

# THE IRISH JOURNALIST

Newsletter of the National Union of Journalists in Ireland

May 2026

## Editorial Note

Welcome to the May Day 2026 edition of the Irish Journalist, marking the festival of Bealtaine and the celebration of labour and workers rights in many countries.

It has been a busy time for the union in Ireland since the last newsletter in February, and we aim to update you with some of the highlights in this edition.

If there is an issue you would like to highlight in a future edition, or activities involving your branch or chapel you want to bring to a broader audience, get in touch. The Irish Journalist aims to publish quarterly, in February, May, August and November.

Until the next time, enjoy this issue, and enjoy the May Day weekend break.

Gerard Cunningham, Editor

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## NUJ says Tá to RnaG pay deal

NUJ members at the Irish language station Raidió na Gaeltachta (RnaG) have welcomed an agreement with RTÉ, marking the end of an unfair two-tier pay system within Irish public service broadcasting through the assimilation of staff onto the standard RTÉ radio grading structure.

Under terms put forward by RTÉ in an industrial relations tribunal (IRT), improvements have been made to a structure put forward by management. The chapel voted Tá (Yes) to the new agreement, which allows all RnaG staff to benefit from two incremental payments in June of this year.

The NUJ and sister union SIPTU had referred the case to the tribunal to secure improvements to a transfer scheme unilaterally announced by director general Kevin Backhurst in 2024.

Both unions felt that the scheme did not go far enough in addressing the inequitable system in operation since the Irish language service started in 1972.

“There was never justification for paying

journalists in RnaG differently because they were working through the Irish language,” said Séamus Dooley, NUJ Irish secretary.

“The notion of a different structure to sister station RTÉ Radio One, has long been opposed by the union and the chapel has never given up on its objective of assimilation.

“The intervention of the director general, although welcome, came without consultation on the practical implications of how staff would be transferred to the RTÉ Radio One structure and some improvements were achieved through local discussions. Grading structures are always complex and sufficient consideration was not given to how fairness might be achieved in addressing long-term inequalities that disadvantaged Gaelic language speakers.

“The NUJ engaged in negotiations and sought the assistance of the industrial relations tribunal. As a result of the tribunal recommendation, all staff will receive a new ⇒ **Continued on next page**

increment, on top of what was already agreed in negotiations. This is a positive outcome and is a tribute to the tenacity of the chapel officers and negotiating team.

“I am especially pleased that the IRT has recognised that long-serving members close to retirement should have their position reviewed separately.

## Vótáil tá do Raidió na Gaeltachta socra íocaíochta

Tá baill NUJ ag an stáisiún raidió Gaeilge, Raidió na Gaeltachta (RnaG), tar éis fáilte a chur roimh chomhaontú le RTÉ a chuireann deireadh le córas éagórach íocaíochta dhá leibhéal laistigh de sheirbhís phoiblí craolacháin na hÉireann tré asamhlú na fóirne go dtí an struchtúr caighdeánta grádála raidió RTÉ.

Faoi téarmaí atá curtha chun tosaigh ag Bínse Caidrimh Thionscail (BCT) RTÉ, tá feabhsuithe déanta ar struchtúr a cuireadh chun tosaigh ag an mbainistíocht.

Ligeann an comhaontú d’fhoireann iomlán RnaG leas a bhaint as dhá íocaíocht incriminte i mí an Mheithimh i mbliana.

Sheol an NUJ agus an deirfiúr-ceardchumann, SIPTU, an cás chuig an Bínse Caidrimh Thionscail chun feabhsuithe a chinntiú ar scéim aistrithe a fógraíodh go haontaobhach ag an Stiúrthóir Ginearálta, Kevin Backhurst, i 2024.

Bhí an dá cheardchumann den tuairim nach ndearna siad go leor chun dul i ngleic leis an gcóras éagórach atá i bhfeidhm ó thosaigh an tseirbhís Ghaeilge sa bhliain 1972.

Dúirt Séamus Dooley, Rúnaí na hÉireann: “Ní raibh cúis riamh ann a mhalairt a íoc le iriseoirí RnaG toisc go raibh siad ag obair trín nGaeilge.

“Tá coincheap struchtúir atá éagsúl ar deirfiúr-stáisiún, RTÉ Radio One, diúltaithe le fada ag an gceardchumann, agus níor chaill an tseipéal riamh a chuspóir maidir le asamhlú.

