

THE IRISH JOURNALIST



Newsletter of the National Union of Journalists in Ireland

May 2025



Joint Presidents Gerry Curran (left) and Fran McNulty (right) with veteran Derry journalist Eamonn McCann (centre), honoured for his fearless journalism and union service. He was made a Member of Honour by the NUJ at the Delegate Meeting 2025 in Blackpool. Image © Jess Hurd

Joint Irish Presidents begin work at NUJ

The Courts Service Media Relations Advisor Gerry Curran and RTE Primetime Presenter Fran McNulty were recently elected as President of the National Union of Journalists in the UK and Ireland. In the role they will preside over a National Executive which caters to the needs of 23,000 media workers from across Scotland, Ireland, England, Wales, Paris, Brussels, and the Netherlands.

The joint Presidents said that, “the role is a busy one, and for two very busy professionals at the height of their careers, it would be impossible to do alone. Thus, We wanted to take on this role jointly while we were at the centre of the professions we work in, bringing with us real-life, real-time experiences of what the world of media work is like, for busy, in demand, professionals”.

“The NUJ is an international trade union, and it is also a long

time since we had a President based in Ireland, so now we can bring a fresh Celtic perspective to the role. To do that we had to be realistic and say let’s split the role, and the voluntary workload, and at the same time bring double the experience”.

“Protected, well paid, and informed journalists are an important bedrock for any democracy”

“Protected, well paid, and informed journalists are an important bedrock for any democracy. Our members need to work without the fear of poverty, the threat of SLAPPS, and the direct threat of death from rogue regimes and organised criminals. Our work will aim to support efforts to supply a safer milieu for members to work in.

“Following our biennial conference a roadmap is now drafted and in the coming months the instructions handed down will be implemented and acted on. There was passion, and a clarity during the debates and although it became heated at

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EDITOR'S NOTE: A CROWDED CALENDAR

It has been almost a year since the last edition of the *Irish Journalist*, but with any luck, the next one will appear much sooner.

This has been a busy year for the NUJ, with multiple challenges. Journalists have been dealing with 'interesting times' for quite a while, and the increasing prevalence of disinformation, and the spread of so-called "artificial intelligence" large language models, all against a background of declining audiences and scarce resources.

The coming year will see a new NEC at work on the programme agreed at the recent Delegate Meeting in Blackpool, and later this year a new Irish Executive Council and Biennial Delegate Conference.

Whatever happens, you can read about it here, or keep up to date with union news at www.nuj.ie

Gerard Cunningham
Editor, *The Irish Journalist*

RTÉ MEMBERS PROTEST TARGETING OF JOURNALISTS

NUJ members and work colleagues at RTÉ gathered at midday on Monday March 31st to express their outrage at Israel's ongoing targeting and killing of journalists.

Journalists, camera crew and others stood together for a minute's silence in sympathy with those killed and in solidarity with media workers who continue to risk their lives to report from Gaza.

Staff at RTÉ have been holding monthly protests, organised by the Dublin Broadcasting Branch, since January 2024. The protests were suspended when the ceasefire was announced but returned in March as Israel resumed its onslaught on Gaza including attacks on journalists.

"As media workers we are all horrified and outraged by Israel's deliberate targeting and killing of journalists who are risking their lives in Gaza and elsewhere so that the world can witness the horrific impact of the Israeli offensives", said Branch Chair Emma O Kelly.

"We want to encourage other NUJ members to join us by holding similar actions in their places of work, or elsewhere. We all need to take a very strong public stand on this, both in solidarity with our fellow journalists and also for the sake of media freedom because killing journalists is of course an attack on media freedom and on the truth."

The latest gathering at RTÉ took place a week after Al Jazeera Correspondent Hossam Shabat, who was just 23 years old, and Mohammed Mansour, were killed. The IDF confirmed it had deliberately targeted and killed the two journalists.

At Monday's protest part of an obituary that Hossam, knowing he would be killed by Israel, wrote for himself, as reported by The Guardian newspaper: "For the past 18 months, I have dedicated every moment of my life to my people. I documented the horrors in northern Gaza minute by minute, determined to show the world the truth they tried to bury ... I risked everything to report the truth, and now, I am finally at rest."

The protest heard that Hossam Shabat had also appealed to the world to not stop talking about Gaza and to "not look away".



