

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – World status bid for Moravian site

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Image of the day

World status site bid for Irish Moravian settlement

Bid to list Co Antrim Moravian church as cultural world heritage site - See in the media page

People and places



Air Ambulance enabled by Clogher Parish's Celebration of Hymns

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Following an unforgettable ‘Celebration of Hymns’ in the Ardhoven Theatre, Enniskillen, on November 12th, “it was a joy and a privilege this week to present the proceeds, after expenses, to Air Ambulance NI and to the Parish of Lisbellaw with Coolbuck. Warmest thanks again to our wonderful organist Lynda Lindsay for her very significant role in this venture”.

Bishop can't cook? - Holy Smoke in Derry



Holy smoke was present in abundance in Castlerock Parish Hall, this week, as one of Northern Ireland's leading celebrity chefs, Paula McIntyre, put Bishop Andrew Forster and Rev Chris MacBruithin (Rector of Castlerock) through



their paces at a ‘Can’t Cook, Won’t Cook’ contest in aid of parish funds.

The Parishioners of Castlerock and Dunboyne turned out in big numbers to support the event as well as their local Rector.

Paula demonstrated her culinary skills to the audience – preparing a pork fillet in cider sauce dish, with charred cabbage and potato roti – which her ‘victims’ were then invited to replicate. Bishop Andrew and Rev MacBruithin gave it their all, but with mixed results; at one point the Bishop set off the smoke alarm and he also managed to decommission a pair of cooking tongs.

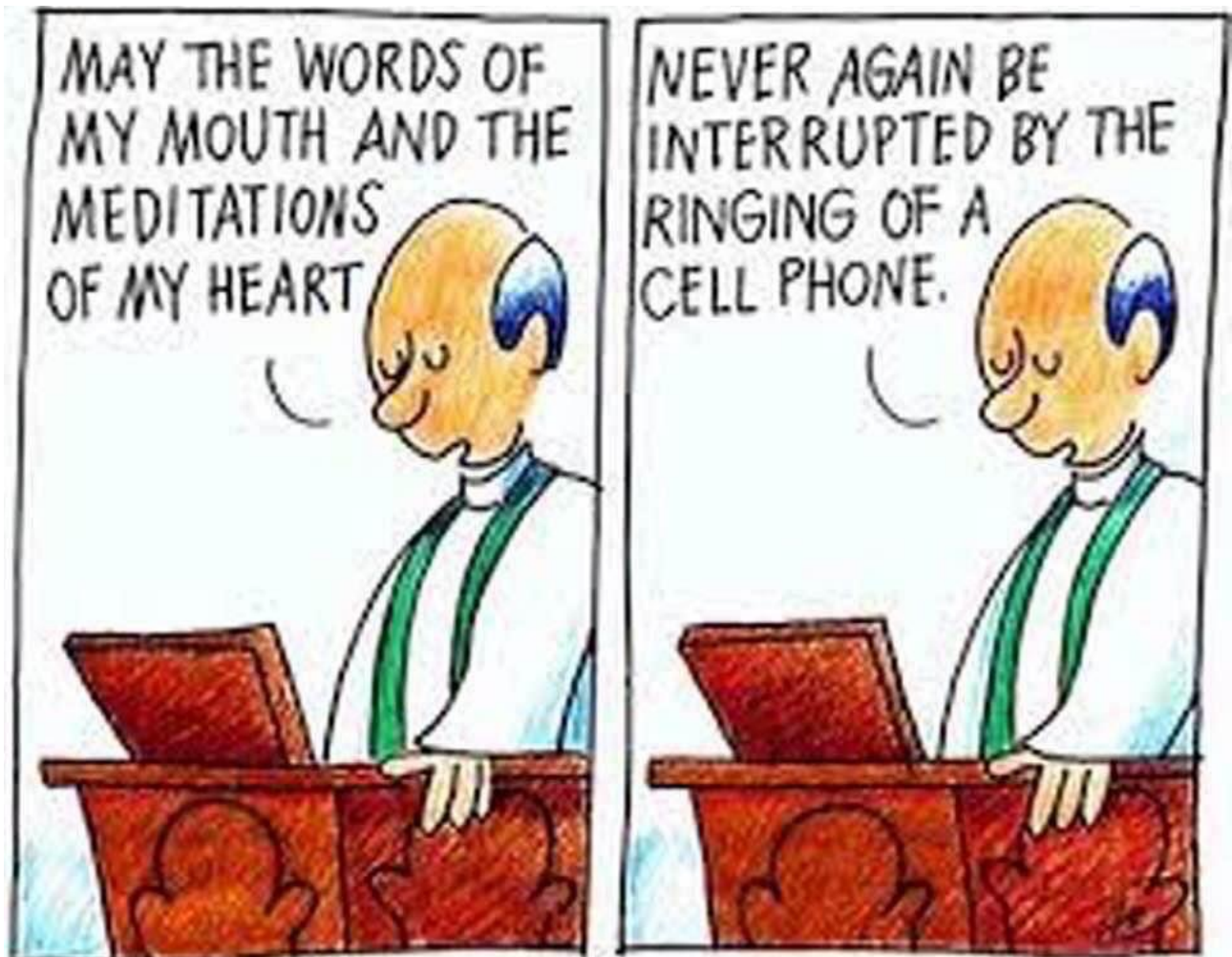
There was withering commentary throughout from Paula who had the audience in stitches.

