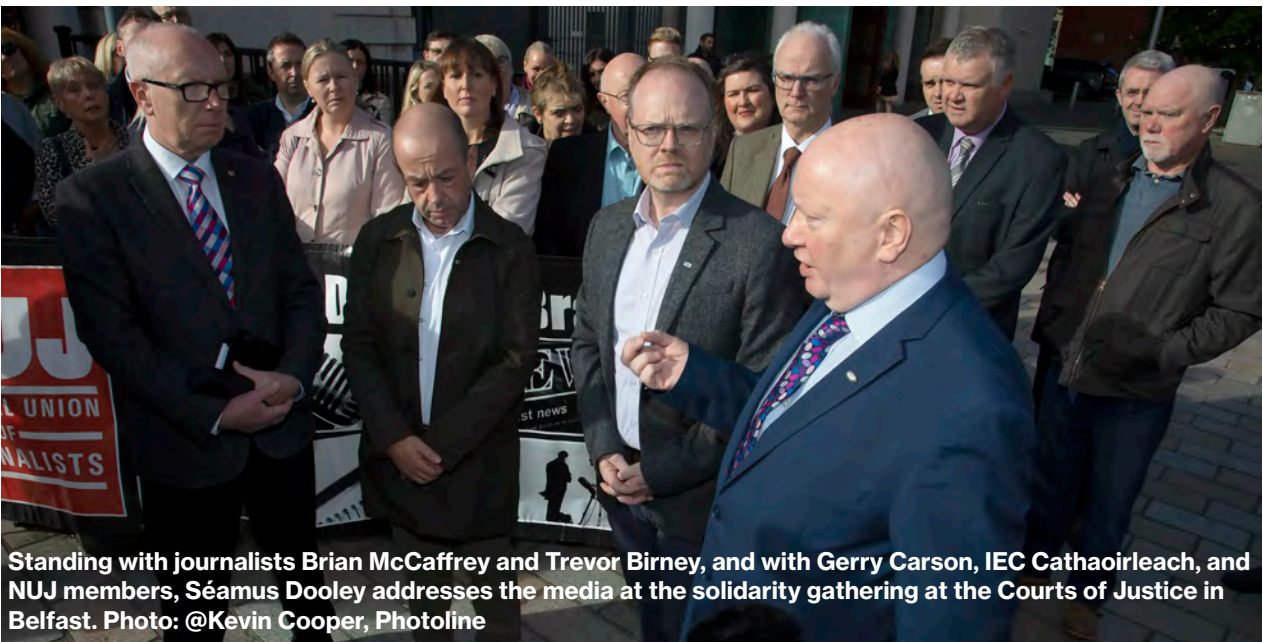


THE IRISH JOURNALIST



Newsletter of the National Union of Journalists in Ireland

Autumn 2018



Standing with journalists Brian McCaffrey and Trevor Birney, and with Gerry Carson, IEC Cathaoirleach, and NUJ members, Séamus Dooley addresses the media at the solidarity gathering at the Courts of Justice in Belfast. Photo: @Kevin Cooper, Photoline

Stop fishing, catch the killers

By Séamus Dooley, Irish Secretary

On Friday August 31st, police raided two homes and an office in Belfast. The raids were linked to the sectarian attack on a pub in Loughinisland, Co Down in 1994, in which six civilians were murdered.

Two men, Barry McCaffrey and Trevor Birney, were arrested and police seized phones, computers and hundreds of files. In normal circumstances such intense activity would have been welcomed as a breakthrough in an unsolved investigation.

But the raids were not part of an investigation into the murders. Rather the police arrested two journalists and removed files from the office of Fine Point Films, makers of “No Stone Unturned”, a documentary that provides evidence of police collusion in the Loughinisland murders.

It was a fishing expedition. The police spent 13 hours searching through every desk and cupboard in the offices. In the High Court, Fine Point Films secured an order that all equipment and documents seized must remain sealed until a further court hearing.

Barry McCaffrey and Trevor Birney are on bail, without charge, until November.

It is an outrage that priority should be given to an investigation into a public interest documentary rather than acting upon the information unearthed.