“This small group, who, because of age and service, deserve to reach the top of the new scale applying to RnaG staff, and this now forms part of the final piece of protracted negotiations.

“RnaG is a jewel in the crown of RTÉ, and it is appropriate that in the centenary of Irish radio we can finally ensure a fairer structure for RnaG journalists.”

Cé gur cuireadh fáilte roimhe, bhí idirghabháil an Stiúrthóra Ginearálta, gan aon chomhairliúchán maidir leis na hiarmhairtí praiticiúla ar conas go n-aistreofaí an fhoireann chuig struchtúr RTÉ Radio One agus baineadh roinnt feabhsuithe amach trí phlé áitiúil. Tá struchtúir grádála casta i gcónaí agus níor tugadh a dhóthain machtnamh ar conas a d’fhéadfaí cothroime a bhaint amach nuair a dhéileáiltear le héagothroime fhadtéarmach.

“Rinne SIPTU agus an NUJ idirbheartaíocht agus lorgaíodh cúnaimh an Bínse Caidrimh Thionscail.

“Mar thoradh ar mholadh an BCT, gheobhaidh gach ball foirne incrimint nua, os cionn a raibh aontaithe cheana san idirbheartaíocht. Is toradh dearfach é seo agus tá moladh ag dul do dhíograis oifigigh an tseipéil agus an fhoireann idirbheartaíochta.

“Tá áthas orm go háirithe go bhfuil an BCT tar éis aitheantas a thabhairt gur gá déileáil leis na baill a bhfuil seirbhís fhada acu agus atá gar do dhul ar scor ar bhealach ann féin.

“Tá sé tuillte ag an ngrúpa beag seo, toisc a gcuid seirbhíse agus aois, barr an scála nua a bhaint amach atá i bhfeidhm d’fhoireann RnaG agus is é seo an t-aon chuid den idirbheartaíocht fadálach seo atá fágtha.

“Is é an tseod is luachmhaire ag RTÉ é RnaG agus tá sé cuí le linn comóradh céad bliain raidió in Éirinn gur féidir linn struchtúr níos cothroime a chinntiú do iriseoirí RnaG.”



# Minister's comments 'a serious overreach' — NUJ

Recent comments by Communications minister Patrick O'Donovan calling on Comisiún na Meán to investigate media coverage of protests and blockages arising from fuel price increases have been strongly criticised by the NUJ.

O'Donovan subsequently claimed to have "made a hames" of what he intended to say following the union's public statements, which were effectively supported by the Tánaiste and Fine Gael leader Simon Harris.

Assistant General Secretary Séamus Dooley described the minister's series of local radio interviews and his subsequent statement as being O'Donovan's Lady Bracknell moment.

He was addressing a gathering of teachers of Politics and Society at an Oíde seminar in Leinster House on the role of media and democracy in an age of polarisation.

"Last week," he told the audience, "was Patrick O'Donovan's Lady Bracknell moment as he claimed to have made a hames of the profound words he wished to utter as Minister for **Communications**, in three radio interviews across the country.

"To paraphrase Lady Bracknell, 'To make a hames of one interview may be regarded as a misfortune; to do it twice looks like carelessness, to do it a third time is cause for serious reflection!'"

The AGS said Deputy O'Donovan was guilty of serious overreach in demanding a Coimisúin na Méan review, seeking to use non-existent powers on the basis of a flawed analogy with An Garda Síochana.

He added: "The use of intemperate language, the inappropriate threat of a State review of RTÉ and the intimidatory tone adopted to interviewees cannot be compared to some of the vile threats and behaviour of a small but influential group of protestors, both online and on the street.

"However it must also be acknowledged that Mr O'Donovan as the custodian of State policy wields considerable more power than the so called self appointed leaders of public opinion and his words carry far more weight.

“ Patrick O'Donovan's  
Lady Bracknell  
moment ”

"In times of conflict opinions become polarised and what was notably absent from Mr O'Donovan's narrative was a recognition of the real challenges which journalists, camera crews, photographers and editors face in covering ongoing protests and blockades in the 24-hour news cycle. In the new environment where everyone with a phone can claim to be a citizen journalist, professional journalists have a real responsibility to operate within an ethical framework while faced with abuse because they belong to the so-called mainstream media.

"The role of the journalist is challenging. Our members are always alive to the need to report without fear or favour, not to be used as a pawn by dissident groups or government and to strike to give a balanced and objective report of news as it unfolds.

