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# PUBLIC MUST BE VIGILANT ON SCAM REQUIRING BANK DETAILS TO CLAIM ELECTRICITY CREDITS

The public, particularly vulnerable and elderly citizens, should be wary of a phone scam asking for bank details in order to claim Government electricity credits, according to TD Emer Higgins.

Deputy Higgins has urged members of the public not to hand over bank account details to fraudsters who are currently using an official Government of Ireland information page on electricity credits in order to scam unsuspecting individuals.

Deputy Higgins said: "Constituents have alerted

me to a convincing phone scam currently in operation where individuals are receiving texts claiming to be from GOV.IE, telling them they are eligible for a discounted electricity bill under the Energy Support Scheme. "They are then directed to a link to apply for the credit, which brings them to an official government page from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, with information on the Electricity Costs Emergency Benefit Scheme II.

"This page has information relating to the previous three credits given in the

November/December 2022, January/February and March/April 2023 billing cycles.

Customers who received those credits did not need to apply for them or contact their electricity provider as the credit was applied automatically. "However, through this latest highly sophisticated scam, individuals are asked to click on a "Verify Now" button which brings them to a page asking for their personal details including address and telephone number.

Once they continue, they are then asked for their

card details, including number, expiry date and CVV number. "They are then directed to log into their internet account depending on which banking institution they have inputted. "I am extremely concerned that given the content of this scam, a vulnerable or elderly individual may hand over their bank details to these fraudsters, thinking it is a legitimate message from a Government department regarding how to claim their electricity credits.

"As announced in this year's Budget, over 2.2 million households will benefit from a new tranche of Electricity

Credits -- worth €450 in total. Three payments of €150 (including VAT) will be made between December 2023 and April 2024.

"Individuals need to remember that similar to last year and earlier this year, the credit will be applied automatically. Households do not need to apply for it, nor do they need to contact their electricity supplier. "Criminals are now using ever more sophisticated methods of phoning and texting customers and can make replicas of official web pages to make it appear that the communication is legitimate. "With regard to

phone and email scams, if something feels unsafe or unofficial do not give bank account details to third party and err on the side of caution.

"If you suspect you have been the victim of fraudulent activity, immediately end the call and ring back the number on the back of your card or call the official number for your branch.

"Banking customers are also advised to never click on links sent in a message, or share passwords, or the full five digits of your personal access codes with anyone," Deputy Higgins concluded.

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# BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT CHARITY RECEIVES DONATION FROM AMAZON

A charity supporting families affected by stillbirth has received a €1,000 donation from the team at Amazon's fulfilment centre in Dublin. Féileacáin was formed by a group of bereaved parents to offer support to families affected by stillbirth or neonatal loss.

The charity provides hospitals in Ireland with a 'Gifts of Remembrance' service which includes memory boxes, clay imprints, sibling support and more. The donation from Amazon will be used to provide memory boxes

to Maternity and Children's Hospitals that are then gifted to parents after the loss of their baby.

Darragh Kelly, General Manager at Amazon in Dublin, said "Experiencing the loss of a child will never be an easy journey but with the right support and guidance, families have a safe space to grieve. Féileacáin is run by an amazing team of staff and volunteers who give everything to support families in the community.

We hope that this donation

can help support the important work they do across Ireland."

Joe Monahan, an employee from Amazon in Dublin who nominated the charity for support, said "Féileacáin is a charity very close to my heart. The endless support the charity's volunteers provide is outstanding and can be such a blessing for people experiencing the loss of a child. I'm pleased Amazon is showing their appreciation with this donation."

Nina Doyle, from Féileacáin, added "Féileacáin relies on the support of the community to function, and without donations like this, we couldn't provide our vital services to individuals and families who need it. Thank you, Darragh and everyone at Amazon in Dublin, for believing in what we do."

The donation to Féileacáin was made as part of

Amazon's programme to support the communities in and around its operating locations in Ireland. Since opening its doors one year

ago, the Dublin fulfilment centre has supported many community organisations locally, with donations totalling €46,000. Charities

supported by the team at the fulfilment centre include Cliona's Foundation, Jigsaw and LauraLynn Children's Hospice.



