

THE IRISH JOURNALIST



Newsletter of the National Union of Journalists in Ireland

November 2017

BIENNIAL IRISH DELEGATE CONFERENCE, DUBLIN, NOVEMBER 18

Valuing journalism at a time of challenge

'Valuing Journalism' is the theme of the Biennial Irish Delegate Conference, which takes place in the Gresham Hotel, Dublin, on Saturday, November 18.

The theme reflects the union's commitment to protecting journalists and journalism at a time when editorial values are under attack and newsrooms left bereft of resources.

NUJ President Tim Dawson and General Secretary, Michelle Stanistreet, will address

delegates and the conference will be chaired by Belfast and District member Gerry Carson, who jointly chairs the IEC with Felicity McCall, Derry & North West branch.

Motions dealing with pay, employment rights, training, pensions and media freedom will be debated, while the topical issue of negotiating for equality will be the focus of a seminar chaired by Blathnaid Ní Chofaigh, Dublin Broadcasting branch. In all 15 motions have been submitted.

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Cathal Mac Coille, pictured on left with some familiar faces at an NUJ protest outside Leinster House against Section 31 of Broadcasting Act in the early 1980s, will be among several NUJ members to receive Life Membership certificates this weekend. Also in the photo are Fintan Drury, Padraig Ó Ciardha, Charlie Bird, Sean Duignan and Sean O'Rourke.

Valuing journalism at a time of challenge

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Michelle Stanistreet will be joined on the panel by Natasha Morris, Legal and Equality Officer, NUJ; Esther Lynch, Confederation Secretary, European Trade Union Congress; and by Ethel Buckley, newly appointed Deputy General Secretary, SIPTU. The seminar theme is 'Mind the Gap' and there will be an emphasis on tacking the gender pay gap within the media.

With the recent passing of the Competition (Amendment) Act this year, conference will turn its attention to how the NUJ can best represent freelance workers and the first motion on the agenda calls on the union to campaign for new freelance agreements, while Dublin P&PR branch deal with the threat to workers from the so called gig economy.

Low pay within the regional sector will be highlighted by Irish South West branch.

Once again Belfast and District branch will draw attention to the fact that no one has been convicted for the murder of investigative journalist and Belfast Branch officer Martin O'Hagan. The branch is

seeking an ongoing IEC campaign, with the topic being a standing item on the agenda of each IEC meeting.

In his report, Irish Secretary Séamus Dooley draws attention to the successes achieved by the union in Ireland over the past two years but also renews warnings issued at the last two conferences about the need for branch renewal and strategic recruitment to compensate for the significant loss in membership, notably in the national press sector.

On Friday night, the traditional eve of conference reception will be held to honour life members of the union. Tim Dawson will present life membership certificates to a diverse group of members, the best known of whom is undoubtedly Vincent Browne. Vincent has had a turbulent relationship with many NUJ members over the years but has proudly retained his membership. Among the other recipients will be recently retired Morning Ireland presenter Cathal Mac Coille and former union activists Brian Trench, Ann Cahill and Geraldine Collins.



Bláthnaid Ní Chofaigh will chair a seminar on pay inequality in the workplace, 'Mind the Gap: Inequality at Work', with a particular focus on gender discrimination, at the Irish Delegate Conference on Saturday.

Setting journalist standards that encourage trust

IEC Cathaoirleach Gerry Carson's welcome to delegates

As Cathaoirleach, I hope you enjoy this online edition published to coincide with the Biennial Delegate Conference in the Gresham Hotel, Dublin.

I hope those honoured for 40 years membership enjoy making the news.

Elsewhere in these pages there are details about those receiving Certificates and the lead story sketches out the programme for tomorrow.

Much has happened worldwide in the two years since our previous Delegate Meeting and while we might just be a small island on the edge of Europe, major events do find a way of affecting lives here in Ireland, both North and South. And journalists are the key to helping communities everywhere understand what is happening and why .

Indeed, at local level, journalists are often the only members of the public able and willing to ask questions and demand answers from those in authority, be they government, local councils or political parties of every hue!

So journalists — real journalists, not the self appointed bloggers of the world — are vitally important in helping people understand crucial matters and make informed decisions about families, about jobs, education, health, justice and all the other matters which affect lives on our little island.

More important than ever, people need to trust journalists to reflect with truth, fairness and impartiality, stories carried in the pages of newspapers, on radio stations, television channels and digitally on the internet. And in the islands of the UK and Ireland, those journalists on whom the public can really depend are those who belong to the National Union of Journalists.