"In practice that means that at times one side or the other in a dispute or protest may dominate a specific report, coverage of a flashpoint or the outcome of a meeting.

"Editors will be mindful of striking a balance, giving appropriate rights of reply across bulletins or in reports but it is emphatically not the function of public service media or commercial broadcasters or publishers to save the blushes of government, no more than they should allow wildcat actions go unchallenged.

"The media plays an vital role in protecting democracy not by shielding the government or State agencies but by fairly, systematically and independently scrutinising the actions of all protagonists.

"The function of journalism is to challenge the consensus. In any conundrum there can be more than one consensus — in any political drama there are many players with different agenda. This is true in our own fragmented, political system and even more so on the world stage."

Dooley also criticised the abuse of media workers covering the protests and online. He said abuse of workers — be they journalists, Gardaí, security workers or public officials — is never acceptable and cannot be defined as some sort of democratic right.

# Celebrating Jim McDowell's defiant spirit

## Séamus Dooley

Jim McDowell, who has died aged 76 was more than just the former Northern Ireland editor of the Sunday World. He was an institution.

McDowell was one of the most formidable journalists of his generation: stubborn, tenacious and brave. He has been described as larger than life, a euphemism frequently deployed to describe a personality who is difficult to capture in a neat, tabloid headline.

No phrase could adequately sum up Big Jim, a nickname he rejoiced in.

His career, which began in the Newsletter, spanned 50 years and was marked by frequent threats from paramilitary groups and criminal gangs, not least those engaged in profit from drugs.

The murder of Martin O'Hagan on 28 September 2001 devastated his colleagues in the Sunday World.

Martin O'Hagan has been hired by Jim's predecessor Jim Cambell in 1987. McDowell encouraged his fearless journalism.

I recall meeting Jim in the Morning Star the evening after the murder. I had flown to Belfast from London and was collected at the airport by Kevin Cooper, Belfast photographer and NEC member.

Over the next few days I witnessed the pain of loss felt by Martin's colleagues and their resilience in publishing that weekend's paper featuring the murder of one of the most courageous journalists ever to grace our profession.

And I witnessed the defiant spirit of Jim McDowell. He was also a tower of strength to Marie and to Martin's three daughters not just in the difficult days after Martin's murder but throughout his tenure as editor and in his retirement.

Jim never tired of demanding that those who murdered Martin should be brought to justice but it would not do him justice to remember Jim only for his commitment to that vitally important, ongoing campaign.

Throughout the Troubles and beyond McDowell was forced to face down those who sought to



*Jim McDowell. Image courtesy of Sunday World*  
silence journalists and journalism and was himself the target of a physical attack while walking through Belfast city centre – in the grounds of City Hall.

Kevin Cooper has described Jim as "defiant and outspoken", and the Belfast photographer and union activist has captured Jim's towering personality in many gatherings over the year.

When the NUJ ADM, as it was then known, was held in Belfast, McDowell spoke passionately at an event in the Linen Hall marking the unveiling of a picture of Martin.

He was exacting and demanding – of himself and those around him. Without committed and brave journalists he could not have made such a major impact on the media landscape in Northern Ireland. When his team, or any member of the team, came under attack they had the editor's back. He faced down the enemies of journalism.

Jim stood up to those who sought to silence the Sunday World, including politicians, lawyers and the police but above all those who hid behind political ideologies to justify criminal behaviour.

Jim was a lifelong member of the NUJ and a strong supporter of Belfast and district branch.

On behalf of the NUJ I extend condolences to Jim's wife Lindy, to his daughter Faye and to his sons Jamie and Micah.

# NUJ gives evidence to Joint Oireachtas Committee on AI and copyright

Séamus Dooley, NUJ Irish secretary, called for a tech tax and stronger legislation to protect journalism and democracy while giving evidence to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on AI and copyright.

In his opening statement, Dooley told the committee that AI “is not an impending threat but a presence across our industry.”

Dooley insisted that journalists are not resistant to change and have consistently adapted to the introduction of new technology. “It is very easy to sound like the blacksmith bemoaning the introduction of the motorcar, to sound like an old fogey,” said Dooley.

However, in many workplaces artificial intelligence has been “imposed without any consultation whatsoever, and it has huge implications on how you do your work, and whether you have a job at all or not.”