RTÉ workers gather to protest the ongoing targeting and killing of journalists by Israel Defence Forces.

Evelyn Hannigan retires

Carolyn Farrar

When the Irish Biennial Delegate Conference is held in Dublin later this year, it will be the first time in 12 years that Evelyn Hannigan won't be there, greeting delegates at the door and making sure everything is in place.

Evelyn retired late last year as office administrator of the NUJ Dublin Office.

Séamus Dooley, Irish Secretary said: As office manager Evelyn brought a wide range of skills. She came from the hospitality industry having previously worked in a large legal firm.

"Replacing June Coughlan, long time Irish Officer

administrator, meant she had big shoes to fill but she rose to the challenge of getting to know and understand the workings of a membership-based organisation.

"Evelyn enjoyed meeting people and attended both the Irish Delegate Conference and the union's wider biennial delegate conference.

"When Ireland hosted the IFJ World Congress Evelyn worked with the small IFJ and NUJ team to put in place a programme which

set a new benchmark for the global event. Delegates from across the globe commented on her helpful nature and willingness to go the extra mile," he said.

Evelyn came to the NUJ after more than 20 years in hospitality, where she worked as a general manager.

"I had dealt with HR and managing the hotel and I liked people and thought it would be very interesting to see things from the other side," Evelyn recalled. "It appealed to me that I could maybe make a difference and make somebody's life a little easier."

Gerry Curran, joint vice president of the NUJ, said: "Evelyn

will be remembered as the calmness and the backbone of the Irish office of the Union: nothing was too much for her to do for members and no union event did not have her stamp of efficiency on it. She was a great support to many at union events over a long period and was great fun with it."

Helen Taylor, PA to the Irish Secretary and Irish Organiser and Siptu rep for the Dublin office, said: "Evelyn's knowledge, hard work, sense of humour, and elegance are sorely missed from the Irish office. However, I am very grateful that Evelyn will stay in my life as a valued friend."

Evelyn's role also included membership issues and press cards, and other administrative and financial responsibilities.

She said: "I liked the variety of the work, and I liked dealing with the members very much. It was busy, but no two days were the same. I really enjoyed my time and my colleagues in the office – I miss the place. "I respect the NUJ. I think they do great work and I think our members are lucky to have them." she said. Her work with journalists also gave her a new appreciation for the work they do. "I have a very high regard for journalists," Evelyn said. Evelyn is looking forward to getting to spend more time with her husband, Donal, and their four children and seven grandchildren, and "having new adventures and getting the opportunity to travel when we can".



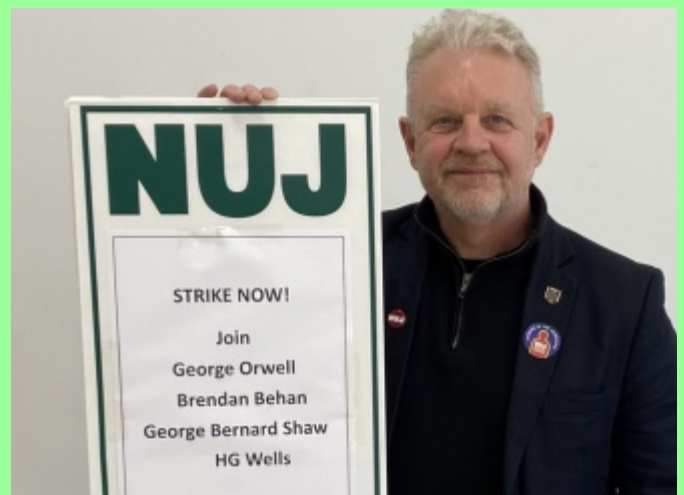
Evelyn Hannigan, pictured recently

Cathy steps down

Best wishes to Cathy Halloran on her retirement from RTÉ.

The Mid Western Correspondent has been a loyal and active member of the local branch and noted especially for her collegiate relationship with colleagues throughout the region.

DCU Union Recruitment day



Neil Ward at DCU trade union recruitment fair held recently.

Joint Irish Presidents begin work at NUJ

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times, it spoke to the passion people have for journalism and the role of the union”.

“The conference raised some difficult and important topics. The discussion on AI will have raised concerns in the minds of people who have not yet been impacted by it. The industry faces a huge challenge from AI, the debate has shifted from AI is bad, to a realisation that it is here to stay and as an industry we have to deal with that.