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# VOLUNTEERS FROM SOUTH DUBLIN ATTEND NATIONAL FORÓIGE'S 51ST VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE

Foróige volunteers from all over Ireland came together in the Mount Wolseley Hotel in Co. Carlow last weekend recently for Foróige's annual volunteer conference. This was the 51st annual Foróige Volunteers Conference, with over 130 delegates from 18 counties enjoying a wide variety of guest speakers, group discussions and social events aimed at exchanging ideas to continue Foróige volunteers' impactful work throughout Ireland.

Dr. Bernadine Brady, Senior Lecturer of the University of Galway and Senior Researcher with the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, was the keynote speaker at the conference and spoke about the research she has carried out about the impact of volunteer-led youth work and mentoring "There is evidence that universal youth work impacts positively on young people in a range of areas, including social connection and belonging, personal

development and civic behaviour. These are all priority areas for youth policy so it makes absolute sense to invest in and support youth work'.

Odhrán O'Mahony, the newly appointed Foróige Chairperson, addressed the volunteers at the conference "I come to the role of Foróige's Chairperson as somebody who has seen first hand the impact the organisation has on young people and as somebody who passionately believes in the power of community. Having Foróige in communities is hugely important and we need to make sure Foróige is available to young people, who I think it is fair to say, need us now more than ever."

Looking towards the future Odhrán commented "Over the next 10 years Foróige wants to see an Ireland where every young person who wants to be involved in youth work can be - we

want to see Foróige clubs flourishing in every county and all aspects of Foróige available. We want to be able to attract and retain quality volunteers and staff and to ensure that Foróige is central to communities right across the country."

Foróige celebrated its 71st year with the first Club meeting in Mooncoin on 14th March 1952. Foróige now has over 4,500 volunteers working in its 450 clubs, 180 projects and programmes, including Leadership for Life; Be Healthy Be Happy, the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE), and Big Brother Big Sister. Foróige volunteers are essential to the organisation's engagement with over 50,000 young people year after year. Foróige, with the help of volunteers, encourages young people to take responsibility for themselves and to be part of shaping the world around them while developing their talents, skills and abilities.



Pictured: Second row L-R Kevin Dignam, Wayne Travers, Anthony Clinton, Geraldine Kavanagh, Jeremy Collins and First row L-R Sabrina Hannon, Debby McAuley, Martina Deans, Paula Martin, Sarah Deans, Emma Jane Moore.

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# DUBLIN MID WEST SINN FÉIN SELECT 10 LOCAL CANDIDATES FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS

Dublin Mid-West Sinn Féin has selected 10 candidates to run in the three Local Electoral Areas in the Dublin Mid-West area for the 2024 Local Elections.

The party currently has two sitting Councillors in the Dublin Mid-West area and is hoping to increase its representation on South Dublin County Council to 10. Sinn Féin TD Eoin Ó Broin has been appointed as the Director of Elections for the three LEAs of Lucan, Palmerstown/Fonthill and Clondalkin that are in the Dublin Mid-West area..

Deputy Ó Broin said: ‘Next year’s Local Elections will give the voters an opportunity to vote for real change. Since 2019 South Dublin County Council has been led by a coalition of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. Since 2020, these same political parties have been in coalition in the Dáil. During that time there has been

growing frustration locally with both the failure of the Council and the failures of Government. People want better local services; they want the crises in housing and health addressed.

They also want a government that will support workers and families through the cost-of-living crisis. Next year’s local election, and possible general election, will provide voters with an opportunity to vote for real change and Sinn Féin will be standing the maximum number of candidates to deliver that change.

‘We have selected a really strong slate of candidates for the three Local Electoral Areas within the Dublin Mid-West constituency. Our sitting Councillors Derren Ó Bradaigh and William Carey will be recontesting, alongside former SDCC Councillor Ruth Nolan. They will be joined by candidates with a range of experience

and knowledge including local train driver Joe Nugent, school teacher and Gaelgeoir Cathal Ó Murchu, constituency worker with Mark Ward TD Daniel Loftus, business analyst Rosemary Masinga, disability and youth worker Emma McCormack, mental health worker Niamh Fennell and tutor with children with intellectual disabilities Lorainne Dwyer.

‘I am particularly delighted that our slate is representative of the diversity of our community. We have a 50:50 gender split, a great balance of youth and experience and a slate representative of the cultural diversity of our great community. ‘Sinn Féin’s candidates will all be contesting to win their respective contested seats and have already started knocking on doors to listen to the concerns of local communities and to engage people who are hungry for real change both at local and

central Government label’ Candidates selected by LEA are in Clondalkin Cllr William

Carey, Emma McCormack, Rosemary Masinga and Joe Nugent. In Palmerstown/Fonthill Daniel Loftus, Niamh

Fennell, Ruth Nolan and Cathal Ó Murchu. In Lucan Cllr Derren Ó Bradaigh and Lorraine Dwyer.