NUJ members are already encountering false attributions, inaccurate AI-generated stories and use of their work without consent or compensation. These practices harm workers’ ability to earn a decent living and thwart access to reliable information and impartial news reporting, leading to an erosion of public trust in journalism and risking the reputation of journalists and media organisations.

During the committee hearing, Dooley called for fair and reasonable terms of compensation for journalists’ creative work, which is a core input to

AI’s commercial value.

Big tech platforms have “pillaged and profited from the media sector with financial impunity,” said Dooley.

These platforms have regurgitated editorial content, replacing local news sources while claiming they are platforms and not publishers - failing to take responsibility for the discrimination and disinformation pushed by their algorithms and published on their platforms.

“That’s a core problem. No one else gets away with saying, ‘I only lit the match’,” said Dooley. “The fact of the matter is that they set the place on fire and they have done a huge amount of damage.”

The NUJ has called for a 6% windfall tax on these companies. The “only thing capital understands is cost,” Dooley added.

Dooley also called for “clear and unambiguous enforcement of copyright law” and a licensing system for the use of creators’ copyright materials.

He said: “Tech companies should be obliged to disclose their training data, the design of their algorithms and their output, and pay their fair share for the wholesale robbery of creative workers’ labour.”

[Watch the AI and copyright hearing at the Oireachtas here.](#)

[Read the NUJ’s full submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee here.](#)

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## Trade Union Week: Better in a Union

In the week approaching the May Day Bank Holiday, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) marks Trade Union Week, which takes place between 27 April and 4 May.

This annual week of action and celebration highlights the power of collective action through union membership, with coordinated events in workplaces and local communities across the island of Ireland.

As part of Trade Union Week, the Mediahuis chapel in conjunction with Ian McGuinness, Irish

organiser, hosted an online party with members and non-members and also promoted membership within the company.

The event was well attended and highly successful, and a number of new members have already indicated their intention to join the NUJ.

On April 30 members in the RTÉ chapel joined with other trade union in hosting an information morning featuring leaflets, cake and music from the National Concert Orchestra, courtesy of the Musicians Union of Ireland (a division of SIPTU).

## Mediahuis Group Chapel Says Yes To New Conditions

A four-month stalemate between the NUJ and Mediahuis has been broken after union members overwhelmingly voted in favour of new terms and conditions of employment. Eighty percent of ballots cast were in favour of accepting the raft of proposals. The NUJ Group Chapel Committee had recommended a Yes vote.

It was a different matter last December, when almost three quarters of NUJ members who voted, rejected a two percent pay increase for 2026 and a €500/£500 Christmas bonus. No recommendation was given by the Committee in that ballot.

The new terms and conditions - including a pay offer for 2027 - cover all editorial staff in the Irish Independent, Sunday Independent, Herald, Sunday World/Crime World, Belfast Telegraph, Sunday Life and the company's regional titles.

In a concerted effort to break the deadlock from the December 2025 ballot, the NUJ engaged with Mediahuis and the following improvements were proposed, covering staff north and south of the border:

- **Paternity leave** was increased from two to four weeks, ensuring full pay for the month.
- **Domestic violence leave** has been boosted from five days to one month on full pay.
- **Bereavement leave** is also increased and – depending on the relationship of the deceased to the employee – will be granted for three working days, five working days, 10 working days or a month.
- **Mileage rates** have moved upwards in the Republic. They are now paid at 60c per km (up to 6,437 km) and 30c thereafter. Electric vehicles and those in receipt of a car allowance receive 40c per km. North of the border the HMRC rate of 45p per mile continues (up to 10,000 miles) and 25p thereafter. However, electric vehicles and those with car allowances are now paid 30p per mile.
- A small cohort of employees in the Republic have

also been moved from the minimum wage to the **recommended living wage**.

- A **retirement scheme** for those aged 62 or above (with at least five years' service) will pay one year's gross salary to them, if they retire within one year. This will be paid as a tax-free lump sum, if the individual qualifies for such under HMRC or Revenue Commissioner rules.

The company also offered a two percent increase in pay in 2027.

The NUJ agreed to put this to its members, on the clear understanding that the union will seek to engage with Mediahuis again on pay for 2027 this autumn, taking into account the economic environment at the time and the finances of the company.