“We need to protect working journalists from the threats it poses, as well as supply guidance as to its possibilities. We have faced many other challenges in the history of the NUJ,

this is another. A clear and well-informed approach will stand to our members in the years ahead.”

In the coming months Gerry and Fran will work with officials to ensure every action required from conference will be worked on and applied through the myriad of committees and groups across the union. They will pay attention to the ever changing world of work and make sure member's voices, the voice of journalism, is heard at every negotiation, meeting and event the union is involved in or organises.

“Openness to members views will be a hallmark of our work and members should feel free to contact us on any issue they have concerns over”, they said.

Government defends IHRA decision

Taoiseach Micheál Martin and Tánaiste Simon Harris have defended the Irish government's decision to endorse the Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism and the working definition of antisemitism as defined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

The Irish Executive Council has expressed NUJ concern at the lack of consultation on the decision and expressed fears that it would have a chilling effect on coverage of the actions of Israel.

In a letter to Seamus Dooley, NUJ assistant general secretary, Mr Martin said the decision had been taken “after very careful consideration”. “Neither endorsement is intended to prevent, or have a chilling effort on individuals or the Government's criticism of the actions of the Government or State of Israel”, he said.

Mr Harris in his letter drew attention to Ireland's statement at the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Third Committee in October. “This statement stresses the crucial role of journalists and calls for the full and equal protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression of all persons, noting in particular our concern at the unprecedented level of killing of journalists in Gaza,” Mr Harris noted.

Reacting to the correspondence Séamus Dooley said: “Sadly the UNGA statement last October made no impact on Israel. Journalists continue to be targeted in clear breach of the Geneva Convention. The IEC noted the lack of consultation by government on the decision to adopt the guidelines and nothing in the correspondence indicates the rationale for that failure to engage with journalists or media organisations”.



Taoiseach Micheal Martin.

Image via Houses of the Oireachtas Flickr, CC by 2.0 licence

Scenes from NUJ Delegate Meeting 2025



Delegates hard at work on a busy agenda at the 2025 Delegate Meeting in Blackpool. Photo: Gerard Cunningham



"We asked him to put it in writing."

New joint president Fran McNulty tells Eamonn McCann that President Michael D. Higgins had followed up his video message with a letter congratulating him on becoming NUJ Member of Honour.



General secretary Laura Davison, member of honour Eamonn McCann, and outgoing NUJ president Natasha Hirst.



Delegates watch a recorded message from President Michael D Higgins to member of honour Eamonn McCann.

Domestic abuse guidelines launched for journalists as survivors tell their stories at conference

Una Murphy

The Responsible Reporting Matters conference, held in the Great Hall at Queen's University Belfast earlier this week, launched updated guidelines and resources to help journalists, editors and communications professionals to report on violence against women and domestic abuse.

The conference revealed the awful realities behind the headlines, and I was one of many journalists in the room, who listened to survivors' stories.

We heard from Julie-Anne Walkden; I had watched her tell her story in a television documentary presented by retired senior police officer, Judith Gillespie, a few years ago. But seeing her, face to face, recounting the physical assault she endured in her home, at the hands of her then husband, was visceral.

I listened when she told us that how the reporting of these crimes is "absolutely critical".

Sonya McMullan from Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland warned the subject matter was difficult and challenging to hear.

Julie Ann said: "If it were not for the BBC and Judith Gillespie and others, this would not be explored, as it was not covered in the court room".

The media has the ability to change the culture on the safety of women and girls and must use it wisely, she added.

Kelly Andrews, Chief Executive of Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid, admitted how challenging it had become to give interviews to the media following killings of women in Northern Ireland but felt she "owed it to the women who used our services to do interviews."

Some of the speakers and panelists who took part in the event

I will also think about Jack Dawson, a young actor and playwright, who spoke at the conference. He will be running the Belfast Marathon in May. Jack wrote a play *Holding Ground* about the violent assaults he and his mother suffered at the hands of his father, who gave him "one last beating at the age of 17". You might spot him running the marathon. He will be the one carrying 16 kilos, because the police say,



Noelle Collins, Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid, left, with Shona Jago, Teresa Parker, communications professional, and Una Murphy, National Union of Journalists

Julie-Ann had looked back at the articles and headlines which told her story and the words that were used: 'smashed her face and teeth', 'rendered unconscious' She told us that in court, it was stated that the issues around a "flawed marriage" should not be rehearsed again, and she spoke of the decision not to impose a custodial sentence on her ex-husband.