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After the main course, the would-be chefs tried to follow their teacher's lead in preparing a pudding – crepe suzette.

If it takes courage to stand and cook in front of an audience, the award for bravest man in the hall surely went to Willie Oliver MBE,

who had the dubious honour of sampling both cooks' efforts and choosing a victor.



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In both instances, the award for 'finesse' went to Rev Chris; the main course was declared a draw, while Bishop Andrew conceded the dessert competition.

As Bishop Andrew was eager to point out, it wasn't the winning but the taking part that counted. Mr Oliver thanked and congratulated both contestants and there was warm applause for chef Paula who will have won many new fans for her excellent compering and culinary skills.



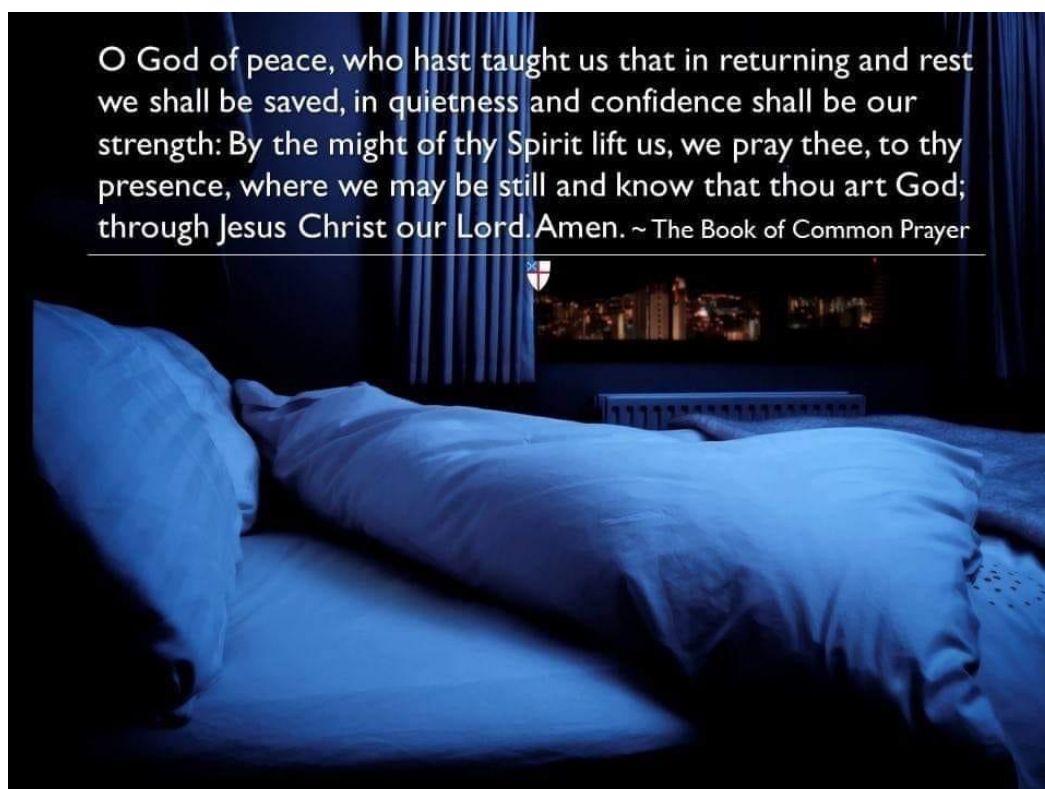
Memorial to Chaplain to Army Cadet Corps

Following the untimely passing of the Reverend Doctor Paul Bailie, adult volunteers across the battalion came together recently to dedicate and name the large classroom in Magilligan Cadet Training Centre in his memory. Colonel



Adrian Donalson said that the presence of his widow, Mrs Anne Bailie was greatly appreciated by the organisation.

