School of Government. Conor McGarry works in online business marketing in Dublin and is also Chairperson of Sallins Fianna Fáil.*



# SOCIAL MEDIA: FRIEND OR FOE?

There has been a lot of discussion lately about Social Media. Most of the tone of the discussion has been to demonise this form of media. It would seem that the people who are on the negative side of this debate are also part of the demographic that engage least with social media. It is apparent that most of the concerns that emanate from the negative attitude towards Social Media stem from a fear of the unknown, not to mention a lack of engagement backed up by an unwillingness to educate themselves about the pros and cons of this medium.

The two Social Media sites that are most used by our members are Twitter and Facebook. Both sites are very valuable tools of communication for party members to engage with. On Facebook there are over seventy pages now by local units as well as numerous individual member pages. These pages are a great way of keeping members informed of the local activities of local Reps, Cllrs and the issues being dealt with on the ground.

*When someone posts a tweet it can then be retweeted and, in a matter of minutes, a message can be seen by thousands*

As the local elections come ever closer, the use of these sites will be an addition to the traditional campaign methods. If any local unit wishes to establish a presence on Facebook they could contact D.J. Moore who gave an excellent presentation to the Naas Cumann on engagement with Facebook.

Cyber bullying has become a huge topic in the debate on the benefits of Social Media and has been linked with causing severe stress on those involved in politics, both in high profile positions and in local organisations. While this is obviously a subject that needs to be pursued and dealt with accordingly, it is technically misleading to suggest that Social Media is a cause of bullying. People intent on causing harm will find any avenue to do so. Social Media doesn't bully people, people bully people.

It is the responsibility of everyone who writes on



Social media websites are changing politics.

any Social Media site to do so in a constructive, non-abusive manner. By all means people should be encouraged to debate and back up their positions with facts and links.

While engaging always remember even though you have a personal account you are representing the party as a party member so refrain from posting anything that could bring you or the party into conflict.

In regards to the anonymity of a Twitter or Facebook account, no one is totally anonymous. Your I.P. address can be tracked as opposed to the more traditional methods of written word and telephone, which were totally anonymous.

Another way of protecting yourself on Facebook is to set up a business page instead of a personal page. The advantages of these pages are that you can have administrators who have access to posts on a page, whereas a visitor may only be able to visit the page and like the links.

The Fianna Fáil discussion group on Facebook is a great example of how a group page can work properly. It has over nine hundred members and debates issues regularly. The group is managed by a team of administrators who oversee the running of the page. There is a list of rules on the page that members are encouraged to read and abide by, in turn,

a member can only be added by an existing member thus maintaining the security of the page.

Twitter has become very popular over its last two years and there are numerous members on Twitter. Recently more of our elected representatives have joined Twitter, including our leader Micheál Martin. Like Facebook, Twitter is a good communication tool and has to be utilised to its full potential. Many of our elected reps use it to update people of clinics and vital issues in their area.

When someone posts a tweet it can then be retweeted and, in a matter of minutes, a message can be seen by thousands. The same basic principles as discussed above; regarding how users of Facebook should conduct themselves, apply when using Twitter. Like any form of engaging with the public, Social Media comes with its dangers but its potential and its positives far outway its dangers. It is here to stay so the best way of ensuring it as a safe medium is to engage and understand its workings.

By Mark Power

Mark Power is an administrator of the Fianna Fáil FaceBook group and also of the Cuisle FaceBook page as well as being a stalwart of the local organization in Meath West and in Navan Comhairle Ceantair.

# FIANNA FÁIL ONE YEAR ON STILL FEELS LIKE THE RIGHT DECISION

It may sound politically incorrect, in a sense, but from my point of view as someone who has worked in the media for the past 20 years, I have never had more fun than that I have enjoyed since joining Fianna Fáil.

This happened in September 2011, following endless deliberation, added to by mounting desperation, following the near annihilation of the party in the February 2011 General Election.

While 'coming out', so to speak, initially triggered a certain anxiety (brought on by concern for having ceded my neutral status that had acted as a safeguard for so long), soon afterwards I felt free in a way I had never felt before. Becoming a member of the party provided me with a concrete connection to something I had long identified with, but never dared publicly acknowledge.

Over a year on from having nailed my colours to the mast I have capitalised on the privileges that go with being a paid-up member of Fianna Fáil. This has included attendances at regular Westport Fianna Fáil Cumann meetings, Westport Comhairle Ceantair/Mayo Comhairle Dail Ceantair meetings, the powerful Fianna Fáil Education Conference in Galway during summer 2012, the Fianna Fáil national church gate collection, the President's Ball in the plush surroundings of the Burlington Hotel and of course, top of the bill, the 73rd Ard Fheis staged with such panache in the RDS during last March.

My very first Fianna Fáil meeting had party leader Micheal Martin as guest speaker, as part of his countrywide 'reconnecting with the grassroots' tour. Our Comhairle Dail Ceantair meeting in Mayo was well attended, with over 300 delegates travelling from all around the county. Along with many others on the night, I took the microphone at one stage to make my own small contribution to the renewal discussion.

I suppose I was both starstruck and nervous chipping in my tuppence worth in such a public forum but it was part of a pact I made with myself to say something at every meeting. A few months later it had become second nature to just speak up when it seemed relevant to make a point. Consequently, I feel it is very important that all members are encouraged to contribute as much as possible at meetings, both to help generate healthy debate but also to enhance members' self-confidence and public speaking abilities.

Back to the fun part - probably what turned my



Mayo Fianna Fáil TD, Dara Calleary, pictured with Joan Geraghty at the launch of her book, 'Fit For Success'. Photo: Michael McLaughlin.

early fears to quite quickly feeling 'at home' in Fianna Fáil, were the people in the party. Members of our local cumann - certain elderly ones in particular - kindly took me under their wings and welcomed me into the fold. It meant the world to be readily accepted in this way. Over time these relationships continue to grow and have helped enormously in widening my circle of new friends and colleagues within Fianna Fáil.

Being a journalist and now secretary of the Westport Cumann means I sometimes can't resist taking down most every word said at meetings. Reading these verbatim 'minutes' aloud makes for some interesting times at subsequent meetings and is fodder for some of the 'fun' element that prevails afterwards. The various little spats and confrontations that naturally arise between genuine members for whom Fianna Fáil is their true cause, also make for some terrific moments, high on emotion.

This new experience has taught me a whole lot about Fianna Fáil that I could never have learned on the outside. It has taught me that instead of Fianna Fáil now being deemed 'a party people love to hate', there remains tremendous love and loyalty for Fianna Fáil. Past mistakes may sadly have disillusioned some good people to the point of walking away, but those who

have stayed, the burgeoning Ógra element and new people like myself who have signed up to Fianna Fáil, only see solidity and re-growth taking shape.

Fianna Fáil therefore deserves congratulations for the contained manner in which it is managing its fall from grace and gradual return to public acceptance. Most of all it deserves to be reminded of what is so great about the party in the first place and the privileges it confers on a member.

Fianna Fáil remains a strong political force but is also a fine family with a future to protect, whose richest resource lies in the wisdom, loyalty and continuing support of the older grassroots members in the party.

Joan Geraghty is author of 'Anyone Can Run' and 'Fit For Success' and is currently studying for a diploma in Social Gerontology, examining public policy on ageing in Ireland, at NUI Galway. Joan is secretary of Westport Fianna Fáil Cumann, joint PRO of Mayo Comhairle Dail Ceantair and newly appointed Local Area Representative for Westport.

Written by Joan Geraghty



# 90 years on THE CIVIL WAR CONSIDERED

As Fianna Fáil – The Republican Party meet under Uachtarán Fhianna Fáil Micheál Martin, the leader of Irish Republicanism, for our 74ú Ard Fheis it is appropriate to consider the tragedy of the Civil War and its causes on its 90th anniversary.

## Origins of Fianna Fáil are in the Civil War

The significance of the Civil War must be of particular importance for Fianna Fáil, as it is from opposition to the Treaty settlement and the Civil War that Fianna Fáil came. Apart from the origins of Fianna Fáil, many cumainn are named for participants in the Civil War. The fact that Irish politics is not divided between ‘Left’ and ‘Right’ but by the divisions of the Civil War; that Fianna Fáil has never countenanced coalition with Fine Gael, nor them with us: are examples of the enduring legacy of Civil War politics. The Civil War is the defining epoch of Irish politics even to this day.