She challenged media and communications professionals in the room "to play their part in ending domestic violence by turning the dial against silence".

Speaking about the personal impact of the violent assault,

"there is domestic abuse call every 16 minutes".

Jack trains for the marathon on the seafront at Whitehead, passing a plaque to Alyson Nelson. She was murdered in 2022. Jack said that Alyson lived just a few houses away from his mum.

• Responsible Reporting Matters guidelines are available from Women's Aid Federation for Northern Ireland:

<https://www.womensaidni.org/resources/responsiblereportingmatters/>

This article originally appeared in View Digital

Lyra McKee's spirit celebrated at Belfast AI symposium

The challenges posed by Artificial Intelligence (AI) would have excited Lyra McKee, her sister Nicola McKee Corner told a symposium in Belfast on Friday 28 March.

Recalling Lyra's love of gadgets and technology Nicola emphasised that her sister's success as a journalist was rooted in her personal qualities.

The second Lyra McKee Symposium in the Crescent Arts Centre marked a new partnership between the NUJ and the Belfast Festival of Ideas and Politics.

Lyra McKee, a Belfast branch member, was killed on 18 April 2019 in the Creggan area of Derry while observing a riot as a freelance journalist.

A digital journalist and early, proficient user of social media platforms, Lyra was an accomplished journalist, researcher and campaigner.

The symposium was chaired by broadcaster, writer, and chair of Belfast and District branch Anne Hailes, who challenged the panel and audience with the question "AI and Journalism – Threats or Opportunities?"

Speakers included: Ciaran O'Connor, Dublin Institute of Strategic Dialogue senior analyst; Laura Davison, NUJ general secretary; Professor Charlie Beckett, Journalism AI director at the London School of Economics (via a pre-recorded video from London); Jude Copeland, legal technology specialist in Cleaver Fulton Rankin's Legal Technology Group; Ciaran Hanna, NUJ Belfast and District branch vice-chair; Stiofan Bruce, media student studying journalism at Belfast Metropolitan College.

General Secretary Laura Davison praised the branch for organising the event and expressed the hope that the ideas discussed might form part of wider discussions within the NUJ.

This article first appeared in the Journalist



Stiofan Bruce, media student studying journalism at Belfast Metropolitan College, speaks at the symposium.

© Kevin Cooper



Anne Hailes, NUJ Belfast and District branch chair, speaks at the Lyra McKee Symposium.

© Kevin Cooper



The Lyra McKee Symposium panel from left-to-right, top-to-bottom: Jude Copeland, Stiofan Bruce, Ciarán Hanna, Ciarán O'Connor, Seamus Dooley, Nicola McKee Corner, Anne Hailes, Laura Davison.

© Guth Publication

NUJ delegation meet King Charles

Amanda Ferguson

At first I wasn't sure what to do when I received a media reception invitation from King Charles and Queen Camilla. But then I remembered I am a journalist.

And I thought to myself if the late Queen and Martin McGuinness could both stretch themselves to meet and shake hands at Belfast's Lyric Theatre in 2012 then I am pretty sure I could enjoy a glass of Champagne and have a good nosy at Buckingham Palace.

It was a fascinating experience to attend the evening event with colleagues from across Britain and Ireland as part of the NUJ delegation.

We were there because we operate at a "grassroots level", and have made "outstanding efforts in regional media".

It obviously meant more, on a personal level, to colleagues who are royalists, but I am glad I went.

I spoke to Charles about the work I was doing with Women in Media Belfast CIC, about giving younger colleagues confidence and a sense of community, and the pervasiveness of media manels.

We also discussed his recent visit to the north/NI, and his normalisation of the use of the Irish and Welsh languages. My trip to Buckingham Palace came in the same week I interviewed former Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams about his Long Kesh prison diary for the Imagine Belfast festival, and I also attended a memorial event for the late trailblazing Alliance Party politician Anna Lo.

The variety in my work and life is a huge part of what makes me still want to keep going with a media career 15 years on. Who knows where I will turn up next?