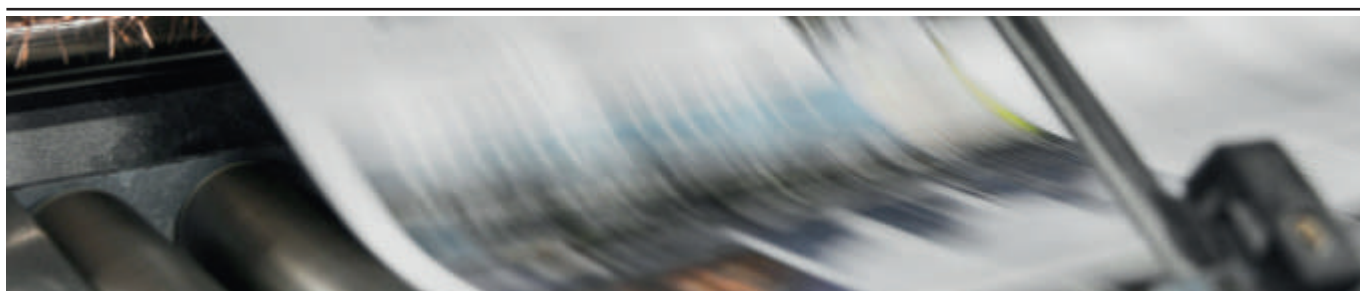
Furthermore, the company has agreed to work with managers to ensure leave is planned for and implemented more effectively; a working group on workloads and stress, with NUJ reps, has been established and has begun its work; and Mediahuis and the NUJ are now holding quarterly meetings to deal with any issues of concern to either party.

NUJ Irish Organiser, Ian McGuinness, praised the commitment and hard work of the union's reps over the past four months and said the agreement with the company ensures that both sides can now move forward.

"Without Alan Caulfied, Edel Hughes, Steven Moore, Áine Toner, John Toner, Margaret Roddy and Eugene Masterson, this would never have been achieved.

"The NUJ's reps worked tirelessly, attended meeting after meeting with myself and with the company, and did so solely to improve the terms and conditions of their colleagues.

This raft of improvement helps to build a stronger safety net for our members in Mediahuis and the NUJ looks forward to continuing to work constructively with the company in the future."



## Dublin Freelance branch concerned pension income calculation affecting membership

Including pension entitlements in calculating earnings is resulting in members leaving the union because their monthly subscription is greater than the amount earned from journalism, a recent meeting of Dublin Freelance branch heard. Low earnings in the freelance sector is an endemic problem, recognised by rule 4 (contributions) which states members earning less than £16,000 (€17,500) per annum shall pay £13 (€13.80) per month. The rule goes on to state that "no member shall pay contributions of more than one per cent of their taxable income."

"Many older freelance members are living on quite meagre incomes, and the occasional piece of freelance work offers a welcome boost", says branch welfare officer Kieran Fagan. "I have been approached by people who have been by told that to stay in membership they need to pay a fulltime subscription which exceeds the pittance they get in freelance payments."

An individual's eligibility for a reduced subscription is reviewed annually. "Based on what members are telling me, there is a harder line now being pursued by the membership department and Dublin Freelance branch is losing members as a result", says Kieran Fagan " And these are people who wish to continue supporting the NUJ as it has supported them during their working lives."

"I understand in difficult times the union must collect every penny it can to support the work it does for all of us, and I don't criticise the

membership department for doing its job properly. But I don't think the union's financial problems will be solved by making it impossible for long standing members whose careers are winding down to continue to support the union."

The issue was raised at the March 2026 Dublin Freelance branch meeting, and it was resolved to raise it at the Irish Council and with NEC members to see if a solution can be achieved which does not involve older members paying more to the union than they get paid by employers.

Responding to the branch discussion Séamus Dooley, Assistant General Secretary said there was a misunderstanding about the application of the NUJ rules.

"The rules governing subscriptions are made by the union's delegate meeting and are not determined by staff. The inclusion of all taxable income is no a new development, nor is there a harder line being adopted by staff paid to implement union policy.

"It is worth noting that the rule was changed to 1% of taxable income in DM2005 motion 61, by an amendment by London Freelance Branch to a motion tabled by the National Executive Council.

"Within the parameters laid down by the delegate meeting the union adopts a sympathetic approach to all members encountering difficulties in paying subs."

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## Freelance Forum Spring 2026: Court Reporting

The vital role of professional journalists in covering courts was emphasised by Mr Justice David Barniville, president of the High Court in Ireland, at the Spring Freelance Forum organised by Dublin Freelance branch on Saturday 21 March.