## Catastrophe of Civil War & Division of Irish Republicanism

The Civil War was a tragic period for Irish Republicans and must rank amongst the saddest episodes in the history of the Irish nation. Existing divisions within the united Sinn Féin Party of 1917-1921 were opened to bloody consequence, dividing Irish Republicans as successfully as the nation had already been divided through partition. The result on both counts was a weaker Ireland: geopolitically and economically. For Ireland, the Civil War must be seen as a catastrophe: one not caused by Republicans, nor whole heartedly entered into by our Fianna Fáil forbearers.

## Republican Perspective on Origins of the Civil War

To many the cause of the Civil War was the Treaty settlement negotiated and signed under the duress of the British threat of ‘terrible and immediate war’ in London on 6th December 1921, in breach of the Irish government instruction that no agreement should be made without first seeking the consent of the Cabinet in Dublin. It should be noted that the opening shots were not fired until 28th June, 1922, with the Pro-Treaty Provisional Government bombardment of the Four Courts.

Civil War was the culmination of a number of events and not just the signing of the Treaty. With the passing of the Treaty, the Provisional Government was established as an instrument for drafting a Free State constitution and expatiating the delegation of limited British authority to the proposed Free State, with British troops vacating barracks, withdrawing back to the Treaty Ports bases and to the Northeast.

The British threat of terrible and immediate war did not end with the signing of the Treaty but persisted through 1922. Despite their differences, by mid-May, 1922 Éamon de Valera and Michael Collins agreed a pact to fight united the June, 1922 election, in what historians call the Pact Election, and form a united Sinn Féin government following the election, should they win a majority. The panel of united Sinn Féin candidates to contest the June 16th general election was based on the existing pro-Treaty and anti-Treaty Dáil Éireann ratio of representation with less anti-Treaty candidates standing as against more pro-Treaty candidates.

The British response was to suspend the evacuation of British troops from the 26-counties and stop further supplies, including arms, to the Provisional Government. Just two days before voting Michael Collins repudiated the pact. The Free State Constitution, now an embarrassment to the new Provisional Government, had been much redrafted by British officials to expunge any republican elements, appeared in newspapers on the morning of the polls, with most of the electorate outside Dublin not having sight of it prior to voting. In the Pact general election of June 16th, 1922 the turnout was dramatically reduced at 45.5% from the 71.2% in the December, 1918 general election, or 61.2% in the August, 1923 general election. The electoral turnout did not return to the high levels of 1918 until the February, 1932 general election when 76.5% of the electorate turned out or January, 1933 when the electorate turnout reached the high of 81.30%. Of the 124 united Sinn Féin panel candidates the Pro-Treaty Sinn Féin won 58 seats and the Anti-Treaty Sinn Féin won only 36 seats.

The result of the Pact general election can be interpreted in a number of ways, the most common being that the electorate voted overwhelmingly for the Treaty settlement. Other interpretations include John A. Murphy’s conclusion that “in the midst of the political crisis the electorate was expressing its interest in social and economic issues” or that as the election was fought substantially on the basis of the united Sinn Féin pact, the better interpretation would be to interpret the vote as a vote for the united Sinn Féin pact and the envisaged coalition government of Pro and Anti-Treaty Sinn Féin, so not as a straight vote for or against the Treaty. With a low turnout of 45.5% it is clear that the electorate was perplexed and certainly the anti-Treaty Sinn Féin failed to get its vote out. With the benefit of hindsight: was it the future Cumann na nGaedheal electorate of the conservative establishment that came out to vote; with the greater sway of working class voters either

being split between the Labour Party, which emphasised class interests such as social and economic issues, and Anti-Treaty Sinn Féin, with a majority of the electorate abstaining all together? It is of significance that from 1922 the electoral fortunes of anti-Treaty republicans improved at the expense of the Labour Party and with an ever increasing turnout.

In the intervening months since the Treaty vote, Pro and Anti-Treaty forces had a complex relationship. They had been involved in a series of stand offs, notably at Limerick in February/March; Sligo in April and the occupation of the Four Courts from the 13th April, 1922; but also during the second and third weeks of June, 1922 arms were exchanged between the Provisional Government forces and the Anti-Treaty Four Courts garrison so as to equip IRA Divisions in the North with untraceable weapons.

The renouncing of the electoral pact within Sinn Féin by Michael Collins, and the consequential rejection of coalition government, together with the monarchical Free State constitution broke any possibility of common ground being made between the principal Pro and Anti-Treaty political factions and allowed the militarists on each side to take the initiative in leadership.

*Malachai Duddy BA (Hon) (Dubl.)  
Chumann FF Seán Lemass, Brí Chualann, Co. Chill Mhantáin*



## 90th Anniversary of the Murder of Captain Noel Lemass Ó. na hÉ.

1916 GPO veteran, War of Independence combatant, brother to Taoiseach Seán Lemass.

The murder of Noel Lemass took place outside the rule of law and outside the hostilities of the Civil War. Abducted from Drury Street, Dublin in July, 1923, two months after the ending of the Civil War, his dismembered remains were found at the Featherbed Mountains on the Dublin-Wicklow border near Glencree on the 13th October, 1923. Captain Lemass could only be identified by his clothing and spectacles, being in an advanced state of decomposition, his head was found decapitated from his body with evidence that his fingernails had been pulled out, having suffered torture.

# NEW POLITICS MUST EMPOWER COMMUNITIES

This year has seen some good progress in the renewal of our republican movement. However, there remains - to paraphrase our leader, Micheal Martin - a hard, and long road ahead.

To rebuild trust with our fellow citizens and construct a robust and relevant political party, we must focus on developing a society based on communities of citizens empowered to direct their own affairs.

While recent opinion polls show some welcome improvement in our party’s standing, they also point to some worrying trends.

For instance, over a third of the electorate polled offered no preference for any political party or Independent candidate, which suggests a general deep despair with current politics and its power to change lives for the better.

At Fianna Fáil’s core lies a belief that political power must reside in a people who are truly free to decide their own future. True republicanism represents a people not imprisoned or divided by simplistic ideologies of left and right; exaggerated divides of religion, class, gender, sexual preference or the latest media-fuelled social divide such as public sector versus private sector.

Our goal should not be to exploit differences for narrow political gain, but to create a public space for dialogue to occur, allowing all of our people to engage on an equal basis to achieve mutually acceptable solutions.

Fianna Fáil members are diverse but united One of the key characteristics of the Fianna Fáil party is the diversity of viewpoints held by members. Some regard themselves as right, left, conservative, liberal, while others are moderate and centrist. However, all share one common view – which is - that together, we are stronger; that no problem is beyond resolution once honest dialogue, compromise and varying arguments are allowed a hearing.

The economic crisis has resulted in many

*At Fianna Fáil’s core lies a belief that political power must reside in a people who are truly free to decide their own future... Our goal should not be to exploit differences for narrow political gain*

western nations feeling increasingly powerless amidst global markets and bureaucracy. It is sad to note therefore that this Government seems determined to centralise political power and governance in our republic.

The local government reform programme entitled “Putting People First” - proposes the abolishment of the Seanad and all Town Councils and the merging of some County Councils. It is promoted as bold reform for the purpose of reducing the high costs of a bloated public service, but instead represents a new low in politics.

While there is general agreement that our public services need to be delivered more efficiently, these short-sighted proposals to abolish local government bodies are destined to centralise political power in the hands of a few, highly paid civil servants and the political parties that control council chambers.

Our communities and the citizens in them will be excluded even further from the public policy process as a result of these measures. At a time when over a third of our citizens are expressing despair about our political process, it is dangerous in the extreme to over-centralise power. Anyone who cares about our republic must oppose these measures, tooth and nail. Republicanism empowers all citizens and all communities – unlike this government which seems intent on empowering only the elite.