Pictured newly selected Sinn Féin candidates for Clondalkin, Palmerstown/Fonthill, Lucan with Eoin Ó Broin TD, Mary Ward TD and Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald at the Green Isle Hotel selection convention recently.

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# GREATER AWARENESS AND SUPPORTS NEEDED FOR SMALL LOCAL BUSINESS

There needs to be far greater direct engagement with the owners of small local businesses to help buffer them from the many current challenges they are facing, including staff recruitment challenges, inflation, energy costs and cash flow according to one South

Dublin County Councillor. Sinn Féin councillor Derren Ó Brádaigh said “As we know small business owners provide employment to 70% of the workforce in Ireland and account for 99% of active enterprises.

There are now approximately 309,000 SMEs operating in Ireland with 91% of these employing under 10 staff members, so their importance cannot be overstated at either a national or local level.

“Small business operators by their nature are usually ambitious, capable and very independent people and often reluctant to seek assistance before their business is experiencing serious challenges. Quite often, difficulties arise through no fault of their own and are a consequence of the current cost of living crisis, inflation attracting and keeping good staff and having information about support and grants made more readily available.

Cllr Ó Brádaigh said “Just recently, I received some figures in relation to supports and grants provided to small local businesses in my own catchment area of Lucan and Palmerstown-Fonthill. And whilst the Local Enterprise Office has a number of advisory supports services available, I was astonished that only 19 small businesses were able to successfully secure funding supports this year, with the figure in 2022 a total of only 25.

When I consider the number of existing business owners and small self-employed people with two and three employees operating and that are struggling right now, this is surprising. There must be numerous potential start up businesses that could benefit from grants and guidance, enabling them in turn to provide critically vital future local employment. Ó Brádaigh added “In South Dublin County we have in the region of 6,800 business entities employing over 80,000 people. 80% of

these businesses have less than 20 employees which further underscores the sheer importance of these essential local sustainable employment providers, and it is imperative that we are offering the very highest level of supports and access to finance at every point. More information on supports

and grant applications can be found by visiting the Council website [www.sdcc.ie](http://www.sdcc.ie) and [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) and searching under enterprise support.

I would remind local shop owners that you can also apply for grants toward renovation to your premises and shop fronts.”



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Cemetery Office hours: Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4pm, Saturday 10am to 1pm

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# LD PLATES REQUIRED FOR COMMERCIAL CYCLISTS AND E-BIKES

Commercial cyclists should be required to wear identification numbers to improve safety standards on our public roads, a local TD has said. Deputy Emer Higgins has called for legislative action to ensure accountability and promote safer sharing of space on the road.

these commercial cyclists and e-bikes. This will not only protect pedestrians and motorists but also ensure that those who do not follow the rules of the road are easily identifiable and held accountable," Deputy Higgins explained.

"Many people use bicycles and e-bikes for business and employment purposes and in the same way that we can identify cars, through

registration plates, we should be able to identify other road users through proper identification plates.

"By introducing a number plate system for commercial cyclists, we can foster a more responsible culture on our roads. It will aid the Gardaí in addressing

traffic violations swiftly and effectively, ultimately enhancing the safety of our roads for everyone.

"While there's no denying that commercial cyclists such as food delivery drivers experience their own challenges, particularly in relation to their own personal

safety, including the risk of theft and violence, no one should have to fear walking the streets of their own communities or doubt the safety of their loved ones on the road," Deputy Higgins continued.

"We have more bicycles, e-bikes and e-scooters on our roads than ever before,

and unfortunately with this comes an increased risk of accidents and incidents. Ireland has already had more road deaths in 2023 than all of 2022, so we must now try to do everything we can to ensure our roads become safer for all and that means making all users fully accountable."

"It's time we consider the implementation of a system akin to number plates for

## MINISTER MUST CLARIFY IF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM ARE EXCLUDED BY CAMHS

Mark Ward TD has called for focus on support for children with autism within CAMHS. Deputy Ward was speaking following a presentation given to members of the Oireachtas by the group Families for the Reform of CAMHS. Since 2020, 25,000 children who were referred to CAMHS have been refused treatment.