Mrs Anne Bailie with Colonel Adrian Donaldson



Padre Baillie also had an extensive involvement with church growth and support in Africa.

News reports

Dublin minister to be next Moderator

For the first time in nearly a quarter of a century, a minister from a congregation in the Republic of Ireland will become Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI).

Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney, the minister of Adelaide Road Presbyterian Church in Dublin was elected Moderator-Designate of the all-island denomination yesterday evening (7 February) in the Church's annual election for its principal public representative.

Brought up in Ballycastle in County Antrim, the 60 year-old father of three received the most votes from the Church's 19 regional presbyteries when they met in various locations across Ireland. Dr Mawhinney, who has been minister of the city centre church since 2008, will be the denomination's 178th Moderator since 1840.

Dr Mawhinney was one of two nominees for the Church to choose from this year, which traditionally elects the Moderator-Designate on the first Tuesday in February. He will be formally elected as Moderator by the Church's General Assembly in June and will be the first Moderator from a congregation in the Republic of Ireland since the year

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2000, when County Dublin minister, Rev Trevor Morrow of Lucan Presbyterian Church, was elected to lead the Church. Until then Dr Mawhinney will be known as the Moderator-Designate and continue to serve in his congregation.

Speaking about his election, the Moderator-Designate said, “I am genuinely surprised and humbled by my election this evening. It is a position I have not sought, but happily accept as God’s will for my life. While in some respects it is quite a daunting task, I know that God’s help is promised for every task we are called to and I therefore thank Him for the opportunity to serve the Church in the year ahead.”

Votes

The minister of Drumreagh Presbyterian Church in County Antrim, Rev Richard Murray, was also considered for election alongside Dr Mawhinney. Each received the following votes:

- Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney 10 votes: The Presbyteries of Ards, North Belfast, South Belfast, East Belfast, Carrickfergus, Derry & Donegal, Dromore, Dublin & Munster, Monaghan, and Templepatrick
- Rev Richard Murray 9 votes: The Presbyteries of Armagh, Ballymena, Coleraine & Limavady, Down, Iveagh, Newry, Omagh, Route, and Tyrone.

As a boy, Dr Mawhinney grew up on the North Coast and worshiped with his family in Ballycastle Presbyterian Church, attending Ballycastle Primary and Ballycastle High Schools.

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It was during his time at High School, where Dr Mawhinney was head boy, he became conscious of being called to ministry within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. As he explained, the reality of this was so overwhelming he decided to study medicine at Queen's University, Belfast, but become a missionary doctor. "In many ways I considered this an acceptable compromise," he said.



Medical practitioner

After he left Queen's in 1986 Dr Mawhinney (Photo above) spent five years working in Altnagelvin Hospital in Derry/Londonderry, Waveney Hospital in Ballymena, the Holywell Hospital in Antrim and Templepatrick General Medical Practice, becoming a member of the Royal College of General Practitioners in 1991.

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“Having fully qualified as a GP, the question arose again about ministry within PCI, as that strong sense of call had remained with me. With the advice of a trusted minister, I was encouraged to test the call and see if this was from God,” he said.

“The process was a thorough one as I explored the idea of a call to medicine verses a call to church ministry in my presbytery interview. At each stage God graciously confirmed my sense of call to the latter and I was accepted to begin training for the Presbyterian Ministry at the Church’s Union Theological College in September 1992. As I had a year to wait before I started, I was able to spend that time in Kenya, serving as doctor at the Presbyterian Church of East Africa’s hospital in Kikuyu, 10 or so miles northwest of the capital Nairobi.”

Ministerial training

As part of his ministerial training, Dr Mawhinney was the assistant to the minister of Old Park Presbyterian Church in north Belfast in 1995 for two years, before he was ordained as minister of Cahir and Fermoy Presbyterian Churches, a joint charge in Counties Tipperary and Cork respectively. He and his wife Karen lived in Fermoy with their three sons before being called to Adelaide Road Presbyterian Church, where Dr Mawhinney has served since 2008.