*John Mullen is Chair of South Wicklow Fianna Fáil Comhairle Ceantair*

# THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

The centenary of the 1916 Rising is fast approaching. In this context as part of the party’s on-going renewal process we need to reaffirm our nationalist origins. For decades Fianna Fáil was the undisputed voice of Irish nationalism, however in recent years others have tried to steal our clothes. Likewise the revisionist versions of history being put forward by some, as seen in the recent TV3 documentary is trying to sully the good name of those who provided the catalyst for our party’s foundation.

It is now more important than ever for Fianna Fáil to honour our fallen heroes from the War of Independence, Easter Rising and the many rebellions that preceded those along with marking the anniversaries of our great battles on the road to freedom like Crossbarry and Kilmichael.

I’m writing this piece having just returned home from the Crossbarry Ambush commemoration where the oration was expertly delivered by Senator Mark Daly. Over the last while very few of those who gave the oration at Crossbarry were from the Fianna Fáil family (a similar pattern has occurred in other places) so it was great to see one of our own. Outside of having an FF man give the oration there was a strong FF presence in attendance from throughout Munster outnumbering those from those all other parties. The fact that the crowd had braved atrocious weather conditions showed how much commemorating our fallen heroes and great nationalist victories means to the Fianna Fáil grassroots members unlike the sunshine nationalists of other parties.

Elsewhere today the oration at the General Liam Lynch Commemoration in Newcastle, Co. Tipperary was given by our party leader, Micheál Martin where he spoke on the topic of modern republicanism. This modern republicanism is something that should be close to all our hearts and central to our philosophy as a national movement. The first aim of the party as outlined in the coru is “to secure in peace and agreement the unity of Ireland and its people” While pursuing our other priorities as a renewed party we need to keep this constitutional republicanism front and centre.

It’s vital as a party we celebrate our history and embrace it fully. Men like Tom Barry whose flying column were victorious at Crossbarry and General Liam Lynch are the giants on whose shoulders our party stands. At every available opportunity we need to mark this proud history and never again should we let others try to claim a place that continues to rightly belong to the one true republican party in Ireland – Fianna Fáil.

*by Ken Curtin, secretary of the Cobh Cumann*



# ENDING COMPULSORY RETIREMENT

Fianna Fáil has undertaken a long term commitment to protection of the elderly which is currently an important component of party policy.

As a spokesperson for older people, Fianna Fáil Senator Mary White has taken the lead on ending compulsory retirement in the workplace giving older people choice and flexibility in respect of when they should retire.

The Senator has been an advocate for equality and fairness in our society towards the growing older population for many years and believes compulsory retirement is one of the single most important issues facing older people today.

“Why should able bodied people who have full mental and physical capacity be required to face compulsory retirement at the age of 65? Many people in their 60’s 70’s and even older are now well able to continue working if they wish to do so as it has been proven that people are living longer and their long term health is improving,” says Senator White.

With the encouragement of Uachtarán Fhianna Fáil, Micheal Martin TD, Senator White drafted the policy document “Active Ageing and Quality Caring” which was approved by Fianna Fáil and published in June of 2012 as an official party policy document.

Through this document Senator White proposed the introduction of the Employment Equality (Amendment) (No 2) Bill 2012 to ensure that people cannot be discriminated against in the workplace on grounds of age.

These strong words were swiftly followed by action as Senator White introduced the Employment Equality (Amendment) (No 2) Bill 2012 in Seanad Éireann on the 21st of November 2012.

“We have legislation in place to ensure people are not discriminated against in the workplace with regards to ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation so why are we discriminating against older age? I firmly believe that people must be given choice and flexibility when making the decision to enter retirement or not.

The law should facilitate those people by prohibiting discrimination based on age. If a proposal was advanced prohibiting any person from being a member of the Houses of the Oireachtas if they were over 65 years of age it would be rejected by both houses.”



Senator Mary White and Senator Hilary Clinton

*“Why should able bodied people who have full mental and physical capacity be required to face compulsory retirement at the age of 65? Many people in their 60’s 70’s and even older are now well able to continue working if they wish to do so*

The second stage of the Employment Equality (Amendment) (No 2) Bill 2012 was debated in the Seanad chamber for over 2 hours on the night of the 21st of November 2012 and received widespread support from members of all parties.

The Bill was seconded by Senator John Crown who described Senator White’s ‘visionary proposal’ as ‘critically important legislation’.

“The time has come to examine mandatory retirement in public service. It is unfair that somebody who is still contributing and has not reached a milestone of infirmity or failed a test of ability is denied the right to work. It is inequitable,” explained Senator Crown.

A strong argument against the abolition of mandatory retirement is that it may prevent younger people from gaining employment.

Senator White has unequivocally rejected that argument believing that it is unfounded maintaining that a similar argument was put forward in the 1930’s when the marriage ban for women was introduced.

“Women were told when they got married that ‘you can’t have your jobs back because you are taking jobs from men’. It was a nonsense argument then and it is a nonsense argument now,” says Senator White.

Fianna Fáil Senator Labhrás Ó Murchú agreed by stating in the chamber, “It is interesting to note that people of an older age encourage young people to do things, whether in organisations or communities. How often does somebody stand up and say a young person is needed? We must hear that from the other side as well”.

Senator White has long argued that forcing people to retire at the age of 65 creates a “brain drain” of experience, judgement and expertise from public and private organisations.

This stance was strongly backed by Senator Fergal Quinn on the night of the Bill’s introduction, “There is a huge value in appreciating the skills, ability and talent of older people, as well as in the way they can pass on these qualities to the next generation.

It is a win not only for the person who has reached the age of 65 but also the employer, be it the state or an entrepreneurial business.”

The Bill was taken on behalf of the Government by Minister for Justice and Equality, Alan Shatter TD who shared Senator White’s concern “that we facilitate the active participation of older workers in the labour market that benefits society as a whole.

Many in their 60’s and 70’s have the alacrity and mental capacity to make a continuing and substantial contribution to their lives and those of others and to remain in the workforce and be innovative,” concluded Minister Shatter.

Senator White did not seek a vote on the Bill at this stage so that it remains on the legislative agenda of Seanad Éireann.

*by Laurence McCormack, parliamentary assistant to Senator Mary White*

# SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING MUST BE STOPPED

As a Republican party which places citizenship at its heart, I believe that slavery is anathema to citizenship and thus to Fianna Fáil.

American President Barack Obama and US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, have repeatedly stated that human trafficking is modern-day slavery. Unfortunately, slavery is a reality in Ireland. The publicly accessible US Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report 2012 states that “Ireland is a destination, source, and transit country for women, men, and children subjected to sex trafficking”.

The report goes on to name ‘Kilkenny, Cork, and Dublin’ as places where children are exploited for prostitution. Indeed figures from the Department of Justice, Defence and Equality reveal that of the 129 victims of slavery identified in Ireland over the past two years, some are indeed children, among them, Irish children.

## What is human trafficking?

In simple terms human trafficking is the use of force, deception or coercion to make persons available for exploitation. While violence is at the heart of human trafficking, the various tools traffickers employ include deception, indebtedness, psychological abuse, physical abuse, substance abuse, threats against the person and/or the person’s family and rape. When one looks past these individual acts of violence, true, cold-hearted manipulation becomes apparent. This is the process by which slaves are made.

Many myths surround slavery. The image of a victim who has been kidnapped and shackled to a bed in a darkened room anxiously

anticipating some impending exploitation is a potent and compelling one. This need not however reflect reality. Such is the level of control maintained by traffickers over their victims that those who are trafficked are not hidden from sight, but rather hidden in plain sight.

This point is significant, for it illustrates the financial impetus that motivates most human trafficking activities. If a trafficker is going to sell his or her wares, then he or she also needs to advertise them to as wide an audience as possible. Once victims of traffickers move from citizen to slave, from human being to commodity, their transition is in hand and the process can then be completed.

In the Western World this form of exploitation and slavery commonly manifests in the form of forced commercial sexual exploitation, catering to customers looking to buy sex. Pimps and traffickers realise that as victims of human trafficking are paid little, if anything at all, the profit derived from their use as sex slaves or ‘prostitutes’, makes the practice extremely lucrative.