Teachta Ward said "Recently, I invited Families for Reform of CAMHS into the Oireachtas to address elected representatives and staff. "This group is made up of over 400 families across the state and they are growing every week. "They have used their first-hand experiences of CAMHS to highlight the changes needed to reform services. "Members of the Oireachtas heard moving personal testimonies about services denied to their children.

"They highlighted the lack of services within CAMHS for young people with autism. "We heard how 59% of their members had a child with a diagnosis of autism and 85% of those felt that this diagnosis negatively impacted the service and support their child received. "Autistic children are 28 times more likely to consider suicide and that 70% of autistic children are estimated to have a dual diagnosis of a mental health disorder.

"Parents described how they feel that children with autism are excluded from CAMHS and even when they are accepted for treatment by CAMHS that they cannot avail of all the services. "Autistic children in CAMHS with "a primary diagnosis of Autism" are currently excluded from accessing support from the pilot phase of the launch of the CAMHS Hub programme.

"However Autistic children in CAMHS have already deemed to reach the threshold of moderate/severe mental health issues. "Why are they denied this service? "I have raised the singling out of children with autism with Minister Butler and have asked if this practice can be changed and if Children with Autism are being excluded by CAMHS. "Information I have received shows that over 25,000 children who were referred to CAMHS since 2020 were denied treatment.

"I have written to the Minister to see how many of these children had autism. "The powerful testimonies that we heard recently, and the dedicated work being carried out by this group is a wake-up call for the Government to increase their efforts to improve CAMHS services.

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## MINISTER FOR EDUCATION MUST IMMEDIATELY ADDRESS TEACHER SHORTAGE

TD for Dublin South West Seán Crowe has demanded urgent action to end the teacher shortage affecting almost every school across Dublin South West. Teachta Crowe said "There is a growing teacher shortage right across south Dublin that must be addressed immediately. This crisis requires urgent action. Children cannot be expected to keep paying the price for government failure to plan and to act.

"Too many schools are struggling to find the teachers they need to have fair class sizes and deliver the education that children deserve. I know from my own dealings with local schools and principals that these struggles are having a very real impact on their ability to provide an education to children. "It is not acceptable that schools are being forced into plugging

staffing gaps by redeploying special education teachers to cover for absent teachers in mainstream classes.

"This is leaving the most vulnerable pupils without the essential support they need and the education they are entitled to. The Minister must clearly outline to parents and school leaders how she intends to address the 'unprecedented' shortfall of more than 800 vacant teaching posts across primary classes in the state. "Despite the continuous pronouncements from Government, our schools remain under resourced, lacking the necessary investment and have some of the largest class sizes in Europe.

"The Minister must outline what she intends to do in the short and medium term to address this unacceptable

situation of staff shortages in general and particularly in areas of disadvantage, special schools and Gaelscoileanna.

"Let's be clear, this crisis is happening because of this government's failure to get to grips with the housing crisis. Under Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, teachers are simply unable to afford to rent or buy near their work. Every day that this government remains in office, the situation is becoming worse. Sinn Féin in government would get to grips with the housing crisis and deliver genuinely affordable homes in Dublin South West and across the state.

"Government failure to invest in schools and tackle the housing crisis cannot continue. It's time for change."

## SOD TURNING CEREMONY FOR THE WHITESTOWN STREAM PARK UPGRADE



On the 6th of November 2023, the Mayor of South Dublin County Council, Cllr. Alan Edge officially turned the sod to mark the commencement of works on the Whitestown Stream Park Upgrade Project. The Mayor was joined by Ms. Teresa Walsh, Director of Services, Staff of South Dublin County Council local Councillors and guests to celebrate this event.