In a detailed closing address to the forum, attended by almost 70 journalists and student journalists, Mr Justice Barniville said transparency in the administration of justice matters in navigating the tensions that can arise when seeking to balance full and open access with the need to safeguard the integrity of court processes.

Addressing the reporters present, Mr Justice Barniville said: "Transparency builds trust and strengthens public

confidence in the administration of justice. Indeed, courts rely on members of the public understanding not only what decisions are made but why they are made. We depend on you to communicate those decisions accurately, responsibly and in context.

"Your reporting in that regard ensures not only that justice is done, but that it is seen to be done and broadly understood. Your role in reporting on court hearings, and your right of access to in order to properly facilitate that work, is central to the proper functioning of an open, liberal democracy and to the rule of law. Accurate reporting enhances public understanding of the rule of law by demystifying

proceedings that might otherwise appear opaque or inaccessible."

The High Court president also addressed the issue of access to court papers by bona fide members of the press. He acknowledged the importance of ensuring that bona fide members of the press can readily access court papers so that reporting can be as accurate and informed as possible. This access is also a part of the principle of open justice. To support this, the Courts Service has guidelines in place to facilitate access to documents where permissible.

The president said his door, and that of the Principal Registrar, is always open if bona fide journalists encounter difficulties in obtaining papers or wish to raise concerns about access.

Mr Justice Barniville said that with access comes responsibility. Journalists who receive copies of court documents must handle them with the utmost professionalism, discretion and respect for what can and cannot be published.

He said the NUJ's Code of Conduct and the Press Council of Ireland's Code of Practice provide robust ethical frameworks that remind reporters of their duties in respect of accuracy and responsible use of information. He added that media responsibility extends to all aspects of modern reporting.

Much like the media landscape, the courtroom environment has been reshaped by the widespread use of social media. While bona fide reporters, bound by professional standards of accuracy and fairness, can and do utilise social media as another reporting tool, others (including disruptive litigants and individuals with grievances) have attempted to weaponise social platforms by spreading misinformation or attempting to film, broadcast and/or mischaracterise proceedings.

He said he and his colleagues have witnessed an

increasing number of incidents "whereby certain litigants, fuelled by anger or personal grievance, engage in repeated and sometimes outrageous attacks on the authority of the court – interrupting proceedings, refusing to comply with directions, or even shouting accusations such as calling a judge a liar in open court."

Referring to recent cases by "some well-known and particularly disruptive litigants" he said such abuses of process have created new pressures on judges, court staff, lawyers and litigants.

The High Court president underlined the exercise of editorial judgement when reporting on extreme or persistent instances of disruptive behaviour in court.

He said: "When such behaviour occurs, it is of course generally newsworthy. But I would ask you to consider whether every inappropriate interaction merits publication.

"I am certainly not suggesting that misconduct of this kind, or outbursts in court, should be concealed. As experienced professionals, you have the capacity to distinguish between what informs the public and what merely amplifies behaviour designed to undermine the dignity of the court."

Gerry Curran, NUJ joint president, addressed the event through his role as media relations advisor to the Courts Service. Curran said that it was important for court reporters to ensure stories were interesting and accessible while remaining accurate and objective with the essence of every article faithful to what was said in court. He drew attention to court rules limiting what can be reported and when.

The Courts Service continues to provide daily assistance and information on court cases to reporters and Curran undertook to improve any areas where the press felt there were gaps and to give a longer online presentation to attendees at a future date.



*NUJ joint president Gerry Curran, assistant general secretary Séamus Dooley, Orlagh Flood, office of the DPP, the Hon Mr Justice David Barniville, president of the High Court, and John Maher BL at the Spring 2026 Freelance Forum held in March. Image: Guth Publication*

## Freelance Forum Spring 2026



*Paul Reynolds, RTÉ crime correspondent, Stephen Bourke, Courts News Ireland, and Susan McKay, press ombudsperson, at the Spring 2026 Freelance Forum. Image: Guth Publication*



*Above: Sarah MacDonald, Priyanka Borpujari, and Emmet Ryan, who spoke about the challenges of pitching overseas. Image: Guth Publication*



*Left: Dr Shubhangi Karmakar, Dublin Freelance branch chair Gerard Cunningham, and Leona O'Neill at the Freelance Forum. Image: Brendan O'Neill*

## ICTU WOMEN'S CONFERENCE: Strong NUJ contribution to key debates

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Women's Conference 2026, held at the Slieve Russell Hotel, Co Cavan on 19–20 March, brought delegates together to discuss equality, workers' rights and the challenges facing women in Ireland's workplaces.