Speaking personally about his journey of faith, Dr Mawhinney said, “I grew up in a Christian family home and remember listening to Rev David Armstrong of CSSM, the Children's Special Service Mission, which was later to become Scripture Union. He preached in my primary school

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canteen of all places when I was eight or nine and it was then that I came to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

“My faith deepened in my teenage years, I became a member of my home church when I was 16 and when I was 17/18 I served with Portrush CSSM under Rev Godfrey Brown, who himself became Moderator in the late 1980s. As a disciple of Jesus, at Queen’s the outworking and deepening of my faith lead to me being offered positions of leadership, becoming Prayer Secretary of Queen’s Christian Union and its President in 1983/1984. It was during this time there was a real involvement of students from the Republic which inspired me, developing the sense of call I had to serve south of the border.”

Adelaide Road has become an international church

Today he ministers to around 110 families in the city centre congregation totalling around 150 people. “We are in the heart of inner city south Dublin where Adelaide Road has become an international church. For many years we were happy to share our church building with the Dublin Korean Church until recently and still welcome the Japanese Christian Fellowship that meet in our building once a month.

“We are Bible-centred and evangelical, with a heart for serving the local community. In preparing God’s people for those works of service, we seek to serve one another in love and encourage engagement with the local community in mission that is relationship based and gospel focused. Our ethos tries to hold this outward focus,” Dr Mawhinney said.

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Originally built in 1841, the year following the establishment of PCI, by the 1980s, the church considered moving from the city centre. “I am pleased to say that in 1989 the congregation took the prayerful decision to ‘Stay and Share Jesus’. It was a great decision as the local population is diverse, from those living in social housing, to modern apartments and expensive private homes, and student communities – everyone needs to hear the Good News!”

Describing his own ministry, Dr Mawhinney said, “I believe that when God’s word is taught, God’s word is heard. I therefore see preaching as my primary task and have sought to preach well and relevantly throughout my ministry. For many years I have attended regularly the Irish Preachers Conference and presently serve on its organising committee.”

Third minister of Adelaide Road to be Moderator

Dr Mawhinney will be the 11th minister serving in a Dublin congregation to become Moderator and the third serving in Adelaide Road to be elected. Dr Mawhinney’s immediate predecessor at Adelaide Road, Rev Dr Frank Sellar, was elected Moderator in 2016, eight years after he left. Thinking about his forthcoming year in office, he said, “While a little daunted, I am very much looking forward to serving Christ in a very different way. During my time, I would like to highlight the work of God in Ireland, particularly south of the border where I have lived, raised our three children with my wife Karen and ministered for nearly 25 years.

“I am genuinely excited by the green shoots of Church growth and want to encourage us to look outside of

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ourselves. As we witness a rising tide of society's unbelief we need to remind ourselves that "if God is for us", as we read in Romans 8:31, we are able to deal with the reality of a changing Ireland and begin to move forward and rediscover the confidence and the blessing of our faith."

"God is love and so he moved towards us humbly and with self-giving, and my desire for the Church is that we would be confident in our Christian faith and loving in our desire to move towards people with the message of salvation in an attitude of service," he said.

A vision of confident Christianity

Dr Mawhinney continued, "As Moderator I am looking forward to sharing with the church this vision of confident Christianity. I am also looking forward to having a front row seat and being able to travel and visit the Church across Ireland. It will be a real blessing to have an opportunity to support and pastor our ministers and people."

The Moderator-Designate concluded by saying, "I am sure that my own journey of Christian discipleship during this time will be both a good and challenging one, and I am also confident that, as the Apostle Paul tells us in Philippians, "he who began a good work in me will carry it on until the day of Christ Jesus."

When he is not in the pulpit, or visiting members of his congregation, Dr Mawhinney relaxes by doing bits of DIY, tidying the garden and watching sport and TV dramas. As a former hockey player he also enjoys sport and road cycling

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in particular. A keen Manchester City supporter, he was until recently manager of YMCA Dublin's 1st IX hockey team.

Dr Mawhinney will be officially nominated to this year's General Assembly at its Opening Night in Belfast in the third full week of June when he will succeed the current Moderator, Rt Rev Dr John Kirkpatrick. Dr Kirkpatrick will continue in office as the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's principal public representative until then.