Speaking at the event Mayor Cllr. Alan Edge said "Phase 1 of Whitestown Stream Park upgrade has now been completed with the upgrading of the park boundaries and estate access points. The works that are about to commence will include the upgrading of the main park entrances, a play-exercise trail, a footpath exercise loop, a cycle south Dublin link that will connect to the wider cycle infrastructure,

two new bridges, planting, signage, seating, an informal kick-around area, and areas for biodiversity. I would like to thank the Public Realm Section in South Dublin, who along with Nicholas de Jong Associates Landscape and Urban Design Consultants have carried out the planning and design work on this project to date. Construction work on site will be carried out by Clonmel Enterprises Ltd and I wish them every success during the construction stage. We acknowledge and thank the community for their assistance and input during the preliminary design stage and their support for this project in general. We ask them to kindly bear with us during this construction process. We will endeavour to cause as little inconvenience to them as possible. I wish all involved a safe and successful delivery of the project"

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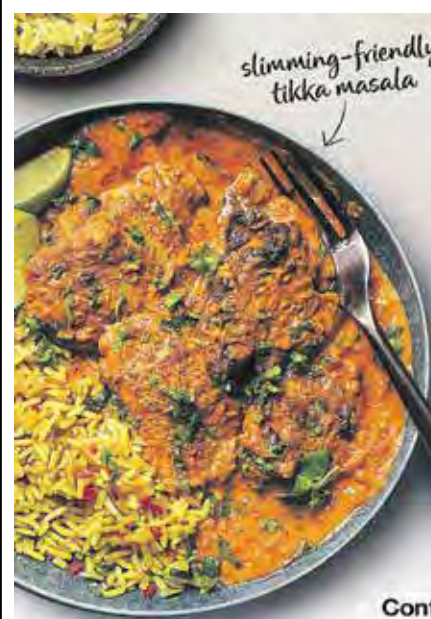
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# TALLAGHT PARENTS SPEAK OUT ON SUDDEN UNEXPLAINED DEATH IN CHILDHOOD

Tallaght locals, Aaron and Laura lived every parents worst nightmare when their little girl Ada passed away suddenly without explanation on the 26th of October 2022 when she was just 2 days short of 20 months.

Now they are coming together with others affected by 'Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood' to form a support group, and to campaign for more help

for families affected. Their cause was raised with the Taoiseach recently by local TD Paul Murphy, who has been in touch with the families, and is campaigning for funding for counselling services, public information and research.

In Ireland, sudden unexplained death in childhood (SUDC) accounted for 5% of deaths in children aged 1-4yrs during 1994 - 2008. Aaron and Laura have no concrete answers in

relation to why Ada passed. Speaking about the death, Aaron described how she "went to bed happy and healthy, such a great little kid." Ada's Mam Laura and another parent, who is also called Laura and comes from Tallaght have started a parent's support group - 'You've Got a Friend In Us' - to offer others in this situation the support which they did not receive. Anyone

who is in need of this group's support can find them on Facebook by searching for 'You've got a Friend In Us', you can follow their public page or join the private group.

People Before Profit's Paul Murphy questioned the Taoiseach on this matter in the Dail chamber recently, urging him to "commit to offering as many publicly

funded counselling sessions as parents of children who die from sudden unexplained death in childhood need".

The Dublin South West TD went further asking that the government "to put funding into this area to research it so parents can understand how and why this is happening". He also requested that there is "an awareness campaign so parents facing this grief

will understand there are others who have suffered in the same way."

He commended these parents "for creating such an important resource for other families who have suffered because of SUDC", however, he went on to say "clearly these are things the State should be doing, as opposed to people having to do them voluntarily."

## DOSA DOSA STREET FOOD OPENS IN ADAMSTOWN



On November 3rd, Adamstown celebrated the launch of 'Dosa Dosa South Indian Street Food,' by Chef Karthik Thiru, located at The Crossings. The ribbon-cutting ceremony, presided over by local TD Emer Higgins, promises a vibrant addition to Adamstown's food scene. Open Thursday to Sunday from 5pm to 10pm, the full menu can be found at [www.dosadosa.ie](http://www.dosadosa.ie).

## Cllr. Charlie O'Connor PC

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The Fianna Fail Team is Barry Andrews M.E.P, John Lahart TD, Cllrs Yvonne Collins, Teresa Costello, Lilian Gueret, Emma Murphy & Charlie O'Connor



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# LOCAL DUBLIN BEALTAINÉ EVENT ORGANISERS INVITED TO THE BEALTAINÉ GATHERING 2023

Are you an individual, an artist or a member of a group that organises Bealtaine Festival events in your community? Age & Opportunity, producers of the Bealtaine Festival, invites you to join them in Dublin, at the National Gallery of Ireland on November 15th, for this year's Bealtaine Gathering.