The NUJ was well represented. Bernie Ní Fhlatharta and Kathryn Johnston attended as delegates, with Paula Geraghty as conference photographer. Former Irish Journalist editor Carolyn Farrar had hoped to attend but was unable to do so and was much missed.

The conference opened with welcomes from Joint Women's Committee Chairs Tina Creaney and Lynda Scully, and Cllr Niamh Brady of Cavan County Council.

Congress President Phil Ní Sheaghda formally opened proceedings, while ICTU General Secretary Owen Reidy addressed delegates, highlighting the theme: *Achieving for Women in Work: A New Economic Model for Women Workers*.

A key highlight for the NUJ was the unanimous support for Motion 9 on gender-based digital violence. The motion called for stronger laws, regulation and union support, and was proposed by Kathryn Johnston (NUJ) and seconded by Sally Corr (SIPTU). Delegates from across unions spoke in favour, commending the NUJ for bringing the issue forward.

All motions were passed, with two exceptions. Motion 7, from Equity NI on the decriminalisation of sex work, was remitted for further discussion,

while Motion 10 from the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) on flexible working in education was withdrawn.

Debate on Motion 7 was wide-ranging. While some speakers opposed decriminalisation, most supported further exploration. Several referenced the New Zealand model, noting backing from organisations including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Fringe events covered solidarity with Palestine, research on women workers, and strategies to tackle misogyny and hate, though scheduling clashes limited attendance to one session.

The session on misogyny and hate drew particular attention, reflecting concerns about gender-based digital violence. Speakers emphasised allyship as key to challenging misogyny and advancing workplace equality.

Bystander intervention training, discussed at the 2024 conference, was also revisited. Although courses had previously been discontinued due to low uptake, ICTU officials indicated they may be reintroduced.

Despite progress, many longstanding issues remain. Equal pay, workplace equality, misogyny, and stigma around women's health—including menstruation—featured prominently. Other motions addressed artificial intelligence, online abuse, period poverty and racial discrimination.

The conference was vibrant and engaging. Delegates often drew on personal experience, with contributions met in attentive silence and, at times, standing ovations.



Bernie Ní Fhlatharta. Image: Paula Geraghty



Kathryn Johnston and Bernie Ní Fhlatharta. Image: Paula Geraghty

# The Joe Drennan Memorial Prize: Honouring a Young Journalist's Legacy Through Inclusive Storytelling

Entries are now open for a journalism award established by University of Limerick, in association with The Irish Times, in memory of Joe Drennan, the University of Limerick journalism student killed tragically in 2023.

**Unheard Voices: The Joe Drennan Memorial Prize for Inclusive Journalism** will celebrate journalism that advances social justice and enhances understanding of marginalised communities and values.

Open to students in third-level institutions studying for *all* courses – not just journalism degrees – throughout the island of Ireland, the Drennan Prize will honour Joe's legacy and encourage emerging journalists to amplify underrepresented voices.

A native of Mountrath, Co Laois, Joe was a final year journalism student in UL when he was killed just two weeks after his 21st birthday. He was standing at a bus-stop on his way home from working in a restaurant in Limerick when he was struck by a hit-and-run driver.

"Joe's passion was to build a journalism career grounded in inclusivity and social justice," said Dr

Kathryn Hayes, Associate Professor in Journalism and Digital Communication at University of Limerick.

"We are proud that this prize established by the journalism department in UL honours Joe's legacy, particularly his dedication to journalism that speaks for often-unheard voices. Opening it up to students across Ireland ensures that Joe's values will inspire a new generation of journalists nationally."

The Editor of The Irish Times, Ruadhán Mac Cormaic said: "The Joe Drennan prize is a fitting way to memorialise a promising young journalist who was just starting out in our trade. It will create an invaluable opportunity for an emerging reporter to do work of real depth on a subject that matters."

Entrants are required to submit a 1,500-word article, along with images and video. Submissions will be judged on impact, originality, depth of investigation, quality of research and reporting, and standard of writing.

The winning entry will be published in The Irish Times.



## What's Up?

The NUJ has set up a WhatsApp link for the Students and Early Careers Network. We'd really value more members joining and asking questions, sharing ideas etc.