And that's because the NUJ has standards, defended with vigour, which set out how ethical journalists should behave in following their profession. The NUJ Code of Conduct has as the first principle the requirement that a member "At all times upholds and defends the principle of media freedom, the right of freedom of expression and the right of the public to be informed". And the second principle that "A member strives to ensure



that information disseminated is honestly conveyed, accurate and fair".

So I believe that all journalists in these islands should seek membership and help to fight the ever present pressures on the media, the constant and often unfair demands of media owners, the increasing work loads and the unjust pay and conditions which many face daily in simply trying to carry out their profession to the best of their ability.

Union membership brings solidarity and power and, used carefully, can change and enhance lives. And of course the NUJ offers advice and support in fighting work place injustices. It offers training and many other benefits and over the past two years the Irish Executive Council has been involved in many activities reflecting the needs of members, not just within the UK and Ireland, but in other countries where journalism is under threat.

There is the almost constant abuse of power, absence of truth and freedom of expression that flows from the mouth and keypad of the President of the United States, the shameful lies which brought about the Brexit shambles in the UK, and the daily revelations about sexual misbehaviour in the world of films, the arts and in Parliaments.

Then there are the attacks on media workers world wide, the crackdown in Turkey, the worrying situation in Spain and, closer to home, the challenges facing the Dáil and the continuing absence of local political government in the North of this island.

There have, of course, been successes in Ireland and perhaps the most welcome is the Competition Bill which now gives media freelance workers in the Republic the right to be represented by the NUJ. I was pleased to attend the Dáil with Leas Cathaoirleach Bernie Ní Fhlatharta to help in lobbying support for this Bill.

And I was privileged to lead a team also involving IEC colleague Ronan Brady, to address the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Dáil on the matter of the abuse of media workers in Turkey. Earlier in the same year, I led a deputation to the Turkish Embassy where we spent an hour outlining our concerns about media colleagues in that country.

I have been to seminars held by the Policing Authority, to the launch of its Annual Report, and to the launch of the Annual Report of the Press Council. I was with Irish Secretary Seamus Dooley at the launch in Áras an Uachtaráin of a Report on Ethical Standards in the Workplace. I represented the union at seminars held by ICTU and was part

of the delegation that attended its three-day-long Delegate Meeting in Belfast.

On a more sombre note, I attended a number of funerals of distinguished members, both North and South. There were, sadly, many such attendances, but two in particular were rather special for me.

One was in London for Lionel Morrison, the first black person to be union President and a truly inspirational figure who was both innovative, sensitive, yet tough and softly spoken. And the other was in the wilds of Donegal, on the edge of the Atlantic, for a unique celebration of the life of another former union President, Paul McGill, who at one time was chairman of the Belfast branch of the union.

And so, as the membership of the Irish Executive Council changes this weekend, I say thanks to all outgoing members for their help and dedication over the past two years, I say a special thanks to vice-chairperson Felicity McCall and to Leas Cathaoirleach Bernie Ní Fhlatharta and record my gratitude to Seamus, Ian, Evelyn and Helen for their hard work on behalf of members and their challenges of keeping me on the straight and narrow.

I offer congratulations to the new IEC line-up and encourage them to continue the drive for new recruits. I wish them well in the undoubted challenges that lie ahead.

Gerry Carson
Cathaoirleach IEC
Belfast and District Branch

NUJ salutes media veterans

Broadcaster and former editor Vincent Browne, recently retired RTÉ presenter Cathal Mac Coille, academic Brian Trench and Cork writer Mary Leland will be among those receiving Life Membership certificates from NUJ President Tim Dawson at a function in the Gresham Hotel, Dublin at 7.30pm this Friday, November 17.

The recipients all have more than 40 years membership of the NUJ and represent a variety of strands of the Irish media. A notable feature of the biennial event will be the number of photographers honoured including Matt Kavanagh, Ray Cullen and Liam O'Connor.

Those who will be honoured are:

**Raymond Cullen, Dublin;
Michael Hilliard, Dublin;
Hugh Oram, Dublin P&PR;
Matthew Kavanagh, Dublin Freelance;
Liam O'Connor, Dublin;
Kenneth Kelly, West of Ireland;
Michael Glynn, West of Ireland;
Brian Trench, Dublin Freelance;
James Rhatigan, Irish South East;
Mary Leland, Cork Freelance;
Cathal MacCoille, Dublin Broadcasting;
Finbarr Coughlan, Cork;
Geraldine Collins, Dublin;
Ann Cahill, Cork;
Donal Buckley, Dublin;
Vincent Browne, Dublin P&PR;
Patsy McArdle, Irish Eastern;
Gene Yore, Irish Eastern.**

Members of the incoming Irish Executive Council 2018-2019

The newly elected incoming Irish Executive Council will serve a two year term starting with their first meeting in the New Year.

