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UNITED STATES
UNITED IRELAND

The Times They Are a-Changing

A letter from Ireland

a Chara,

This has been quite the week in Local government in the North of Ireland as local councils elected their Mayors or Council Chairs for the coming year. In the North, the Mayors and Chairs are elected by the council and serve a one-year term.

There are eleven councils, and this year Sinn Féin took the leadership role in six councils, including the largest urban councils of Belfast, Derry and Strabane, as well as councils covering Armagh, Fermanagh, and Tyrone.

In Antrim and Newtownabbey Council, Henry Cushinan became the first Sinn Féin member to serve as Mayor. Henry is a former political prisoner who served time in Long Kesh during the Blanket and Hunger strike protests.

In many ways, this first is a symbol of political change in Ireland. Before taking on the role, Henry paid his respects to those who had struggled in the gaols. His politics has not changed; he is a committed Irish Republican and United Irelander, but the growth of Sinn Féin and the peace process have changed the North.

For years, Sinn Féin did not contest elections in the North; all of that changed when Bobby Sands was elected an MP while on Hunger Strike in 1981. In 1983, Alex Maskey was elected to Belfast City Council in a by-election (special election) and became the first Sinn Féin Councillor in the city since the 1920s.

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soon be joined by other Sinn Féin Councillors.

The first election campaign I ever worked on was for Máirtín Ó Muilleoir when he was elected to the Council in 1987. Whistles would be blown when a Sinn Féin member tried to speak, and the Irish language was banned from the council. In his book, "The Dome of Delight", Máirtín details the rows, fist fights, court cases and protests that secured the right of Sinn Féin Councillors to be heard. All of that came at the cost of living with the threat of assassination and the loss of many party colleagues. Our offices were attacked, our members killed, a bomb was placed outside the party room in the Council, and we were censored by the governments from the media. Alex would go on to be the First Sinn Féin Mayor of Belfast and would be joined by others, including Máirtín.

Belfast Council has fundamentally changed. That change has been frustratingly slow, and a minority still hold out for the old days of Unionist dominance.

Sinn Féin is the largest party, and the Council has unveiled a strategy to promote the Irish language. The City Council, like the city itself, is now a shared place. The time I grew up in is now gone, and the city is in the hands of a new generation. The new Sinn Féin mayor is Róis-Máire Donnelly, a Gaeilgeoir (Irish language speaker) from the Ballymurphy area of West Belfast. She has promised to prioritise the needs of young people in the city and to promote the shared heritage of the Irish language. As the words of the song go, "the times they are a changin'."

Have a great weekend.

Is mise,

Ciarán

Ciarán Quinn is the Sinn Féin Representative to North America

Sinn Féin Vice President Michelle O'Neill to speak in San Francisco Friday, June 5

San Francisco, do not miss this opportunity to hear from Sinn Féin Vice President Michelle O'Neill on Friday, June 5th at 7:30pm. This is a exciting moment in Irish

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A Conversation With
**Sinn Féin Vice President
Michelle O'Neill**
Friday, June 5, 2026 - 7:30pm
United Irish Cultural Center
San Francisco, CA



Michelle O'Neill comments on Keir Starmer's apology to families of those killed in Springhill Massacre

Commenting on the British Prime Minister's apology to the families of the Springhill Massacre, Leas-Uachtarán Michelle O'Neill said, "The British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's apology to the families of those killed by the British Army in the Springhill massacre on 9 July 1972 – Fr Noel Fitzpatrick, Patrick Butler, John Dougal, David McCafferty and Margaret Gargan – is an important acknowledgement of the suffering endured by these families over many decades.

"Nothing can undo the pain and loss experienced by those who lost loved ones that day. But acknowledgment matters. The Springhill families deserve the truth, and they deserve to have that truth publicly recognised."

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Friends of Sinn Féin Store: OPEN

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Mary Lou McDonald to speak in Washington, DC on June 25th

Washington, DC! Join us on Thursday, June 25, 2026 at 6:00pm for a conversation with Mary Lou McDonald, the President of Sinn Féin, the largest political party in Ireland and Ireland's first woman leading the Opposition.

Hear an address from Mary Lou McDonald, followed by a fireside chat hosted by our friends at The New 32 Project. There will be time to meet and greet afterwards, as well as a chance to connect with activists who are part of the work being done to plan and prepare for a new and united Ireland.

Tickets are very limited and are required to attend.