Amanda Ferguson is an NUJ Belfast & District Branch member, and incoming NEC Northern Ireland seat holder



King Charles and Amanda Ferguson shaking hands



Invitation



NUJ delegation outside Buckingham Palace March 26th (Photo: Nikki Harris)

Members of Honour

Derry's Eamonn McCann Honoured by the NUJ as a 'fearless journalist' and 'tireless campaigner'

President Michael D Higgins has led tributes to Derry journalist Eamon McCann, who has been made a Member of Honour of the National Union of Journalists.

The veteran Irish journalist and campaigner was recognised at the union's delegate conference in Blackpool on Saturday. The highest award in the union was granted in recognition of his lifelong contribution to trade unionism. Eamon is a former member of the national executive council and has held a variety of positions within the union.

In a video message, President Higgins recalled his long-time personal friendship with McCann, which dates back to their university days.

He said: "I think with fondness of our earliest encounters, when you and I met in the earnest contests of student debate - myself in University College Galway, with Gearoid O'Tuathaigh, you and Michael Farrell representing Queen's Belfast."

President Higgins described the award as "a fitting and richly deserved recognition of Eamonn's life, a life lived with an unyielding commitment to truth, to justice." He described McCann as having a life marked by fearless journalism, principled activism, and a steadfast dedication to the rights of workers and the rights of all members of our shared humanity.

President Higgins also paid tribute to the National Union of Journalists, "The Union's continued commitment to its foundational values, and the defence of ethical journalism is more vital now than ever before."

Accepting his award, McCann said he was delighted and proud to receive the Member of Honour award. He said he had been a member of the NUJ for almost 50 years and was delighted to have followed in the footsteps of his father, a ship worker, who described his family as 'socialists'.

He said, today was a 'crowning moment for the McCann's trade union tradition', and he was looking forward to telling them.

Jim Symons, Dundee, was also honoured for his lifetime services to journalism. He said he was inclined to turn down the honour, as "I feel I do not deserve it." Symons recalled that he had looked after three children as a single father and succeeded in getting his degree thanks to the support of neighbours and students at the university. Earlier, he told the conference about being arrested by Scottish police and handcuffed when he was accused of taking photographs of a crime scene from a helicopter.

His colleague Jimmy Black said the honour was richly deserved, he was an indefatigable, passionate and forceful representative who kept the Dundee Branch NUJ going for 14 years.



Eamonn McCann and Kitty Holland. Image © Jess Hurd



Jim Symons and Eamonn McCann. Image © Jess Hurd

ENNISKILLEN TITLE IS PAPER OF THE YEAR

Anton McCabe

For the second year running the Enniskillen-based Impartial Reporter has been named UK Weekly Newspaper of the Year at the Newspaper Awards. The citation praised "brilliant investigations, in-depth reporting and unique front page

He is pleased the paper has achieved a good circulation growth. "To convince anyone to pick up a new paper, I think, is a great thing," Rodney said.

There is a perception local newspapers are in difficulties. Rodney believes the local, printed newspaper still has a



(From left) Vincent Kearney, Una Murphy, Michael Fisher, Colin O'Carroll, Joe Mitchell, and Kevin Cooper at Belfast City Hall for last year's May

design that made it stand out."

Editor and NUJ member Rodney Edwards said it was a fantastic accolade for the whole team. "In a fast-paced digital world where local journalism often fights to survive the fact that we've won this is, I suppose, a recognition of a very proud legacy within the Impartial Reporter, stretching back nearly two centuries," Rodney said. "Next month, May 19th, the Impartial Reporter turns two hundred."

Thus the award is a nod to past generations of journalists, editors, printers and readers who shaped the paper. Rodney has been editor for 18 months, but involved with the paper since he was 16 "well over twenty years. In that time it's changed dramatically."

The award follows closely on the Impartial expanding its circulation area from its core area of Fermanagh to include South Tyrone. "We saw that as an opportunity, that we would move into a new area," Rodney said.

At its foundation, the Impartial covered Tyrone, Monaghan, Cavan, Leitrim and Donegal. Stories in the areas bordering Fermanagh were always covered but "We didn't really give it any big details, we didn't really give it the resources it really needs." They were the local newspaper for part of South Tyrone "but we weren't really doing enough. We have invested a considerable amount of money into making that happen." There is now a South Tyrone edition, with a unique front and back page, and some inside pages also. Pagination has been increased from 72 to 88 pages which "means we have even more content from Fermanagh and South Tyrone" and the Border areas of the Republic.