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/CH2NkssgryQ9CvWkTcj5ug>

## Celebrating Life Membership

Due to an error in transcription in the last issue, Paul Russell (broadcasting branch) was omitted from the list of those awarded life membership at the recent life membership presentation ceremony in the Teachers' Club, Dublin in December 2025. We apologise for the error.

## Stephen Corrigan

Congratulations to Stephen Corrigan who has been appointed as an industrial official based in Galway. Stephen is Cathaoirleach of the Irish Executive Council and will be stepping down at the next meeting of the council having resigned from his work as a reporter with the Connacht Tribune to pursue a new career. He worked in the Galway based newspaper for almost ten years and had a stellar career as a journalist.

Wishing him well on his appointment Séamus Dooley, Assistant General Secretary paid tribute to Stephen's work at chapel branch and IEC level.

"Stephen is a great loss to journalism. He was widely respected as a reporter and admired as a courageous and committed chapel officer.

As a member of the IEC he was outspoken, passionate and always had the best interest of members at heart. He will be a valuable addition to the health division of SIPTU in the West of Ireland."

## NUJ tribute to Gordon Snell

Gordon Snell, author, broadcaster, radio producer, satirist, and storyteller, who has died aged 93, was a life long member of the National Union of Journalists and one of the most respected writers in Ireland.

A graduate of Oxford University, Gordon began his broadcasting career in the BBC. He moved to Ireland following his marriage in 1977 to the journalist, NUJ member, and globally acclaimed novelist Maeve Binchy.

In Ireland he contributed radio scripts including to satirical radio programmes such as Only Slaggin' and Get An Earful of This and the children's TV programme Wanderly Wagon.

An imaginative and evocative writer he published his first book for children, *The King of Quizzical Island*, in 1978.

Séamus Dooley, Assistant General Secretary paid tribute to Gordon, recalling his very public support for the NUJ over many decades.

He said: "Gordon and Maeve were a couple who inspired affection and respect. No second names were needed when referring to these two hugely successful writers and the NUJ valued their support. With the late James Downey they launched an anti-ageism card some years ago in Liberty Hall, Dublin and it was of the most enjoyable union functions *ever* held in that venue. The topic was serious but was tackled with such good humour and wisdom by all three.

"On first meeting Gordon could appear the quintessential Englishman, with impeccable manner but he had a very Irish sense of humour, and his political satirical verses were hilarious and biting.

"He was proud to be known as Maeve's husband, but Gordon also made an enormous contribution to the arts and literature, especially children's literature and like Maeve was a tremendous supporter of emerging talent.

"Those of us who got to know Gordon will remember him as a kind and generous friend, a man of many talents and above all a decent and compassionate human being."

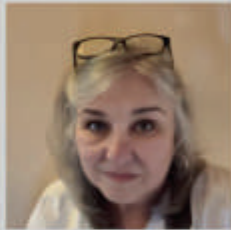
# IRISH EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 2025-27

## Regional Newspapers (1 vacancy)



Stephen Corrigan  
IEC Cathaorleach

## Freelance

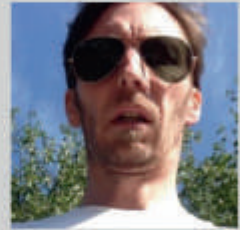


Carolyn Farrar  
IEC Leas Chathaoirleach



Gerard Cunningham  
Treasurer

## Broadcasting



Cearbhall O Siochain



Trevor Keegan

## National Newspapers



Kitty Holland



Éanna Ó Caollaí



Edel Hughes

## Books & Magazine



Vacant (Observer)

## New Media



Phil MacGiollaBhain  
(Observer)



Fran McNulty (NEC)

## NEC Northern Ireland



Amanda Ferguson

## PR & Information



Neil Ward

## NEC Republic of Ireland



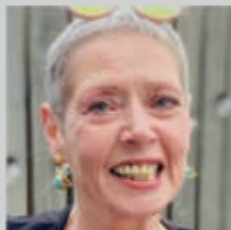
Gerry Curran

## Black Members



Kais Aloui  
(Observer)

## Reserved Seat for Northern of Ireland



Kathryn Johnston

## Retired Members



Robert Baxter  
(Observer)



Bernie Ni Fhlatharta



Dara Bradley

**Fran McNulty and Gerry Curran jobsharing.**

**Bernie Ni Fhlatharta and Dara Bradley job-sharing.**