Disagreements over sexuality 'tarnish' Church of England's reputation - bishop

Long-standing divisions over human sexuality have "cast a shadow" over the Church of England's Christian witness, the Bishop of London told the General Synod on Monday.

The Church of England's governing body is meeting this week in London to discuss deeply divisive proposals to permit same-sex blessings.

In a presentation to Synod, Bishop Sarah Mullally said that "these particular disagreements mar our life together, tarnish our reputation in the world we are called to serve, and distract from God's mission".

"They are a source of discouragement and doubt for us in the Church, dragging us away from the 'love, joy and celebration of our common humanity' that the gospel calls us to; they cast a shadow over our witness to Christ, the

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good news of salvation and redemption that we long to embody and declare," she said.

Further on in her presentation, the bishop said that LGBT people had been treated "inhumanely" by the Church and that the proposals on the table would address the "urgent necessity for pastoral change" towards same-sex couples "without changing the Church's doctrine of holy matrimony".

"That is because they do not set the couple's relationship in the context of a biblical and theological understanding of marriage and they do not use any of the liturgical material of the Church of England's authorised services of marriage," she said.

Bishop Mullally said that she and the other bishops had received "countless" impassioned letters and emails expressing "seemingly opposing views in the name of Christ" and that it appeared that God was calling the Church to "live with our disagreements".

"For some unfathomable reason, God, it seems, has allowed us to continue to disagree – disappointingly refusing to engineer a Damascus road experience for one side or the other, either in the Church of England or across the Anglican Communion," she said.

Bishop Mullally said the question for the Church was how to live with their disagreements "without causing each other so much pain and bringing the Church into humiliating disrepute".

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The plans to bless same-sex couples have been proposed by the bishops on the back of feedback from the Living in Love and Faith (LLF) discernment process on the issues of marriage, relationships, sexuality and identity.

The Bishop of London was chair of the LLF Next Steps Group of bishops who were tasked with formulating proposals to take the Church forward.

Evangelicals have responded to the proposals for same-sex blessings with concerns about their future in the Church of England. Some have expressed the fear that it is only a matter of time before the Church changes its doctrine on marriage as a lifelong union between a man and a woman.

Ahead of a major debate on the proposals today (Wednesday), Bishop Mullally said she did not want the Church to split over this issue.

"To separate, to walk apart would impoverish the Church of England," she said.

"The costlier and more narrow way is to walk together, to bear with one another, to suffer the discomfort of our diversity and difference within the body of Christ, to suffer being misunderstood and perhaps even reviled for refusing to say to a fellow follower of Christ – 'I don't need you'."

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In the media

Bid to list Co Antrim Moravian church as cultural world heritage site

A bid to list a preserved Moravian site in Co Antrim as Northern Ireland's first cultural world heritage site has been launched, Jonathan McCambridge of Press Association writes in the Belfast Telegraph.

The proposal to Unesco is part of a transnational bid involving three global sites – Bethlehem in Pennsylvania in the US, Herrnhut in Saxony, Germany, and Gracehill, near Ballymena.

If successful, Gracehill would be elevated to a status alongside the likes of the Taj Mahal and Great Wall of China.

All three settlements are associated with the Moravian Church, one of the oldest Protestant denominations in Christianity

Gracehill is the best preserved Moravian settlement on the island of Ireland.

The village was laid out in the 18th century as a settlement of the Moravian Church and was designated as Northern Ireland's first conservation area in 1975.

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The nomination is being led by the US in conjunction with the German and UK governments.

It is the first multi-country bid in the 45-year history of the World Heritage Convention to be led by the US.

Colum Boyle, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Communities, has welcomed the development and thanked the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) for co-ordinating the UK part of the three-nation bid.

He said: “Gracehill is an important part of our diverse heritage and the department has been pleased to work with the local community and council over many years as they have sought to preserve the village and ensure that its potential can be realised.

“If successful in securing world heritage site status, Gracehill and the wider community will benefit culturally and economically from this important accolade that will further protect an important piece of history for future generations.”

UK arts and heritage minister Lord Parkinson said: “This wonderfully well-preserved 18th-century settlement offers a fascinating insight into the history of the Moravian Church and its community of worshippers.

“The village of Gracehill would be a worthy recipient of the first cultural Unesco world heritage site in Northern Ireland, complementing the natural heritage of the Giant’s Causeway and Causeway Coast. I look forward to supporting this bid in the coming months.”