This event will be a chance to connect with other organisers, hear about inspiring projects and reflect on a shared vision of creativity as we age, as well as planning for Bealtaine

2024! The theme for the day is Community, Diversity and New Directions in their work and they have put together an exciting line up of speakers to explore these topics. The Bealtaine Gathering will also be a key opportunity for attendees to network, share experiences and give feedback on their challenges and needs as they look ahead to 2024.

Bealtaine Director Dr. Tara Byrne said: "The Gathering is such an important part of the Bealtaine Festival schedule as it both looks back (at the previous

festival) and forward to the next. This year in particular we've worked hard to make it as relevant as possible to our Bealtaine partners and we hope our deep dive on diversity and community will provide new insights on ways to work as well as some practical tips that even the most seasoned of arts organisers might need."

The keynote address Diversity Works Both Ways: Reciprocity is Vital will be given by Conny Groot, (Netherlands), who has worked extensively on inclusive arts projects that have brought together communities from different backgrounds. Her passion is to generate both cultural and social impact by stimulating the exchange of narratives through film, music and storytelling.

They will also be showcasing projects which exemplify building creative communities. Dance artist, Katy Hewison (Dance Limerick) will present on The Golden Flood of Memory, a moving intergenerational dance performance which was part of Bealtaine 2023. Community development worker Richie Keane will be telling about the creative

work of the members of Fatima Groups United as emerging creators. Curator, art historian and writer, Catherine Marshall will speak about the power of artist collectives through her work as a member of Na Cailleacha. Lucy Medleycott (Irish Street Arts, Circus and Spectacle) will ask you to consider new artforms with her innovative yet practical ideas for circus projects with older people.

The afternoon will draw together the main themes of the day, with Oein DeBhairduin, artist and Traveller Culture Collections Development Officer with the National Museum of Ireland chairing a discussion on diversity in our work. The panel will featuring Carmel

McKenna (Munster Academy of Irish Dance), Han Tiernan (researcher and producer) and Kevin Shanahan (Music Alive, Cork). Writer, Laurence McKeown, (Belfast), a recent winner of the Age & Opportunity Creative Ageing Writing Bursary, will provide a final thought for the day.

Also as part of the line up, the Creative Enquiry project (Cork), will launch their report on the arts, access and older people, and as part of this, there will be a very special performance from the project 'Built on Bridges' which features dance soloist Kevin Hayes, and the Mayfield Men's Shed Choir directed by Susan McManamon with 'Statio Bene'. 'Built on Bridges' was a large scale dance performance

exploring themes of home, identity and migration in connection with Cork City that premiered at the Cork Midsummer festival in 2023. This very special excerpt is especially provided for the Bealtaine Gathering, not to be missed!

Whether you regularly organise Bealtaine events or haven't had the opportunity for a number of years, they very much welcome you to join for the Bealtaine Gathering 2023. They will especially welcome smaller groups, individuals, artists, care setting representatives, as well as local authority representatives. Tickets for the day are €15/10\* with lunch provided. For full details and to book see [Bealtaine.ie](http://Bealtaine.ie).

## PALMERSTOWN CAMERA CLUB FEATURE MEMBERS IMAGES



At Palmerstown Camera Club they hold a weekly meeting in person, every Wednesday from 8 pm to 10 pm in the Palmerstown Parish Hall. People interested in joining the club or even attending one or two meetings FREE of charge to see how their photography could benefit from being a member can do so by contacting [Secretarypcc82@gmail.com](mailto:Secretarypcc82@gmail.com).

Recently in Palmerstown Camera Club, they held a judging night for a themed competition "Abstract", two winning images were 'Shadows' and a Gerald Phelan image namely 'Smoke'.



Pic credit: Enrique Carnicero



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## FITZGERALD NOT TO CONTEST 2024 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS

Frances Fitzgerald MEP for Dublin recently stated, "Over recent weeks I have taken time to reflect on the 2024 European Parliament Elections and have decided that I will not contest the Dublin constituency again. "I will continue to work hard in the European Parliament until the end of this term in 2024, representing people across the Dublin Constituency.

"As Fine Gael prepares for the 2024 European Elections I look forward to supporting and campaigning for our candidates, and particularly for the person that I hope will be supported by the voters and become my successor in Dublin. Democracy and peace are under immense strain, and we must elect people to the European Parliament who are fully committed to the founding values of the EU. "Over my career I have been fortunate to have played a part in shaping the building blocks as Ireland developed as a more mature, inclusive and open society.