In this issue we report with pride the response of NUJ members to this latest attack on media freedom. We acknowledge the solidarity of the ICTU, Amnesty International and the families of those murdered, Adrian Rogan, Malcolm Jenkinson, Barney Green, Daniel McCreanor, Patrick O’Hare, and Eamon Byrne.

“They took my daughter’s homework”



Late night release: Trevor Birney, left, and Barry McCaffrey leave Musgrave Police Station, Belfast.

A chilling account of the random nature of the PSNI search of his home was given by Trevor Birney at the September meeting of the IEC, when he briefed members on the case.

Trevor’s wife opened the door to the early morning visitors, and he immediately knew that the raid was connected to his work on “No Stone Unturned”.

His family and visitors from the UK looked on as officers from Durham Constabulary and the PSNI, on foot of a broadly based warrant, seized family property including all mobile phones and laptops.

“They took my daughter’s mobile, they took USB sticks – they even took my daughter’s homework which was on a mobile device,” he explained.

Barry McCaffrey was forced to dress in front of PSNI officers and treated in a degrading manner during the raid on his house. The use of police powers and the confiscation of material manifestly unrelated to the purpose of the arrests forms part of the ongoing legal challenge by Fine Point Films.

Global support

The NUJ has been inundated with support for our campaign against the arrest of Trevor Birney and Barry McCaffrey.

The campaign has received messages from sister unions and comrades from across Europe, the United States and New Zealand, as well as messages from international organisations, including the IFJ.

Among the messages received was one from Steven Gillis, Financial Secretary, USW Local 8751, who wrote: “Please add my name, and the glorious, 900+ strong membership of United Steelworkers Local 8751, the Boston School Bus Drivers’ Union — migrant workers ALL from Haiti,

Barry and Trevor were released on police bail until November 30th.

Setting out the background to the case, Trevor confirmed that there was contact with the PSNI and the Police Ombudsman during the final stages of production, and the police were made fully aware of the content in advance. The ombudsman viewed the film in advance of public screenings in the UK or Ireland. Because “No Stone Unturned” named the suspected killer and contained specific allegations of police collusion it was felt appropriate to give the police an opportunity to respond, and to raise concerns about possible threats to life or safety, he explained. There were no objections or concerns expressed.

Trevor was accompanied by NUJ colleagues Kathryn Torney, editor, and Lindsay Fergus, reporter with the news website, thedetail. Thedetail and Fine Point Films form part of the Below the Radar group of companies. Kathryn joined with Trevor in thanking the NUJ for their support for Barry and Trevor. The speedy reaction of the NUJ had been a source of reassurance to the families of both men while they were in custody.

Cabo Verde, Vietnam, Honduras, Trinidad, Ethiopia, Barbados, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Alabama, Ireland, etc who elected me to represent — to your petition in defense of the brilliant and truth-exposing journalists Trevor Birney and Barry McCaffrey.”

In Dublin, actor Stephen Rea conveyed his strong support for the NUJ campaign to Irish Secretary Séamus Dooley. Rea was attending a book reading by John Connell, author of the award winning “Cow Book”, who also endorsed the campaign.

NUJ members and supporters may email their support to endthreat@nuj.ie



Allison Millar, ICTU Vice President, who represented the ICTU at the solidarity gathering outside the Courts of Justice in Belfast, along with fellow NIPSA members, is pictured with, from left: Gerry Carson, Cathaoirleach, IEC, Trevor Birney, Séamus Dooley, Irish Secretary, and Barry McCaffrey. Photo: @Kevin Cooper, Photoline.

Arrest of journalists causes outrage

The arrest of Barry McCaffrey and Trevor Birney following raids on their homes last month in a joint Durham Constabulary/PSNI operation has outraged NUJ members and human rights activists. The journalists are currently on bail, having been questioned in connection with the alleged theft of documents.

A huge number of PSNI officers also swooped on the Belfast city centre offices of Fine Point Films, makers of the documentary “No Stone Unturned”, and spent 13 hours rifling through cupboards, confiscating a mountain of material and equipment. Much of the material removed is unrelated to the documentary into the Loughinisland massacre.