It now covers a significant part of Northern Ireland West of the Bann. "We want to be the voice of the West of the Bann, and do what we have always done, stand up for people, hold the authorities to account, to be the voice for ordinary people," Rodney said.

future "provided that investments are made. I think newspaper companies need to know the value and the importance of investing in newspapers. What we have witnessed ourselves, and experienced, is that people will still pick up a paper. As long as the journalism is there, as long as you invest in the journalism, the readers will follow.

"We're lucky in that we've been able to put together a new freelance team for South Tyrone," Rodney said.

He finally stressed the Impartial is "a newspaper that's grounded in place, shaped by people, and carried forward by legacy."

Eurovision protest call

RTÉ NUJ sub-branch agreed at a lunchtime meeting on Tuesday 6 May to write to the RTÉ Board to request RTÉ follow the lead of other European broadcasters in requesting of the EBU that Israel be suspended from participation in the upcoming Eurovision Song Contest.

The sub-branch wrote last week to the Director General requesting the same.

"We believe that RTÉ, as an EBU member, should reflect the Irish state's public opposition to Israel's actions in Palestine," the letter stated.

The sub-branch also noted that In 2019 it welcomed assurances from the then DG that any staff member who had a conscientious objection to working on the Eurovision programme would have that right respected. The sub-branch agreed then that it would support any member who wished to exercise a conscientious objection. This remains the position of the sub-branch.

Derry NW's Joe holds his first exhibition

Anton McCabe

Long-standing Derry NW member Joe Boland has held his first photo exhibition. He hopes this will be brought round Donegal.

Joe has been a staff photographer on the Donegal Democrat and Derry Journal. He is now freelance, supplying the local and national press.

The exhibition ran in April in Cara House Resource Centre, Letterkenny.

"It was sponsored by Donegal County Council, as one of their One Donegal Social Inclusion Week," Joe said. "Basically they approached me, maybe a year ago, to see would I be interested and I said 'no'. It's not my kind of thing at all. Then a few of them that I know very well kept hounding me and saying 'Joe, you're being bad, you have (your photos) hidden away on your computer and nobody sees them.'"

So Joe decided to send them 160 photos. "The three judges I call them selected 32 I think it is, that depict people in Donegal," Joe said.

"The subjects are from a spectrum of life. 'There's musicians, there's politicians, there's clergy, there's public figures, there's people from African descent and Chinese, and Indian – it's multicultural.'"

"It fits in well with the Social Inclusion Week. It's called 'Donegal – a day in the life of.'"

Joe's only stipulation was that the exhibition be held in Cara House. He is long involved with it. Holding it there brought people to Cara House to see its work.

Joe did not see the exhibition until it opened. He found that "a bit surreal".

"The response has been away better than I expected," he said. Thus it was kept longer on display.

Joe is pleased and a little surprised at the recognition of his work. "It was never my kind of thing," he explained. "It sounds corny but I'm not a showman. My photographs are very matter of fact, they're not arty-farty, they're newspaper photographs. Now, the wildlife that I do is my own passion. There's a sponsor approached me to do an exhibition on wildlife. So that may happen down the line, probably September or October of this year."

Joe has been a photographer for almost 45 years. "My first photograph was published in the Donegal People's Press in the first week of September

1980," he said. "Which makes me a really old man."

Then, Joe was serving in the Army, where he was a photographer. He served 18 years, leaving in the late 90s.

Accident brought Joe into photography

"My wedding photographer he botched up the job," Joe said. "He was a very good photographer but that day his flash wasn't working, he didn't know that, and we had no wedding album photographs. I had been messing about taking photographs before that, and I said 'I can do that stuff'. I did a course or two and started work then."

Details are uncertain, but it seems the exhibition will tour over the summer to at least three other places in Donegal. "They were talking about Buncrana, Ballyshannon and possibly Gweedore," Joe said.



Joe Boland



FREELANCE FORUM SPRING 2025

Spring 2025 Freelance Forum took place in Connolly Hall (Liberty Hall Theatre) in Dublin on Monday 14 April, with a packed programme of speakers. The Forum is organised by Dublin Freelance branch and sponsored by Coimisiún na Meán. Opening the Forum, NUJ Irish secretary Seamus Dooley noted 2025 was a particularly uncertain time for freelancers, and that bogus self-employment remained an issue. He called on the government to work on guidelines to ensure a coherent approach to the issues involved across departments from Social Protection to Revenue.