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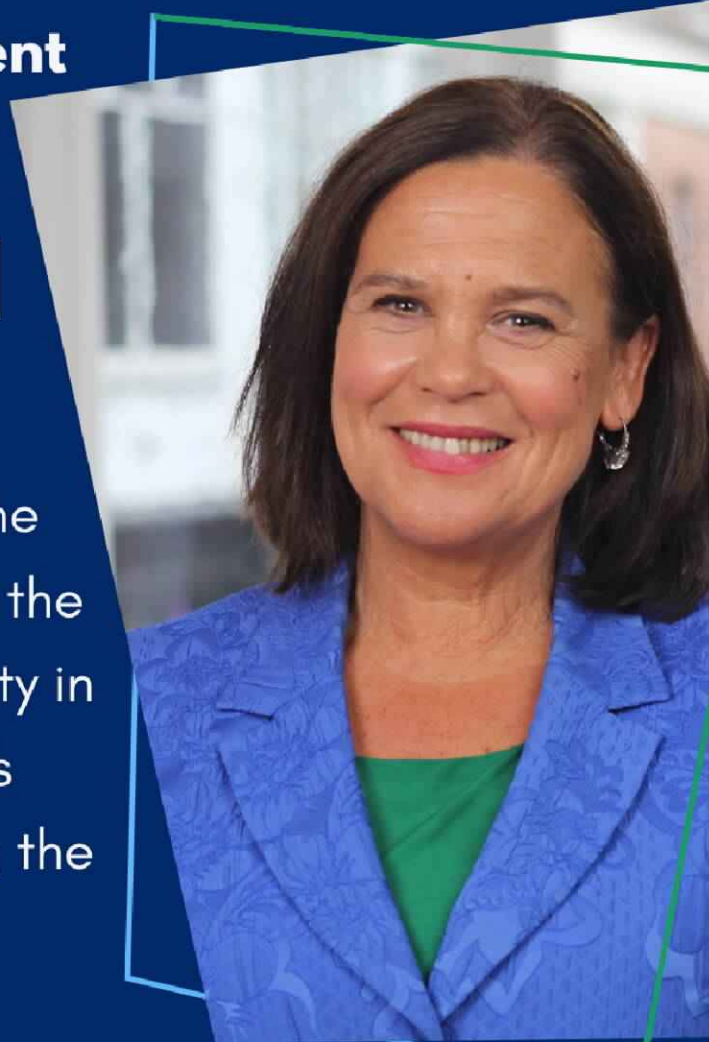
Friends of Sinn Féin & The New 32 Project present:

A conversation with

Sinn Féin President

Mary Lou McDonald

Join us for a conversation with the leader of Sinn Féin, the largest political party in Ireland and Ireland's first woman leading the Opposition.



6:00pm, Thursday, June 25
Exiles - 1610 U St NW,
Washington, DC

Tickets are required & limited.



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Join us for the Irish Unity Book Club - All are Welcome!

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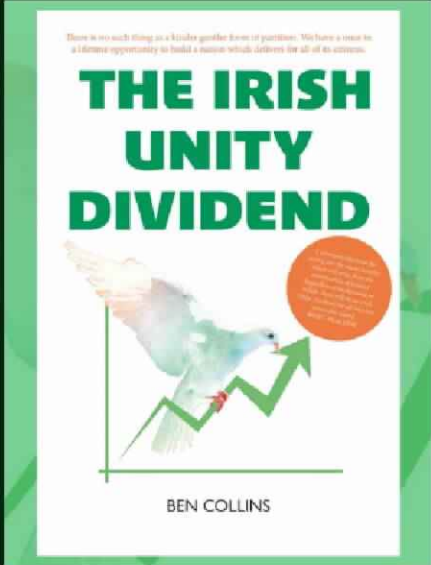
Join activists, readers, and leaders from across the country who will be learning more about the details and plans for a new and united Ireland.

We will meet on Zoom at 7:00pm ET on the last Tuesday of the month, starting in June. Meeting dates are on June 30, July 28, and August 25.

As a bonus, we will host a special call with author Ben Collins exclusively for participants in September.

[LEARN MORE AND SIGN UP HERE](#)

FRIENDS OF SINN FÉIN




BEN COLLINS

ONLINE STUDY GROUP

Irish Unity Study Group

Reading: *The Irish Unity Dividend*

Last Tuesday of each month
June 30 · July 28 · August 25

7:00pm ET · Online via Zoom

- All are welcome - free to join
- Study guide provided
- Facilitated small-group discussions
- Last call in September with special guest, Author Ben Collins

REGISTRATION OPEN TO ALL
NATION-WIDE BOOK READ

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Real concerns for Irish sovereignty as EU Migration and Asylum Pact operational date approaches

Speaking as the EU Migration and Asylum Pact operational date approaches next week, Sinn Féin spokesperson on Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, Matt Carthy TD, said the decision to lock Ireland into the pact was a major mistake by Government, has undermined Irish Sovereignty and will have serious long-term consequences.

Deputy Carthy said that even now significant questions remain unanswered in relation to the operation of the pact given Ireland is part of a common travel area with a state outside of the European Union.

Deputy Carthy criticised other parties for failing to be vocal enough in opposing the decision to sign up to the pact or in standing up for Irish Sovereignty during the passage of the International Protection Bill (which implements the pact) through the Oireachtas.

Teachta Carthy said, "Sinn Féin has been absolutely clear in our opposition to the EU Migration and Asylum Pact. As the operational date of the pact approaches next week real concerns remain about the implications of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael's decision to

“From the very beginning Sinn Féin made it clear that it was not in Ireland’s interests to sign up wholesale to the EU’s Asylum and Migration Pact. We have stated categorically we should retain sovereignty over these matters. We have voted against this pact at every opportunity.

“It was a serious mistake for Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael to opt-in to the pact. It was the wrong decision to hand-over powers on migration to the European Union. It will not fix the problems those parties have presided over in the international protection system. On this and other areas, the Irish Government should be defending the right of the Irish people to make these decisions, not handing more and more powers to Brussels.”



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