A national campaign, entitled ‘Turn Off The Red Light’, is now focused on criminalising the purchase of sex. Formed through an alliance of more than 60 civil society organisations, the campaign has to date enjoyed immense support and considerable success. Already, the initial phase of a review of prostitution legislation by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality, has concluded. The second phase will commence shortly and in the coming months, the report of the committee will be issued.

## Turn Off the Red Light

As citizens we all have a voice and we can

choose to use our voice to denounce slavery. The ‘Take Action’ section of the ‘Turn Off The Red Light’ campaign website, for example, allows each and every one of us to add our voice to calls for legislative change.

I am profoundly grateful to Uachtarán Fhianna Fáil Micheál Martin TD for the support he has given to this matter, especially for his assistance in unravelling, for the very first time, details of how Irish persons have themselves been exploited abroad.

I am also grateful for Fianna Fáil’s submission to the consultative process of the Joint Committee, which arose from our party leader’s support.

I hope that in the coming months we will, as a party, strengthen our resolve to eradicate slavery from our society; that anti-slavery measures will be a strong policy item for our party, and that as part of our commitment to republican citizenship, we shall all offer our voices to the cause of campaigning for those who have none.

David Lohan is Secretary of the Fianna Fáil Charles Daly Cumann and co-author of a book on human trafficking: Open Secrets: An Irish Perspective on Trafficking & Witchcraft. He has recently completed a Masters in Politics at University College Cork and works, in a voluntary capacity, with Cois Tine, a charitable organisation which provides outreach services to African migrants living in Ireland.

More information on human trafficking is available from his website: [www. PalermoProtocol.com](http://www.PalermoProtocol.com).

*By David Lohan*

*...(cont’d from page 13) THE NEXT 18 MONTHS ARE KEY - DARA CALLEARY, MAYO FIANNA FÁIL*

the years in towns like Ballina, Castlebar and Westport. We are now going to lose all of that energy and effort and in Mayo we will be talking about a much broader council area, down from six electoral areas and three town councils, to just four electoral areas. There is all sorts of speculation about how towns will fare on this. I am a great believer in dealing with it when it happens. I think there is a case for councils like Westport of Kinsale to be saved. Why throw the baby out with the bathwater? Why not just bring councils up to date instead?”

## Political life

Dara has no regrets or doubts about following his Dad, former Fianna Fáil TD, Sean Calleary, into politics and is in it for the long haul.

“I love being able to help people around the county through my party. It’s wonderful to be able to represent the country abroad and work on issues that affect us. The best part is helping people work through the maze that is the system. You shouldn’t have to do it but that is life. People need help figuring out how things work and we are there to help them do so.”

## Aspiring politicians

For aspiring politicians, Dara has the following words of advice: “Throw yourself at it. Don’t hold back. Don’t listen to people who say you can’t do it or who talk you down. If you think it is for you, go for it. “To young people I would say, get involved in Ógra. Sign up for the organisation and go for some officer positions.

Put your head over the parapet. I have made some of my best friends through the party over 20 years and my involvement with Ógra. “Most of all, enjoy it. It’s not all research and debates. It’s fun as well.

I think we are in a really interesting time. There are so many opportunities in the party now that weren’t there before. The day of ‘them and us’ - headquarters and us, is gone. We are getting a chance to recast the party for the 21st century. Everybody gets a stake in it. It’s not going to be about a top down effort, but a collective effort. Here’s to the next 18 months!”

*by Joan Geraghty*



# PHOTOS





# BRIAN LENIHAN – AN APPRECIATION

The General Election 1966 was the first time I had the pleasure of meeting the late Brian Lenihan's father Brian – Brian with the black wavy hair.

Brian was then T.D. for Roscommon and he was canvassing in the Cootehall Parish. I can still remember him walking up the avenue and into the hayfield where Dad and I were making hay. Needless to say I had no vote and Brian was 100% certain of No. 1 from Dad.

In the 1973 general election Brian lost his seat in Roscommon but I renewed my acquaintance with him again a few years later, when we both found ourselves in the constituency of Dublin West which then ran from Castleknock to Clane. Brian was the lead man on the Fianna Fáil ticket and I had the joy of being totally involved in that Election campaign.

It was during that Election I first met Brian Óg – he stood out from the crowd – he was a leader. We fought many other General Elections with success, up to and including the General Election 1989, when Brian (senior) was in the U.S. for his transplant operation and Brian Óg took over the running of the campaign – here he showed his brilliance, his vision, his ability and his skill as a politician. The meetings in the front room in Castleknock every morning were a joy to attend – where Brian Óg's leadership shone like a beacon from on high.

Sadly Brian (senior) died in 1995 but Brian Óg was the unanimous choice for the Bye-Election 1996 – which he then won with flying colours.

Suddenly Brian Óg became Brian Lenihan – the leader.

## Days in Athlone.

Brian was brought up in Dublin and Athlone where his extended family were involved in the Hodson Bay Hotel. Brian and the Lenihan family are highly respected in the town today and will be for a long time to come.

Brian attended the local national school. Mary O'Rourke, his aunt, confirms that she taught him Latin and his grandmother taught him French – even at that early age Brian showed he was always a step ahead.

After he finished his Leaving Certificate in Belvedere College, Brian qualified with first class honours in Law from Trinity College, and he then qualified with distinction, as a Barrister from Kings Inns, in 1984.

*After he finished his Leaving Certificate in Belvedere College, Brian qualified with first class honours in Law from Trinity College, and he then qualified with distinction, as a Barrister from Kings Inns, in 1984.*

He married Ms. Patricia Ryan in 1986, a fellow barrister and a lady of immense quality and character. Patricia and Brian set up home in the constituency and were blessed with two beautiful children.

Brian's political career moved swiftly, from Chairman of the Constitutional Committee to Minister for Children and in 2007 he was

appointed Minister of Justice, where he served with distinction. In 2008 he took over as Minister of Finance, where he had to deal with what was the worst national and international financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Brian was a wonderful person. Brian was a very humble person. Brian was a great husband and father. Brian was a dedicated Fianna Fáil man who always put the country first. Brian would have been a wonderful leader and Taoiseach.

To his wife, Patricia, son, daughter and extended family, we express our sincere condolences.

Ta mo chara imithe.  
Ar Dheis de go raibh a hanam dilis.

Michael McGreevy  
Leixlip & Roscommon



Brian Lenihan, 1959 - 2011.

# BACK FROM THE BRINK

Back in April 2011 the possibility of Fianna Fáil seeing its poll ratings even just break through the 20% barrier seemed like a pipe dream. But more than that, it was one that you dared not talk about in public in case people might question 1: Your political judgement or 2: Your grip on reality.

Yet, barely two years on, our party's support heading into the mid 20s and we have confounded the pundits with two better than anticipated by-election performances in Dublin West and Meath East.

Back in 2011 things looked a lot darker. There had been a number of occasions between late 2008 and early 2011, as support plummeted, where we thought: it cannot fall any further. Yet it did.

Two years on from what I described in an Evening Herald column as our electoral "punishment beating" our main achievement is not the increase in the polls, but rather the halt in the party's decline achieved in the months following the February 2011 defeat.

*Two years on from what I described in an Evening Herald column as our electoral "punishment beating" our main achievement is not the increase in the polls, but rather the halt in the party's decline achieved in the months following the February 2011 defeat.*

That was the critical point. It was when the party's future was most at risk. Remember those political pundits who advised that the only future lay in lurching to the right or trying to outflank the Shinners on euro-scepticism?

That was when we faced the key test for a venerable and established political party: its ability to adapt and respond effectively to change. The alternative was stark: descend into factionalism and fade slowly into oblivion.

By the time of last year's Árd Fheis the party had determined that its future lay in change: real change. The decision to invite Prof Tim Bale to address the Árd Fheis was both timely and inspired. His presentation, based on his research into the Tories 13 years in the wilderness, listed the 12 key lessons points a party in our position needs to learn. The first two are:

- 1: Fully understand the scale of the defeat and
- 2: Not to underestimate your opponents.

Yet they are two lessons large established parties find it hardest to grasp. Having represented the political centre of gravity for so long it is hard to grasp that it has moved away and that you need to regain its trust.