The Council meets about six times a year and a General Purposes Committee (GPC) meets in between.

The new Council will elect its Cathaoirleach and other officers at their first meeting in January.

Broadcasting (3)

Cearbhall O Siochan, Dublin;
(JS) Hazel Nolan, Dublin;
(JS) Emma Ní Riain, Co Wicklow;
 Sean Folan, Dublin.

Freelance (4)

Kieran Fagan Co Dublin;
 Ann Healy, Co Galway;
 Anton McCabe, Co Tyrone;
 Kathryn Johnston, Antrim.

Regional Newspapers (4)

Siobhan Holliman, Co Galway;
 Carolyn Farrar, Co Donegal;
 Dara Bradley, Galway;
 Michael Fisher, Co Monaghan.

PR & Information (1)

Gerry Curran, Dublin.

Magazine & Books (1)

Ronan Brady, Dublin.

Reserved Seat for Northern Ireland (1)

(JS) Gerry Carson, Antri;
(JS) Bernie Mullen, Co Tyrone.

NEC – Republic of Ireland (2)

(JS) Emma O’Kelly, Dublin;
(JS) Paula Geraghty, Dublin;
 Barry McCall, Dublin.

NEC – Northern Ireland (1)

(JS) Ciaran O Maolain, Armagh;
(JS) Anton McCabe, Co Tyrone.

Observer (representing New Media sector)

Phil MacGiolla Bhain, Co Donegal.

Observer (representing Black Members sector)

Meraj Abid Mahmood, Dublin.

National Newspapers (2)

VACANT

Retired Members Section Representative

VACANCY



Anything to add?

The Irish Journalist needs a regular supply of articles, photos and news

snippets. Please email irishjournalist@nuj.ie with your contributions and ideas.

Putting the focus firmly on pay inequality

By Séamus Dooley

Publication of the Mulvey report on the gender pay gap in RTÉ has helped sharpen the focus on pay discrimination within the media in Ireland.

The appointment of Kieran Mulvey to independently review gender pay and roles within RTÉ following high profile cases at the BBC, where the NUJ is now engaged in tacking a massive number of pay discrimination cases.

Mr Mulvey, former Chief Executive of the WRC, found that RTÉ's 4pc gender pay gap was well below the norm in Irish public bodies but the situation was worse at higher levels and he identified particular issues in News and Current Affairs.

The RTÉ sub branch has established a committee to examine pay inequality within the organisation. While there are many inequalities - including linguistic and regional disparities, the issue of gender pay is a priority. The union views the Mulvey process as a flawed for a number of reasons.

The RTÉ trade union group had no input into the terms of reference, which excluded those not engaged on full-time contracts of service.

The exclusion of contracts and those forced to work on bogus self-employed contracts



Equality in focus: RTE Arts and Media correspondent Sinead Crowley discusses the NUJ demand for an end to the gender pay gap and bogus self employed contracts with Séamus Dooley, Irish Secretary.

meant that the report did not convey the full picture in RTÉ.

The NUJ welcomes Mulvey's emphasis on greater emphasis on transparency, on the need to address pay inequality and clear, open reporting on pay.

Of particular significance was the parallel announcement of a review of contracts in RTÉ, following on from ground breaking coverage on Drivetime of the bogus contracts highlighted by the NUJ.

Philip Boucher Hayes demonstrated the value of public service broadcasting by challenging the situation within RTÉ itself and the NUJ shaped the post Mulvey agenda by placing the spotlight on the inconsistent approach adopted by RTÉ in forcing some staff to

become "self-employed" despite meeting all the tests which define employees.

There's a strong gender dimension to the contract issue. If you are deemed to be self-employed you don't qualify for paid maternity leave, precarious employment has particular implications for those with caring responsibilities – not exclusively but still predominantly women.

It must be said that many NUJ members in the private sector view RTÉ as a model employer and yes, Mulvey's findings confirm that strong trade union agreements have ensured that many staff are well paid. Others are not and increasingly there is concern at employment practises in RTÉ.

NewsBrands Journalism Awards 2017

Catherine Fegan of the Irish Daily Mail was the winner of the Journalist of the Year title at the NewsBrands Ireland Journalism Awards 2017, announced earlier this month.

This year's competition, sponsored by the National Lottery, featured entries in 25 categories and the winners were presented with their awards at a ceremony in the Mansion House in Dublin.