"Since 1992 I have been privileged to serve as a Councillor, TD and Senator, and most recently as MEP for Dublin. I am grateful for the trust placed in me by voters in the constituencies of Dublin Bay South and Dublin Mid West, and particularly the loyalty and support shown to me in the Dublin Constituency at the 2019 European Parliament Elections. "As a member of Dail Eireann, I have appreciated the opportunities to serve as Tánaiste and in three Cabinet offices. Former Taoiseach Enda Kenny appointed me as Tánaiste and to the Ministries of Children and Youth Affairs, and Justice and Equality, and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar as Tánaiste also, and to Enterprise and Innovation.

"Those opportunities allowed me to bring forward important legislation, and to work in Government and as part of broader movements to deliver ground-breaking referendums which have delivered key changes in Ireland. It has been especially important to me that, as the Minister responsible, I was instrumental in bringing forward the Children's

Referendum and the Marriage Equality Referendum. "In the European Parliament, working with a superb team, I have informed and developed just and sustainable policies in a range of areas - equality, violence against women, the sustainable development goals, international development, trade, health, finance and banking.

"I would like to thank all those without whom none of the work was possible - my family and friends, the many Fine Gael members and elected representatives, and my staff and teams of supporters. To the colleagues with whom I have served and whose support, mostly in the best and occasionally in the worst of times, has been of incalculable value, my deepest gratitude. Their advice, guidance, friendship and kindness were vital. "Politics can be a singularly individual and, at times, lonely space, but it is also one in which strong, trusted and lasting relationships form and make tackling the challenges of democracy and governing possible. Much remains to be done. Children's rights, business and ethical international trade, and health issues will continue to be priorities for me.

"It will come as no surprise, that I will also continue my long-standing commitment to equality and women's rights, working to address the reality of our unfinished democracy by advancing the role of women as leaders in political and public life."

An Taoiseach and Fine Gael party leader Leo Varadkar said 'I was very sorry to hear that Frances had decided not to seek re-election to the European Parliament. Given the big vote she secured in 2019 and her hard work in Brussels and Dublin since then, I have no doubt that she would have been comfortably re-elected. The decision not to run again for elected office is a difficult and deeply personal one for any politician. I know Frances felt that this was the right time for her and in many ways, that's what matters the most.

"I have known Frances since I interned in her office as

a student, serving with her on the Front Bench of Fine Gael in opposition and appointed to cabinet on the same day. I was honoured when she agreed to serve as my Tánaiste when I became Taoiseach in 2017. In resigning from cabinet later that year, she did so selflessly in order to avoid an unnecessary General Election. Her position and actions were subsequently vindicated the following year. It helped to teach me the importance of due process, the danger of the rush to judgement that happens so often in politics but most of all the dignity and respect that comes when someone putting their party and country first.

"Frances is also among a very small number of politicians who have managed to get elected in two completely different constituencies in modern times. She is an example to any new candidate who is ambitious and also willing to do the groundwork as well as the policy work. "I can honestly say that few others have achieved so much in politics as Frances Fitzgerald. She changed Fine Gael and Ireland for the better helping to make us a more modern, equal and tolerant place. As Ireland's first Government Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, she established Túsla and ensured that our Constitution vindicated the rights and interests of children. She was the Minister responsible for the Marriage Equality referendum and brought through the Oireachtas the laws that gave effect to that historic vote. She served as an effective Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation and a loyal and capable Tánaiste.

"Frances came to politics believing that our country needed to be a safer place for women and a place in which women and girls had equality of opportunity. Thanks to Frances Fitzgerald and the women around her, we are on the cusp on achieving exactly that. The work goes on and I know Frances' decision not to contest re-election next year does not mean that she not remain actively involved and interested in public affairs, equality and social justice."



# 2023 NATIONAL 'APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR' AWARDS

The National Apprenticeship Office has awarded three outstanding Dubliners top category awards in the Generation Apprenticeship 'Apprentice of Year' awards 2023, out of a record number 222 nominees from across every county in Ireland. The 14 finalists including Dubliners Shakeel, Jamie and Gary won special category awards in their skilled area, across industries representing Hospitality, Healthcare, Hairdressing, Finance, Insurance, ICT, Property Services, Recruitment, Sales, Engineering, Biopharma, Logistics, Motor, Electrical and Construction.