This was not just true of the Tories, but of other big political parties who have lost and recovered: from the British Labour Party to the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

The temptation is to believe that your rejection is just a temporary phenomenon: that your former voters have just been misled by siren voices from the opposition and will return to the fold when the weaknesses and failings of the other crowd are exposed.

This was the mistake the Tories made about New Labour under Tony Blair and, conversely the mistake that Old Labour made about Thatcher. Both seriously underestimated their opposition and considerably overestimated their apparent entitlement to govern.

But there is another point on Prof Bale's list. It is number 12: Political parties with respected traditions rarely disappear

While the SPD still languishes behind its rival CDU some nine years after Gerhard Schröder lost the Chancellorship to Merkel, it is still a major force in German politics. While Schröder's resignation and the formation of the left wing Die Linke hurt Germany's oldest political party, it focussed on the future; reformed and changed.

The same can be said for the Swedish Social Democrats – once Fianna Fáil's main challenger for the title of Europe's more successful political party. While its support has been falling steadily since the early 1990s, it still remains a major force in Swedish politics, though in opposition since 2006.

While these parties suffered successive defeats, they were not on the scale of Feb 2011. To find an example of a party that came back from

an electoral mauling of similar magnitude you need to look to Japan's LDP. Sometimes hailed as the world's most successful democratic party, the LDP held power in Japan almost continuously from 1955 to September 2009.

The seeds of its 2009 defeat (where it went from 296 seats to 119) were sown in the mid 90s where there were a number of major political reforms.

While the LDP continued to win elections, other parties were adapting better. It could still boast a popular leader in Junichiro Koizumi but, behind the scenes, the LDP was losing its advantage. It went from winning the 2005 election with one of the largest majorities ever to losing 60% of its seats in 2009.

*The temptation is to believe that your rejection is just a temporary phenomenon: that your former voters have just been misled by siren voices from the opposition and will return to the fold when the weaknesses and failings of the other crowd are exposed.*

The loss provided an initial shock to the system with some MPs jumping ship, but the LDP is a big and long established beast. It soon adapted to the 1994 reforms and worked at providing a very effective opposition. After just three years it completely reversed the 2009 defeat winning 294 seats at the December 2012 election.

Clearly there were other factors at play, but it does show what a political party that is deeply rooted in its communities and has a wide and diverse membership can achieve when it faces up to realities.

By Derek Mooney

*Derek is a former government special advisor and now specialises in communications and public policy consultancy. Derek is a member of the party in Dublin Bay South. Contact Derek at: [www.derekmooney.ie](http://www.derekmooney.ie) / Twitter: @dsmooney*

# BOOK REVIEWS



## Don't Look Back in Anger - Detoxing The Tories

Tim Bale's seminar at Árd Fheis 2012 was one of the many 'full-house' events of that gathering. He presented a 12-point programme of post-traumatic therapy for a large and long-serving political organisation like Fianna Fáil, looking to recover from a defeat on the traumatic scale we endured together in 2011. It became one of the most eagerly discussed and debated sessions among members attending that Árd Fheis.

Dr Bale's prescription, in a nutshell, was as follows:

1. Realise and face-up to how 'toxic' the perception of your Party has become.
2. Do not underestimate your opponents – don't simply believe that any faltering on their part will bring about your Party's recovery.
3. Place a high value on external research – talking amongst ourselves will not teach us about broader public sentiment.
4. Accept that people are not interested in what your Party got right previously – so don't waste time trying to rescue or defend your Party's record.
5. Do not obsess about organisational reforms at the cost of spending time listening and campaigning among the public.
6. Demonstrate to the electorate that your Party is a 'changed' entity – ring the changes with fresh faces and new ideas.
7. Adopt positions in Opposition that express your Party's vision and priorities, rather than ones that are very painstakingly crafted for the fine detail of ready implementation.
8. Oppose the Government 'tooth-and-nail' – be constructive – certainly – but be aggressive.
9. Don't lay too much store by good results in bye-elections or local elections.
10. Your leader must be the driver of your comeback – not your members.
11. Your comeback may take 2 to 3 parliamentary terms – so, you must do what is right and proper over time rather than what is expedient – put 'strategy' ahead of 'tactics'.
12. Remember that parties with venerable traditions rarely disappear.

Dr Bale's list for Fianna Fáil is a distillation of lessons the Conservatives learned only after many years at the back of the class – most remarkably their nine-year search for an electable leader, commencing with William Hague, (1997-2001), then Iain Duncan Smith

(2001-2003) before reaching even further into their past to select Michael Howard, (of the former Thatcher Cabinets), from 2003.

Fianna Fáil has always been the Party of equality of opportunity and access in education and health services – as can be witnessed in the reforming work of occupants of these portfolios as far back as James Ryan, Paddy Hillery and Donogh O'Malley to, more recently, our present leader. We need to preserve these priorities while continuing to adhere to the Bale principals elsewhere.

Micheál Martin has forthrightly acknowledged that politics in general have fallen to a place of low-cynicism in the public-esteem and that Fianna Fáil is not immune to it. He has put radical, genuine political reform at the height of the Fianna Fáil agenda. Our Leader's programme of appointment of Local Area Reps has promoted a cadre of people who represent a balanced mix of gender and background. In most cases they are the previously unheard voices of our Party – demonstrating the changed and renewed Fianna Fáil. Moreover, the campaigning deployment of that cadre, as local activists, demonstrates our will to engage with communities and opinions across the public

It is acknowledged from the highest offices in the Party that a failure to keep touch with the concerns and desires of grassroots played its part in the Party's difficulties over recent years. The trend is being reversed: Successful Policy Conferences on Education, (Galway, June 2012), Health and Finance, (Clondalkin, November 2012), have established a healthy principal and precedent of listening and engagement with party members under Micheál Martin's leadership.

*Dr Bale's list for Fianna Fáil is a distillation of lessons the Conservatives learned only after many years at the back of the class*

Perhaps many Fianna Fáil members feel very little common-cause with UK Conservatives. We should nevertheless learn from the mistakes of their recent history that kept them in Britain's political wilderness for over a decade. Tim Bale's assessment of our current position and his exploration of the Conservative's decade of woe can help us to do that.

*Review by Garrett Greene, a member of the Árd Chomhairle "Committee of 20" and an activist of the Ennis CC.*



## Just Mary - A Memoir - by Mary O'Rourke

As the new year 2013 rolled in, this much anticipated political and personal memoir of former Fianna Fáil Deputy Leader, government TD, Minister for Education, Senator and Leader of the Seanad, Mary O'Rourke, achieved top position on the hardback best-seller list of 2012.

Released by Gill & McMillan just in time for Christmas 2012, 'Just Mary - A Memoir' makes for a tremendous read providing resonating memories of love, loss, ambition, disappointments and triumphs throughout a career that Ms O'Rourke maintains she has still not retired from.

Characteristically frank like its author, the story in 'Just Mary' makes public a more detailed Mary O'Rourke - the woman, alongside the well-known Mary O'Rourke - the politician. Relayed in her typical chatty style, it outlines a hugely successful political career against the backdrop of a love story with her late husband, Enda O'Rourke, a van wholesaler who she fell for at age 18. The couple married when she was just 22, he 24 and following her immersion in national politics in later years, Enda became her 'ballast throughout the years', encouraging her political career and managing home and family in her absence.

Ms O'Rourke also divulges with raw honesty wanting to become a mother, fertility issues, the birth of their first son Fergal, undiagnosed postnatal depression and the adoption of their second son, Aenghus.

Later Ms O'Rourke outlines the development of Enda's illness and the subsequent huge loss she suffered following his death in 2001. She also laments the passing of her brother Brian Lenihan Snr and in 2011 that of his son, Finance Minister Brian Lenihan Jnr, while at various stages paying thoughtful tributes to them on their political prowess.

Pitted against a background that saw Ms O'Rourke move from working in the Hudson Bay family hotel in Athlone on to teaching, through motherhood and deep into the world of politics, the story also provides insights into Fianna Fáil's handling of the 1997 Presidential election; the Eircom private share sale controversy; getting trapped in New York following the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers; recession,

*Characteristically frank like its author, the story in 'Just Mary' makes public a more detailed Mary O'Rourke - the woman, alongside the well-known Mary O'Rourke - the politician*

reckonings and 'the bailout' and contains comments on previous Fianna Fáil Taoisigh, Charles Haughey and Bertie Ahern.