Business Story of the Year

John Meagher, Irish Independent

Business Journalist of the Year

Jack Horgan-Jones, Sunday Business Post

Columnist (Broadsheet)

Fintan O'Toole, The Irish Times

Columnist (Popular)

Lynda McCarthy, Sunday World

Crime Journalist

Michael O'Toole, Irish Daily Star

Crime Story

Michael O'Toole, Irish Daily Star

Critic

Patrick Freyne, The Irish Times

Digital Excellence

The Irish Times Abroad, Ciara Kenny

Features (Broadsheet)

Conor Lally, The Irish Times

Features (Popular)

Catherine Fegan, Irish Daily Mail & The Irish Mail on Sunday

Foreign Coverage

Ruadhán Mac Cormaic, The Irish Times

Front page

Irish Daily Mirror 'What Have They Done'

Headline

Irish Daily Star 'Quarter Pounder with Sleaze'

Investigative Journalism

Michael O'Farrell, The Irish Mail On Sunday

News Analysis

Daniel McConnell & Fiachra Ó Cionnaith, Irish Examiner

News Reporter

Conor Feehan, The Herald

Political Journalist of the Year

John Lee, The Irish Mail on Sunday

Political Story of the Year

Ellen Coyne, Ireland Edition of the Times

Scoop

David Labanyi, The Irish Times

Showbiz Journalist of the Year

Ken Sweeney, The Irish Sun

Showbiz story of the year

Nadine O'Regan, Sunday Business Post

Sports Journalist of the Year

Malachy Clerkin, The Irish Times

Sports Story of the Year

Martin Breheny, Irish Independent

Young Journalist of the Year

Niall O'Connor, Irish Independent

Local Ireland Regional Journalist of the Year

Sorcha Crowley, Sligo Champion

Overall Journalist of the Year 2017

Catherine Fegan, Irish Daily Mail & The Irish Mail on Sunday



Winners all . . . at the NewsBrands Ireland Journalism Awards 2017,

The late Andy Needham — a life well lived

“A beautiful human being” (Ziauddin Yousafzai)

Andy (Andreas) Needham packed an awful lot of life into his 44 years, enough for two recent celebrations. The tragedy of his death in a Nairobi hospital in August wasn't forgotten at either of these events. But his warmth, his humour and his courage shone out at each of them.

His sister Jutta welcomed over 100 people to a commemoration near Dublin Airport on October 21st, on behalf of the Needham family. Andy is survived by his mother, two other sisters Rita and Karen, his brother Markus and many, many others. His wife Tabitha and their daughter Chessie sent greetings from Nairobi, where they live. At the Dublin event, a host of family members described the joy Andy brought to their lives from his earliest years, throughout his life, and even when he was far away from them on his work for refugees with the UNHCR.

Andy's comradeship and his irreverent good humour were movingly described by his close friend Ciarán Hancock of the Irish Times. There were tears amid the laughter as Ciarán recalled their time together. Speaking on behalf of the whole NUJ, Irish Secretary Seamus Dooley added his reminiscences in a similar tone. Although Andy had left Ireland in 2007 to work for the UN in various ways, he always maintained a close link with the union.

Some of Andy's UN work colleagues travelled from Geneva to Dublin for the event and added their own warm tributes. In their friend's memory, they also brought a generous donation of €1000 (which they collected among themselves) for the George Viner Memorial Fund. This body enables the NUJ to increase media diversity. There were



tributes too from the Garda Representative Association, Andy's employers when he edited the Garda Review, and from the Football Association of Ireland, where he also worked.

On November 7, Dublin Publications and Public Relations Branch of the NUJ also paid tribute to Andy Needham as part of its November branch meeting. As members stood for a minute's silence in his memory, a slide presentation highlighted aspects of his life. This branch owes Andy a particular debt as he chaired it for many years, working tirelessly for its members. When discussion resumed, Andy's work was recalled by Neil Ward, who succeeded him as Garda Review editor, and by NEC member Barry McCall, one of Andy's staunchest allies on the Irish Executive Council.

RTE musicians fear that review may strike wrong note

IRISH Secretary Séamus Dooley has extended support to the Irish Musicians Union in their campaign to protect RTÉ's performing groups.

The IMU, a section of SIPTU is fearful that a review announced by RTÉ may led to a merger of the RTÉ Concert Orchestra and the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra.

The NUJ works closely with the IMU and president Seamus Doyle, pictured, is a member of the RTÉ Group of Unions.

“Any positive review would be welcome but in the context of the current financial position there is a fear that moves will be made to reduce funding to the performing groups. The public service remit of RTÉ extends beyond news, current affairs and programming and there is a cultural dimension to the work of the public service broadcaster which is often overlooked.”