Longford-native Hazel Johnston, Manufacturing Engineering apprentice with DePuy Synthes Cork took home the second-ever national title at the independently judged awards, standing as the first-ever female winner of the highly-coveted 'Apprentice of the Year' award. Commenting on her win, Hazel said she was "absolutely shocked and thrilled" to have won the award, sharing how "the apprenticeship has just transformed my education and my working life."

Pat O'Doherty Chairperson of the National Apprenticeship Alliance (NAA) announced the 2023 'Apprentice of the Year' and presented 14 exceptional finalists with a prestigious award in front

of a gathering of 500 guests in the Round Room of The Mansion House, Dublin.

Hailing from Lusk, Jamie Birmingham picked up a category award in 'Construction'. A former World Skills Ireland winner now proudly working as an apprentice plumber at Jones Engineering, he said: "It was an honour to be given the opportunity to speak on 'The Heroes Stage' at World Skills this year to talk about the impact, benefits and importance of apprenticeships and to be nominated for an award. I am delighted to win the 'Apprentice of the Year' category award - If you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life!"

Clondalkin-native Shakeel Jeeroburkan, winner of the 'Finance' award said: "Thanks to the NAO for the recognition and the kind words and most importantly, thank you for a very well-organised event. It is a proud moment for me and the entire team at Fidelity International. Winning the overall award in the Finance category means a lot and serves as a motivating factor to continue excelling in my career. Apprenticeships offer a great programme for everyone, no matter what age you are. A huge shoutout to everyone who's been a part of my journey so far, especially my mentors, colleagues, and lecturers at the National College of

Ireland. I'm looking forward to building on this success and contributing further with Generation Apprenticeship"

Ayrfield's Gary Whelan an Electrical Instrumentation apprentice at Diageo Ireland, said of his 'Electrical' category win: "I have been privileged to further my skills and education through my apprenticeship in electrical instrumentation with Diageo. It was an honour to be nominated for this award and now to win an award feels incredible".

Dr Mary Liz Trant Director of the National Apprenticeship Office said: "The NAO was delighted to present the national 'Apprentice of the Year' award for 2023 to Hazel Johnson and 14 exceptional finalists including Jamie, Shakeel and Gary from a 26,000-strong Generation Apprenticeship community of dedicated apprentices. The 'Apprentice of the Year' awards not only celebrate the apprentices nominated but also the power and impact of apprenticeship as a mode of learning and career development."

Minister Harris TD said, "Looking through the list of the 222 fantastic nominees, I can really see the talent we have in this country. Wishing warmest congratulations to each and every one of you. I want to thank each and every apprentice and employer for their unique role in supporting and developing our apprenticeship system."

Dr Trant said "Apprentices are transforming the landscape of Ireland's skilled workforce, bringing exceptional creativity and innovation, adaptability, leadership, fresh perspectives and a steadfast eagerness to learn that makes them valuable additions to any industry or workforce. Their contributions cannot be underestimated."



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# LOCAL STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM DCU



Oyinkansola Adeyemi, Tallaght, Dublin who received a BA in Business Studies during the third day of the October graduation ceremonies in DCU. Pic Credit: Kyran O'Brien



Pictured above Augusta Njongwe, Lucan, Dublin and Eva Newti, Ballymun, who received a BSc in Chemical and Pharma Sciences during the second day of the October graduation ceremonies in DCU. Pic Credit: Kyran O'Brien



Pictured left Rachel Gill, Kingswood, Tallaght, Dublin who received a BA in Education during the first day of the October graduation ceremonies in DCU. Pictured with her Parents Liam and Geraldine. Pic Credit: Kyran O'Brien

## FELLOWSHIP AWARD AT GRIFFITH COLLEGE



Actress and media personality Aoibhín Garrihy received a Leinster School of Music & Drama Fellowship Award at Griffith College Dublin's annual graduation ceremonies. The award was presented in recognition of Ms Garrihy's contribution to the Arts, specifically Speech and Drama.

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**MIRACLE PRAYER** Dear Heart of Jesus in the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask you for a very special one. Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in His merciful eyes it will become your favour and not mine. Amen. Say this prayer for three days. Promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. With grateful thanks to Our Lady for favours received. And thanks to the Sacred Heart for favours received. P.M

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If you would like a Novena published please send a postal order or cheque (Minimum of €10 per prayer) made out to Laura Lynn Children's Hospice, along with your Novena to:

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