### Politics

Born Mary Lenihan in 1937, the youngest of four children, Ms O'Rourke's family was steeped in politics. Her Dad was PJ Lenihan, from Kilfenora, Co Clare, a pro-Treaty and Michael Collins supporter who went on to become a Fianna Fáil TD. Her mother, Annie Scanlan, a teacher, hailed from a strong Republican anti-Treaty family in Drumcliff, Co Sligo.

The family settled in Athlone in 1936 after the then Minister for Industry and Commerce in the Fianna Fáil government, Sean Lemass, appointed her father to set up the General Textiles factory (Gentex) there.

Mary O'Rourke's own political career was a rich and powerful one, that saw her initially become a member of Athlone Town Council, later serving as Chair. She was elected a Westmeath county councillor in 1979 before becoming a Senator in 1981 and then Leader of the Seanad. Her first bid for the Dail in March 1982 failed but six months later after the Fine Gael/Labour coalition broke down, she became a TD for the first time.

She admits to being 'bold' and 'audacious' in turning down leader Charles J Haughey's offer to become 'Minister for Women's Affairs', later happily accepting his offer of Shadow Minister for Education.

She went on to become Minister for Education, at a challenging time of huge spending cuts under 'Mac the knife' Ray Mac Sharry.

She also served as Minister for Health for a three-month stint; Junior Minister in the Department of Enterprise and Commerce; Minister of State for Labour with responsibility for Consumer Affairs; Minister for Public Enterprise (1997) and served as Deputy Leader and Shadow Minister for Enterprise in 1995 before subsequently returning to Cabinet as Minister for Public Enterprise.

Ms O'Rourke attributes much of her political success to her firm belief in the mantra, 'Carpe

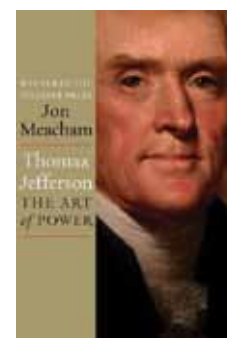
Diem' ie seize the day - advice she followed on her first day as a TD in Dail Eireann, when she delivered an inaugural speech so powerful yet deceptively simple (quoted in full in the book), it marked her out as a woman of huge ambition from the start.

Ms O'Rourke was one of the many Fianna Fáil casualties to lose her seat in the February 2011 election and indeed, opens the book setting the scene of this loss. She also discloses however a plan not to retire, stating:

"I find myself in 2012, age 75, still wanting to know all that is happening in political life and life in general too."

The story continues to unfold ...

*Review - Joan Geraghty*



## Thomas Jefferson - The Art of Power

In this captivating and quick read Jon Meacham manages to unmask Thomas Jefferson in a way that previous biographies have failed to do. Meacham presents an altogether more knowable version of the man, enabling us bear witness to a pragmatic, intelligent and progressive leader.

A recipient of the coveted Pulitzer Prize for his book American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the Whitehouse, Meacham has perfected a style of writing history that avoids the usual onslaught of dates, names and facts. Instead the author focuses on the personalities of his subjects. In doing so he takes the reader on a journey that is hard to step away from.

The book gives us Jefferson the politician and president, the thinker and man of action. He hated confrontation, and was adept at learning from his past mistakes in order to prevail. Jefferson had many passions, but above all he strove time and time again against fierce opposition to ensure that popular government in America prevailed. He led his nation through economic change, bitter partisanship, cultural warfare and threats both external and internal. Jefferson judged political life in the context of the threat posed by the British threat to democratic republicanism, a preoccupation he shared in common with many political figures throughout Irish history.

*he strove time and time again against fierce opposition to ensure that popular government in America prevailed. He led his nation through economic change, bitter partisanship, cultural warfare and threats both external and internal.*

The godfather of the ideal of individual liberty, of the Lewis and Clark expedition, the Louisiana Purchase and the settling of the West, Jefferson was well aware that the possibility of progress lay in the genius of humanity and in the genius of the new nation. Jefferson was a central figure in an age of discovery, ingenuity and learning. It is no small achievement that "for thirty-six of the forty years between 1800 and 1840, either Jefferson or a self-described adherent of his served as president of the United States: James Madison, James Monroe, Andrew Jackson, and Martin Van Buren. (John Quincy Adams, a one-term president, was the single exception.) This unofficial and little-noted Jeffersonian dynasty is unmatched in American history."

Throughout the pages of this biography Meacham stylishly probes Jefferson's love of progress and thirst for power. This terrific piece of work serves as an excellent portrait of one of the original philosopher-politicians. It allows us to see the political brilliance of Jefferson better than ever before. 'Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power' is a must for history and political buffs, and is a fantastic addition to the literature.

*Review - Pádraig Martin*



Are you interested in developing the **Cuisle** web presence? In addition to our existing social media presence we are interested in creating new channels for Cuisle. Drop us a line marked 'web' to [cuisle@fiannafail.ie](mailto:cuisle@fiannafail.ie) if you would like to get involved.



# YOUR LETTERS

Every issue Cuisle publishes a selection of members’ letters. Here is the latest batch...

Dear sir  
Looking back now at Fianna Fáil’s decision not to run a candidate in the presidential election, it can be safe to say that the sky did not fall down on us.

What the party has traditionally done is not a precedent for the future. Party members, and especially the parliamentary party, should always be encouraged to think outside the box.

Yours etc.  
Pat Hynes,  
Dublin South CDC

Dear Cuisle magazine,  
In the run-up to General Election 2011, rural Ireland was promised the sun, moon, and stars by many Fine Gael candidates. However since forming a coalition government with Labour, these promises seem to have been long forgotten.

The coalition does not give a damn about rural Ireland, which must carry the cross of extortionate taxes and charges. For example, for rural people the car is a vital tool in every day life, in order to reach urban centres and avoid isolation. However, instead of assisting in the costs associated with travel, the coalition has instead increased motor tax for all bands of vehicle as well as engine size in budget 2013. This could very well make it impossible for some in rural Ireland to afford the use of a car, in turn, reducing their chances of obtaining gainful employment in urban centres.

Even community employment schemes that provided some jobs to local in rural areas, have been hit with cuts.

Many large families live in rural areas meaning that children must travel to access schools and colleges. The government however does not seem to recognise the importance of education to such families, in light of the increase imposed on the cost of school transport for primary students from 50 Euro to 100 Euro per head.

Never in the history of the Republic have dreams been trodden upon so heavily by an administration. If you are not angry yet remember it was the coalition of Fine Gael and

Labour that increased the Capital Acquisitions Tax (CAT) on gifts and inheritances from 25 to 30 %, and to 33% in budget 2013. That is what your family and friends worked for not them. This government has even had the nerve to tax you on your own property.

It is time we fought back and stopped being defecated upon by this government.

It is time we say to Fine Gael/Labour - no more smash, and grab budgets.

Yours,  
Shane Burke,  
Laois Ógra PRO

A chara,  
Tommy was a neighbour and friend but died about 15 years ago aged 50. Both of us joined FF back in 1976 in Noel Lemass Cumann, DSC. We attended CDC meetings and being close to city centre these were packed houses with TDs from outside Dublin staying overnight attending . Tommy was a gentle cynic with great humour and we joked about all the devious people working the crowd, no need to go into details of that but it was amusing to watch them in action. When tommy and I met outside of FF the first thing we said to each other “hey, meet any devious people lately ? “

Politics is permanently in trouble with accusations of croneyism, gombeenism and any insult one cares to mention flung at politicians from all directions. When it comes to FF the party has received by far more abuse than other parties and a lot of it deserved. However, since the 2011 election we can say without fear of contradiction FF behaviour has been impeccable. The party still gets dung from the past thrown at it but in the last two years I cannot recall one incident when any member of the Oireachtas or general party member stepped out of line and became the target of sustained abuse.

The future of the party depends on many things but a party free of scandal must be a priority. Any hint of a problem should be dealt with instantly and conclusively. The days of treating the public with scorn and indifference are gone. The general public is now far more educated and shrewder at spotting chancers than ever before.