Karlin Lillington spoke on the issues presented by "A.I." and large language models, followed by Emily Duffy from Hope + Courage Collective on the challenges in reporting and countering far-right propaganda.

Editors Alice Linehan (GCN) and Peter O'Dwyer (Business Post) spoke with Priyanka Borpujari about pitching and commissioning tactics and tips.

Veteran journalist Deaglán de Bréadún began the afternoon talking about the hazards of reporting from the Middle East, followed by a panel discussion on the use of archival research to build stories with Anthony McIntyre, Lucille Redmond, and Kieran Fagan. The day concluded with a presentation from filmmaker Robert Fitzhugh on using vertical video across social networks to tell stories and promote the work of journalists.

Extracts from the day will be posted to the Freelance Forum podcast over the coming weeks, and the Forum will return for its Autumn event on Monday 20 October 2025.

Text and images © Gerard Cunningham



Karlin Lillington



Seamus Dooley, NUJ Irish secretary



Emily Duffy, Hope + Courage Collective



Kieran Fagan, Anthony McIntyre and Lucille Redmond



Robert Fitzhugh



Deaglán de Bréadún



Alice Linehan, editor, GCN, Peter O'Dwyer, head of news, Business Post, and Priyanka Borpujari

Journalists Eligible For Troubles' Pension

Anton McCabe

Welfare rights worker Lesley McCrea from the South East Fermanagh Foundation (SEFF) believes some journalists are eligible for a pension due to injury suffered during the 'Troubles'. Lesley has appealed to NUJ members who may be eligible to contact her. She stresses that SEFF is entirely free and confidential.

The scheme is known as the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme. Deadline for final applications is 31 August 2026.

"The scheme serves for a permanent payment for those who suffered a permanent injury as a result of a Troubles-related incident," Lesley explained. "Now that can be a physical injury or a psychological injury or, for some people, both." The scheme includes incidents outside Northern Ireland.



Lesley McCrea

It covers incidents between 1 January 1966 and before 12 April 2010. The Board has a four-year discretion either side of those dates.

Lesley has explained the conditions. "(Claimants) were physically there, they saw what happened, they heard it, it unfolded around them, or were present in the immediate aftermath of a Troubles-related incident where a loved one died or was seriously injured," she said.

"They will also consider those who were responding in the course of employment to a Troubles-related incident in which that person reasonably believed a loved one had died

or suffered significant injury."

Pension is from £2,298 to £11,490 per year, depending on disablement. Payments can be backdated for up to 10 years.

Lesley said applicants would get an initial call "just to get a bit of information, and also for us to provide information to the caller, on the eligibility criteria. So that person would

then be designated to one of our welfare officers who would meet them, help them with the filling in of the actual application. We are also very lucky in that we have a fabulous advocacy team here who are able to assist in terms of research that has to be carried out regarding the incident. Say, for example, somebody wasn't able to recall the approximate date the incident occurred." The advocacy team would research this.

Lesley stressed this is particularly relevant to psychological injury, as "in such cases those affected often did not realise at the time they had suffered psychological injury." Trauma block, passage of time, or current illnesses prevent people remembering.

"We will gather as much information before submitting the application as possible, because that then alleviates any more stresses for the applicant with the Board writing out to them for more information. Now, our support doesn't end with the actual application. We would then be supporting that person throughout the entire process. And also for cases where someone gets a determination and isn't happy with it, we would take that then to the Appeal Tribunal and provide representation at that stage as well.

"We are aware that this process in and of itself can be very re-traumatising. There are other supports we can put in place for that person as well."

Lesley can be contacted on 07907575034/+447907575034, and SEFF on 02867723884/+442867723884 and info@seff.org.uk



Belfast and district branch take part in May Day



Left to right; Brian Phelan, Bob Miller, Cllr Donal Lyons, Seamus Dooley, Assistant General Secretary, Una Murphy, Ciarán Ó Maoláin. The branch later hosted an unveiling of a picture of Lyra McKee in the Reporter Bar to mark World Press Freedom Day. Picture: Kevin Cooper

Mark your diary for BDC and Elections

Timetable for Biennial Delegate Conference 2025 and Irish Executive Council Elections 2025

First call for IEC Nominations/BDC Motions/Delegates_____	W/C Monday 5 May 2025
Closing date for receipt of Nominations/Motions/Delegates_____	Friday 27 June 2025
Circulation of Preliminary Agenda_____	W/C 8 September 2025
Closing date for Amendments to BDC Motions_____	Friday 10 October 2025
Circulation of Final Agenda_____	W/C 3 November 2025

BDC takes place on Saturday 8 November in the CWU on North Circular Road in Dublin.