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David Johnston of the Gracehill Trust believes securing world heritage status would be “hugely significant” to Northern Ireland.

He said: “Gracehill has been a good news story for 250 years and for the last 20 years we have been working with international partners to achieve world heritage status.

“The prize of world heritage designation would be hugely significant, and granting Northern Ireland its first cultural world heritage listing would bring benefits for tourism, the economy, regeneration, job creation and even reconciliation, whilst enriching the profile for the whole region.

“This is a unique opportunity to achieve something of lasting significance that everyone can be proud of and share in, with substantial potential benefits now and for generations to come.”

The Department for Communities and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council have provided financial support and expertise to Gracehill Trust to commission an international consultant to carry out research and prepare a nomination document to Unesco.

Mayor of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Noel Williams, added: “The purpose of world heritage is to help recognise and preserve the named area for present and future generations.

“Gracehill is an area of our borough that we are very proud of and for that reason we would champion any plans that preserve it.”

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The transnational nomination will be considered for inscription on the world heritage list by the Unesco world heritage committee next year.

The Giant's Causeway in Co Antrim was designated as a natural world heritage site in 1986, but if successful Gracehill would be the first in Northern Ireland to be granted cultural world heritage status.

Courtesy The Belfast Telegraph 06/02/2023

**Webinars,
music,
resources,
broadcasts,
and books**



**Who is
governing
Northern
Ireland?
New Pivotal Briefing**

New Pivotal Briefing published 7th February 2023 - Northern Ireland has not had an Executive for over a year. The First

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Minister resigned on 3 February 2022, leaving Departments with caretaker ministers but no Executive. On 28 October, these caretaker ministers ceased to be in post. This Briefing looks at who is now taking decisions in Northern Ireland, and considers the implications for government and local public services.

Ann Watt (photo) is the Director of Pivotal Public Policy Think Tank. Ann is a former civil servant with 20 years experience in Belfast and London. Most recently Ann was Head of the Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland. Before this she worked in London in the Treasury, Cabinet Office and Home Office.

You can access the briefing here

<https://www.pivotalppf.org/cmsfiles/Publications/20230206-who-is-governing-Northern-Ireland-final-briefing.pdf>

Ending Homelessness and mental health

Patricia and Sean are the voice of experience within the Simon Community's report on Mental Health and Homelessness in partnership with Depaul Ireland - Ending Homelessness. They share their stories about dealing with mental health and homelessness here in Northern Ireland. Former Simon Community client Sean states, "If you get the right help at the right time for your mental health, you mightn't become homeless and might be able to work on your problems and resolve your issues." Click the link below to download the full report:

<https://simoncommunity.org/homelessness/knowledge-hub/mental-health-homelessness>

Brighter Communities fund

The December Brighter Communities winner is HUG (Helping You Grieve). HUG offers support, friendship and understanding to men and women who have lost their partners through bereavement.

The funding will be used to facilitate sessions for members to come together to try new experiences. Group activities and outings will be used as a means to build users' confidence whilst simultaneously bringing people together and helping to develop new social connections.

The Brighter Communities fund is designed to help and support local community groups, both large and small. Apply today at www.powerni.co.uk/community/brighter-communities.

Two fantastic events for schools and students in Belfast

Arts Council of Northern Ireland Belfast Music Education Authority - We have two fantastic events for schools and students coming up in the next few weeks which are now available to book:

Our new teen/young adult opera, 'Nobody/Somebody' which tells the story of youth activism and a campaign for better housing has a schools performance on Friday 3 March at 11 am as part of the wonderful Belfast Children's Festival Young at Art. Tickets for this schools performance are £5

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per student, with every tenth teacher free and it is being staged in the Elmwood Hall in Belfast.

If you know a school who would like to attend, please contact c.keaveney@niopera.com - there is a limited transport budget available for school groups attending this event too

<https://niopera.com/performances/nobody-somebody/>

On 22 February as part of the NI Science Festival, join the brilliant Dr Trevor Agus in the Harty Room, QUB Music where he'll be presenting a talk on the crossover between music and science about tuning - how do we know what sounds 'right'. James Henry Piano Services will also be taking part in this event.

This talk is part of the school and education programme and suitable for 14+ and should be of interest to music GCSE, A'Level and music and tech degree students. Booking is essential but tickets are free: find out more on their website. <https://niopera.com/performances/10-good-reasons-to-sing-out-of-tune/>

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com