Social media is putting pressure on politics and politicians. People pick up information online and offline they spread that information around like wildfire. There is no hiding place today for those who want to treat the electorate as fools, the politician who thinks he/she is being clever or devious is surely making a big mistake.

Two years now in office and this government has been arrogant and cynical to levels I have never witnessed. Election 2011 appeared to be a turning point with the micro and macro detail of politics in action open to serious reform and permanent scrutiny. This government have made a mockery of reforms in political behaviour. I ask myself am I just a “dyed in the wool” FF member looking for an angle to attack those opposed to FF. I don’t think so, to me people want to be treated with respect and spoken to as adults. They want straight talking and despise endless false promises made in pursuit of a pointless political agenda.

Based on Michael Martin’s leadership over last two years I firmly believe FF can be the upfront and honest party the country needs. If somehow I met my friend Tommy today it would be nice to say those devious people we joked about have no place in FF these days.

Patrick Monks,  
Chairman  
Con Colbert Cumann  
Palmerstown  
Dublin 20

A chara,  
I came late to Fianna Fáil when, like a great many others, I married, settled down and wanted the best for my children. There really was no credible alternative back then. Due to circumstances, I’ve had to rethink my allegiance in recent years and will readily admit I took satisfaction in Fianna Fáil wearing sackcloth and ashes after the last election. It was required and it was needed - and I will also say I welcomed Micheal Martin’s brave apology at last year’s Ard Fheis.

While great strides have been taken - the implementation of OMOV in particular - it is with the current state of the ‘Renewal’ drive that I take issue with, and challenge the Party itself on. I applaud your own good work in producing this

magazine but could we see articles by elected national executive members outlining what they achieved during their year in office? Agendas, minutes and records of votes and attendances of their meetings should be published . The ordinary member, now able to directly elect their national officers via OMOV, demands and expects more accountability especially in this age of multi- and social-media.

We have some good strong performers elected and volunteers working nationally with limited resources - and I include some members of the current ‘Committee of 20’ in this - but we will be undone by anachronistic, unwieldy and outdated structures, unless we change them. There is much work being carried out on the policy side - and there is some evidence of success in policy formulation judging from increasing attendances at meetings - but we need to revamp our structures. OMOV was a necessary step in the right direction but it was only a step - we need to address our structures so that those elected to committees, whether to Officer Boards of Comhairle Ceanntair or Comhairle Dáil, to the ‘Committee of 20’ or to the Ard Chomhairle, so that they have individually properly defined and visible duties and responsibilities; and that there is clear reporting against those goals ; it is only then that they can be properly held accountable.

Without accountability, we will continue to have the status-quo and Fianna Fáil will remain a party of the 20th Century party in 21st Century Ireland. And ‘Renewal’ grinds to a halt. None of us want to see that happen.

Is mise

Seán Broe,  
Cathaoirleach, Roger Casement Cumann

THESE LETTERS REFLECT THE  
OPINIONS OF THE LETTER WRITERS  
CONCERNED. THEY DO NOT REFLECT  
THE VIEWS OF THE FIANNA FÁIL  
PARTY LEADERSHIP, FIANNA FÁIL  
HEADQUARTERS OR CUISLE.

## In Focus: An Taisce

*In a new series Cuisle hears from different groups within society to gain a better understanding of their aims, objectives and approaches. If your group would like to be featured please let us know.*

Robert Lloyd Praeger, one of An Taisce’s founders, stated in 1948

“In all but the most backward countries organisations exist which have for their object the protection and preservation of things of natural beauty or of human interest within their boundaries. These need protection against dilapidation, against injury, whether caused by carelessness, ignorance or ruthlessness, against sequestration for private ends, and in respect in recent times often against the action of public bodies.”

The need for An Taisce The National Trust for Ireland, a non Governmental Charity, is as strong now as it was then. The natural and built environment belongs to the people of Ireland and still needs the same protection.

An Taisce aims to do this by:

### Advocacy

An Taisce fights for a sustainable future for the people of Ireland and their children within an environment that is protected as far as possible from harm.

*An Taisce runs the most successful Green/Eco Schools programme in the world with 90% of schools signed up.*

An Taisce works with other National and International bodies to bring the latest environmental thinking to the people and Government. In doing so An Taisce always tries to provide solutions.

### Sustainability

Economic, Social and Environmental Sustainability are interlinked. Our society lives within the environment and our economy works within our society. However the environment is under stress both from over extraction of resources and over pollution of our air (climate change) and water and the loss of bio-diversity. These environmental stresses will in turn inflict huge stresses on society and the economy. Society and the economy are going to have to decarbonise, move from a constant growth in resource usage and protect habitats and bio-diversity.

### Protection through Planning

Planning is meant to ensure that development is carried out in a fair way that should allow, as far as possible, services to be provided to

*An Taisce preserves examples of the Country’s Built and Natural Heritage, through ownership on behalf of the people of Ireland*

all the people at a reasonable cost and should allow them reasonable access to work, social, leisure and health opportunities. Urban sprawl and high commute distances are examples of where this has failed. Some planning and associated licensing are in place to directly protect the environment.

Once plans have been approved by Government and other relevant Local Authorities, An Taisce acts, as far as possible, as a watch-dog to ensure that those plans and guidelines are being followed and nobody is trying to get around them for excessive personal gain or at the detrimental expense of the environment

### Education

An Taisce has always understood the requirement for education in the environmental sphere and has provided a range of seminars, outings and meeting for its members, through the network of Local Associations it has throughout the country.

15 years ago, An Taisce realised the importance of environmental education in schools, and began the ‘Green Schools Programme’ as part of the International Federation for Environmental Education (FEE). An Taisce runs the most successful Green/Eco Schools programme in the world with 90% of schools signed up. As well as the educational success, the programmes have recognised cost savings in schools through savings in energy, water, and transport costs.

An Taisce also runs the Green Home, Green Campus, Greening Communities, National Spring Clean, Clean Coast and Blue Flag programmes.

### Preservation

An Taisce preserves examples of the Country’s Built and Natural Heritage, through ownership on behalf of the people of Ireland. An Taisce maintains a small number of properties such as Tailors’ Hall and Howth Courthouse as well as several thousand acres of preserved bogs that are part of various National Parks.

*For further details and to join see  
www.antaisce.ie*

*WRITE TO CUISLE: Cuisle would like to hear your views. If you have any thoughts on Fianna Fáil, politics in general or any of the issues raised in this issue please write to us. Letters can be emailed to [cuisle@fiannafail.ie](mailto:cuisle@fiannafail.ie) (please use the subject line ‘Letters’) or posted to Cuisle PO Box, c/o Fianna Fáil Headquarters, 65/ 66 Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2.*

# NATIONAL DRAW REPORT

Thanks to all members who supported our national draw. Along with the national collection, this is of vital importance to running the party and fighting elections. A report by constituency is contained below.



Constituency	2011	2012
	Return €	Return €
ROSCOMMON	31,750	32,750
CLARE	27,150	31,250
CORK SC	24,150	27,650
WEXFORD	23,450	26,550
LIMERICK COUNTY	20,150	24,250
DONEGAL	23,800	22,650
GALWAY WEST	16,100	21,350
GALWAY EAST	18,100	19,650
CAVAN	19,050	18,750
CORK NW	17,350	17,550
LOUTH	21,550	16,900
KERRY	19,050	16,750
TIPPERARY	15,000	16,750
WESTMEATH	12,300	16,550
MAYO	15,750	15,250
WATERFORD	4,550	15,100
CORK SW	12,200	14,750
OFFALY	13,650	14,350
MEATH EAST	12,450	13,250
DUBLIN FINGAL	7,900	11,850
DUBLIN RATHDOWN	9,100	10,600
DUBLIN SC	6,550	10,350
LAOIS	6,150	10,250
DUBLIN BAY SOUTH	11,250	10,150
SLIGO	10,600	10,100
KILKENNY	9,650	9,900
MEATH WEST	9,200	9,850
CORK EAST	9,900	9,400
KILDARE SOUTH	7,100	8,350
KILDARE NORTH	6,150	8,150
LEITRIM	7,800	7,950
MONAGHAN	6,400	7,950
DUBLIN SW	2,000	7,950
DUBLIN BAY NORTH	8,200	7,750
CORK NC	8,600	7,550
DUN LAOGHAIRE	6,850	6,900
DUBLIN WEST	5,800	6,750
LONGFORD	5,550	6,150
WICKLOW	8,750	5,300
DUBLIN MWEST	6,050	5,300
LIMERICK CITY	3,650	4,850
DUBLIN CENTRAL	4,200	3,950
DUBLIN NW	2,750	3,650
CARLOW	1,250	1,750
	-	-
VARIOUS	12,800	0
Total	531,750	574,750

## THE WILD GEESE

### PATRICK HILLERY CUMANN BRUSSELS - BUILDING ON THE STRONG FIANNA FÁIL TRADITION IN EUROPE

Fianna Fáil has been instrumental in shaping the architecture of the European project and influencing key policy decisions, exemplifying the Lemass view that “we can’t opt out of the future”.