Lyra McKee portrait unveiled in Belfast Reporters Bar



Photo: Kevin Cooper

At the recent Lyra McKee commemorative event in Belfast talk turned to the wonderful display of photographs at the Reporter Bar on Belfast's Union Street.

Séamus Dooley, Assistant General Secretary drew attention to the youthful picture of Eugene Moloney, a former colleague at the Irish Independent.

When it emerged that there was no photo of Lyra on display Belfast and district branch officers swung into action and the management immediately agreed to a May 3 unveiling of a photo. Lyra's sister Nicola is pictured with the photo and many NUJ members will recognise the person in the picture alongside the murdered journalist. His former colleague

Eugene, (55) who began his journalistic career in the Irish News, was killed from a blow to the head in Dublin on 24 June 2012.

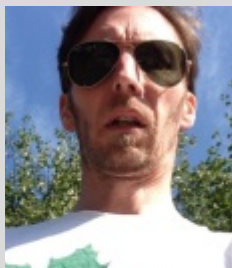
May 3 is World Press Freedom Day and in remembering Lyra, Séamus proposed a toast to the freedom of the press.



The NUJ unveiled a picture of Lyra McKee RIP in The Reporters Bar in Belfast on Saturday 3rd May International Press Freedom Day 2025. Speakers included: Seamus Dooley, NUJ Assistant General Secretary, Anne Hailes MBE, Chair of the Belfast and District Branch of the National Union of Journalists, Ciaran Hanna, Belfast and District NUJ Branch, Nichola McKee Corner, Lyra McKee's sister, who all paid tribute to Lyra McKee RIP. Photo: Kevin Cooper

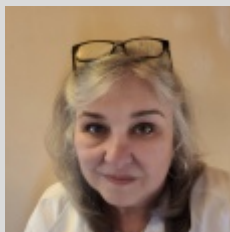
IRISH EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 2023-25

Broadcasting (2 vacancies)

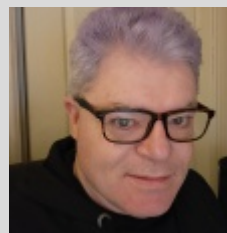


Cearbhall O Síochain
IEC Cathaoirleach

Freelance (3)



Carolyn Farrar
IEC Leas Chathaoirleach

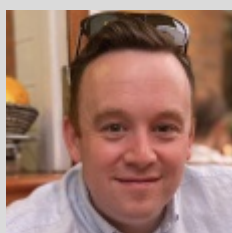


Gerard Cunningham
IEC Treasurer

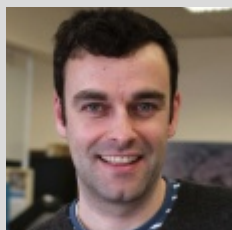


Meraj Abid Mahmood

NEC Republic of Ireland



Fran McNulty
(NEC job share
with Gerry Curran)



Dara Bradley
(job-share)



Damien Tiernan
(job-share)

Books & Magazine



Neil Ward
(Observer)

New Media



Phil MacGiollaBhain
(Observer)

National Newspapers (1 vacancy)



Kitty Holland



Éanna O Caollaí

NEC Northern Ireland



Anton McCabe
(job share with
Kathryn Johnston)

PR & Information

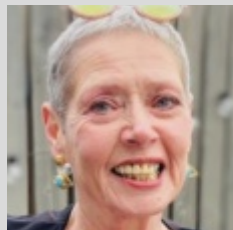


Gerry Curran
(NEC job share
with Fran McNulty)

Black Members (1 vacancy)

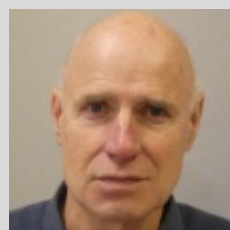


Reserved Seat for Northern of Ireland



Kathryn Johnston
(NEC-NI job share
with Anton McCabe)

Retired Members



Robert Baxter
(Observer)

Regional Newspapers (1 vacancy)



Stephen Corrigan