

## NEWS



(Left) Siofra O'Dwyer, Scoil Mhuire, Buncrana, and Mark O'Donnell, St Columba's Comprehensive, Glenties, pictured at the NewsBrands Ireland Press Pass awards, with Finian McGrath TD, minister of state; and Vincent Crowley, chairperson, NewsBrands Ireland. Photo Colm Mahady / Fennells

# Honours for young Donegal journalists

**STAFF REPORTER**  
e-mail: editorial@donegaldemocrat.com  
Twitter: @dgdemocrat

**Two talented TY students from Buncrana and Glenties won awards for excellent writing and original journalism at NewsBrands Ireland's annual Press Pass Awards.**

Siofra O' Dwyer from Scoil Mhuire, Buncrana and Mark O' Donnell from St Columbas Comprehensive, Glenties were among 16 students nationally to receive awards for their original journalism this year.

Overall this year, 8,000 Transition Year students took part.

Press Pass develops literacy and critical thinking skills and leads students to analyse their society. This year's ceremony, now in its

fifth year, took place in Dublin's Convention Centre on March 10th.

The awards seek to improve literacy and critical thinking while helping students develop a deeper understanding of news media. The competition seeks original journalism entries in features, opinion, news, sport and photojournalism.

Siofra was awarded first prize in the opinion category for her piece, "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun...damental Rights".

Speaking about the piece, the judging panel said: 'When it comes to an opinion piece, many just draw on their own experiences. What is interesting about the piece that is awarded first place in this category is that the author brings in a plethora of examples to show how a highly political topic affects different women

on different levels.

"The women seeking asylum in this country that cannot seek an abortion after she has been raped, the woman who so desperately wants a baby but finds out there is a foetal abnormality which means her child will not survive, the 3,451 women who travelled from Ireland to England and Wales to have an abortion in 2015. Her research is factual but emotive, her opinion piece is well structured and thought out, her use of language is engaging, repeating again and again, 'I am angry', and of course, there is that fantastic phrase that finishes up a great piece... 'Get your rosaries off our ovaries, if you please.'

"It is purely coincidental that these awards are announced on a week where we celebrated International Women's Day where thou-

sands of people marched in Dublin to repeal the eight amendment. No matter when this piece was written though and despite your own personal opinion on this highly contentious issue, this is an opinion piece that strikes a chord."

Mark received 2nd prize in the features category for his fun and detailed write up on a remarkable idea instigated by Brian Carr of Glenties. According to the judging panel: "The simple yet genius idea was the ideal topic for Mark to write about - but we have to stress that the runner-up spot was not awarded to Mark just because the subject matter was fascinating. It was a clever, well-researched and articulated piece of work which was an obvious contender and worthy winner of our second place prize."

## Speeding concerns near Aura centre

A pedestrian crossing must be put in place at the county's busiest leisure centre before there is a serious accident, a county councillor has said.

Cllr James McDauid (FF) has called for the crossing at the Aura Leisure Centre in Letterkenny.

Speaking at the Letter-

kenny Municipal District, he said there have been complaints from members of the public about speeding the area.

Cllr McDauid said there was an accident a number of months back although he did not know if speed was a factor.

"There are people walking

in and out and we have to do everything we can to protect them. With Aura and St Eunan's there are a lot of people walking in and out.

"I would ask the council to do everything it can to put on additional signage or road markings to reduce speed on the road."

He said he would not be in

favour of a ramp and would hope signage and road markings would reduce the speed in the area. He also called for a proper pedestrian crossing at the leisure centre.

"We see young ones trying to cross that road and in particular in the winter, it is very dangerous crossing that road."

## Children being affected by fumes

Fumes coming from a sewerage system in a Donegal town are forcing parents to take their children from their homes in the middle of the night.

Householders are also being forced to deal doors shut with tape to keep the fumes from escaping at the housing estates

Cllr Michael McBride tabled a motion at the Letterkenny Municipal District Council calling on Donegal County Council to ask Irish Water to compile a full report on sewage in Kilmacrennan.

The areas of Hillhead and Lennon View are particularly bad, the Independent councillor said.

"A lot of fumes are making their way into homes," he said.

"This is unacceptable. I have heard that in some cases parents are taking their chil-



Cllr Michael McBride

dren from their beds at night to relative's homes because of the fumes. We need Irish Water to get to the root cause of the problem because it has been going on for a number of years."

Council officials said the matter will be referred to Irish Water for investigation.

## Safety concerns on old rail bridge

Calls have been made to consider whether an old railway bridge should be removed on safety grounds. The issue was raised by Cllr. Liam Blaney who expressed concern about the state of the old bridge on the Upper Aughilard Road, Pluck, Manorcunningham.

He said that a number of stones have come off the bridge, while others are loose.

Cllr. Ian McGarvey said that the bridge was on the old Lough Swilly railway line that ran to Letterkenny. He said that he had been told that the bridge was on private land. He also felt that an option would be to remove the bridge.

Cllr. Blaney has been informed by Letterkenny Municipal District Council that the road has been closed off and diversions have been put in place.

## Gimme shelters, councillor says

Councillors in Letterkenny want shelters to be provided in the Bernard McGlinchey Town Park and Ballymacool Town Park.

Raising the issue at a Letterkenny Municipal District Council meeting, Cllr. Dessie Shiels said it would be particularly useful for pedestrians and those with young children when it rains.

He said that he had witnessed an incident of a downpour at Ballymacool

and how a lady had to take her two young children to go and stand in the toilet block for shelter. She did not have a car and had no option when trying to find shelter. Cllr. Gerry McMonaghle, who seconded the motion, said it did not need to be a large structure and you could just have poles up and a roof. "I think it is a sensible thing to be looking at," he said.

The council said there are currently no plans for the installation of shelters.