The EU is now at a cross roads, moving from austerity policies towards growth and stability and determining how to do more with less with regard to the EU budget are the key challenges facing EU policy makers at present. As the EU moves into the next budget cycle there are many questions which must be addressed about the future direction of the project, its financing, aims and objectives.

This is an opportune time for Fianna Fáil to continue to build upon its strong reputation for leadership in Europe and to capitalise on its tradition of strong and effective engagement with the European Union. In advance of the European Parliament elections in 2014, it is timely to re-engage the public in a positive way with the European project and to provide a platform for discussion on shaping the direction the EU must take, whilst building upon the strong position and tradition of Fianna Fáil at the heart of the European Union.

In 1972 Fianna Fáil concluded the final negotiations on Irish membership of the European Economic Community. Building on the work of Sean Lemass, Jack Lynch and the first Fianna Fáil European Commissioner, Dr. Patrick Hillery, Fianna Fáil MEPs and Commissioners have continued the strong Fianna Fáil tradition of positive and effective engagement with Europe over the past 40 years. Over this time Fianna Fáil has consecutively employed an outward looking vision at the EU level which has shaped both European Union policy and modern Ireland.

*Building on Patrick Hillery’s example, Fianna Fáil Commissioners have been instrumental in implementing dynamic and forward looking policies at the heart of the European project*

Patrick Hillery served as Fianna Fáil’s first European Commissioner in the portfolio of Social Affairs and since then Fianna Fáil Commissioners have held key portfolios in Agriculture and Rural Development, Personnel Administration, Social Affairs and Employment, Health and Consumer Protection and the Internal Market. The current Commissioner Máire Geoghegan Quinn holds the influential portfolio of Research, Innovation and Science,

*As the EU moves into the next budget cycle there are many questions which must be addressed about the future direction of the project, its financing, aims and objectives.*

which is one of the key sectors tasked with stimulating economic growth in Europe.

Building on Patrick Hillery’s example, Fianna Fáil Commissioners have been instrumental in implementing dynamic and forward looking policies at the heart of the European project. From the Directive on Equal Pay prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sex in relation to pay, giving employees the right to judicial process when discriminated against, reforming the Common Agriculture Policy to include increased focus on Rural Development and rural communities and introducing social policy to European competences. Fianna Fáil was also at the heart of developing a new EU Health Strategy, leading the way in banning misleading advertising in relation to cigarettes, introducing the EU Services Directive in order to achieve full competition in the services sectors across Europe and implementing the Innovation Union and Horizon 2020, key programmes for research and innovation in the EU.

Fianna Fáil MEPs representing their constituencies in the European Parliament have upheld the tradition of effective and forward looking engagement on a wide range of policy issues. Fianna Fáil MEPs have been instrumental in influencing and shaping policy in relation to the reform of the

positives for Irish citizens brought about due to the vision of the Fianna Fáil government in placing Ireland at the heart of the EU. Irish citizens have the right to move, work and reside freely in the member states of the European Union; Irish businesses have unhindered access to a market of 500 million people and the pay gap between women and men has been narrowed.

In rural Ireland, Irish agriculture has received over €46 billion in European funds to date, local communities and businesses have benefited from support under the LEADER programme and the transport infrastructure across Ireland has improved significantly due to EU structural funds. Over 28,000 Irish students have had the opportunity to study or work abroad under the Erasmus programme, increasing their mobility and employability. The inclusion of Irish as an official working language in the EU helps to assist promotion of the language and its preservation for future generations.

*As the legislative role of the European Parliament grows so does the importance of engaging with the issues and keeping party members fully informed*

As the legislative role of the European Parliament grows so does the importance of engaging with the issues and keeping party members fully informed. In this regard, the Patrick Hillery Cumann Brussels, the first Fianna Fáil Cumann established outside of Ireland, will add another link between the party, its members and the European policy making process. The Cumann’s members, drawn from across the EU institutions, European public affairs organisations, think tanks and the private sector, have a wealth of experience and knowledge and are committed to the renewal of the party and look forward to furthering the positive image and work of Fianna Fáil in Europe.

The Patrick Hillery Cumann Brussels can be contacted at: patrickhillerycumann@gmail.com

Ciaran Bolger, Chairperson.

*I would like to thank Laura Real and Oonagh Grace who wrote this article on behalf of the Patrick Hillery Cumann Brussels.*



# OUR PARTY. OUR FUTURE.



Kate Feeney, newly elected Uachtarán of Ógra Fianna Fáil.

When I joined Fianna Fáil as an undergraduate in NUIG, Ireland was booming. The year was 2003 and jobs were a plenty for anyone who wanted one. The Fianna Fáil led government of the day had laid the foundations to help attract international business to these shores and it is these foundations that are today helping Ireland recover from the recession of recent years. The situation however is not improving at a pace fast enough to stop the brain drain. We all have friends and family members who have been forced abroad in search of better opportunities.

Ireland needs a party of solutions and that party is Fianna Fáil. Ógra is the platform for young people to express their ideas about

*Ógra must be central in challenging how we do our politics and what we stand for.*

our nation's future. Ógra must be central in challenging how we do our politics and what we stand for.

Since the election of the new Central Officer Board in February at the National Youth Conference in Sligo, I have set about implementing a 'Roadmap for Ógra'. This roadmap sets out a 12 month strategy on how Ógra can foster and develop our party's young members to be effective and productive contributors.

Through the soon to be launched 'Leader's Academy', young members will have easy access to professional training in skills such as debating, fundraising, campaigning, and media

skills. In politics, people are the asset and we cannot expect members to deliver to their maximum potential if they have not yet been equipped with the necessary skills.

We will also be launching an Oireachtas Internship Programme. This offers an opportunity to our members to gain experience of the life of a public representative and exposes them to how politics works on the ground, but it also offers our Parliamentary Party access to the ideas these young people have to put forward.

First and foremost, Ógra is a campaigning organisation. As the only credible Republican

Party on the island we must advocate on behalf of those who are most vulnerable. Ógra must be a voice for Ireland's youth. One of the reasons I joined Ógra was because of strong and positive message they delivered on campus through campaigns. I want to see Ógra return to this, and to become the most vocal and most visible youth organisation in the country. Since the National Youth Conference we have travelled, both as individual members and en masse to Meath East to canvass for Senator Thomas Byrne.

We have launched our Organ Donor Policy which called on the Government to among other things introduce a National Organ Donor Registry and increase education and awareness regarding organ donation. The Seanad Reform Policy which was passed at the National Youth Conference will soon be put to the Árd Fheis for approval.

The quality of these policy documents makes it clear to me that Ógra can be and will be a highly active campaigning organisation over the next twelve months and in the run up to Local Elections 2014. These policies are strong, relevant and clear and our members can be proud to stand over them.

Over the next twelve months Ógra will be working with all members of the Party and with other interest groups, both from inside and outside our peer groups, to ensure that our contribution to Irish life is one which is relevant and is one which gives a voice to those who are most vulnerable in our society.

It is firmly my belief that Ógra's role is central to the continued revival of our Party. Through the recruitment of new members and the initiative shown through campaigns and policies like those mentioned above we will hold claim to our Party's title as the only truly republican party on this island.

by Kate Feeney