Officers from Durham Constabulary and the PSNI detained Trevor Birney and Barry McCaffrey in Belfast over the use of material allegedly stolen from the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (PONI). PONI officers reported the alleged theft to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), which then asked Durham police to conduct an independent investigation, but the PSNI took the lead role in questioning the journalists and heavily outnumbered the outside force in the raids.

Séamus Dooley, Irish Secretary, said there were a number of disturbing aspects to the arrests. Among those were the involvement of the PSNI, the removal of material unrelated to

the documentary and the decision to remand two journalists on bail in the absence of any evidence of wrongdoing.

“To hold two journalists whose crime is public interest journalism for 14 hours without any evidence of wrongdoing is unacceptable. They could have been invited to the station for questioning,” he said.

Séamus pointed out that the PSNI and the Ombudsman had the opportunity to meet the film-makers and view material in advance. “There were no surprises in the film, there is nothing they do not know already, and this is a fishing exercise,” he said.

Documentary maker Alex Gibney said the arrests were outrageous and that police should instead have reopened the investigation into the 1994 massacre at Loughinisland.

He said the film had exposed the failure of police to properly investigate the murders.

Fine Point Films have challenged the seizure of equipment and sought a High Court order to protect confidential information.

Members of the NUJ gathered outside the Courts of Justice in solidarity with the makers of the documentary ‘No Stone Unturned’. Barry and Trevor were cheered when they arrived, accompanied by Séamus Dooley and Gerry Carson, IEC Cathaoirleach.

Prior to the hearing, Séamus and Gerry met the journalists privately to assure them of continued trade union support and solidarity.

Irish South West branch discusses the implications of GDPR

By Anna Nolan

[Editor's note: This article is a report of a branch event, and should not be construed as legal advice. If you have queries about GDPR in your work, please consult your usual legal advisers.]

Do journalists have to change the way they work in order to comply with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that came into effect on 25th May this year? If so, to what extent? And what about our precious, hard-earned contact lists?

To answer these questions, the Irish South West branch invited local solicitor Rossa McMahon of PG McMahon Solicitors in Newcastle West, County Limerick to explain the implications for journalists. Reassuringly, he told us that although there is much that we have to be aware of, and be careful about, we are legally allowed to keep information and personal data necessary for our work, and we definitely don't have to ask everyone on our contact lists if we may keep them there.

His key message consisted of four main imperatives. We must:

- be able to justify that keeping the data is in the public interest;
- encrypt our drives;
- securely store our notebooks; and
- make sure that we do not accidentally send emails with sensitive personal data to the wrong person.

Under GDPR, "personal data" is any information relating to an identified or identifiable (directly or indirectly) natural person. The definition of "sensitive personal data" is far-reaching. It is data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious/philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, data concerning health, or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation, and even an IP address.

There are three key players involved in the day-to-day workings of GDPR – the data subject, the data controller, and the data processor. Rossa explained to us what this means in practical terms.

The data subject is the person that the data is about. This person has wide-ranging rights under the regulation. The data controller is the person who controls that data. The data processor does things with the data on behalf of the data controller.

Under GDPR, data processing includes anything done to personal data. This affects just about anything done with personal data since it takes in collecting, recording, organising,



Norma Prendiville, Cathaoirleach, South West branch.
Photo: Adrian Butler

structuring, storing, adapting, altering, retrieving, consulting, using, disclosing, combining, restricting, erasing or destroying.

The data controller may also be the data processor, or may pass the data to an outside contractor for processing. In this case, the data controller still carries the same responsibilities.

A media business is a business, and therefore subject to all the requirements and restrictions of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), Rossa explained.

Fortunately, exemptions from some of the more stringent requirements of GDPR apply to us as journalists, if we are processing data solely for journalistic purposes, and if the data controller reasonably believes (a) that publication is in the public interest and (b) that complying with the DPA obligations are incompatible with journalistic purposes.

The individual staff journalist is, additionally, in the fortunate position of not being a data controller. That responsibility rests with the employer. Freelance journalists have to be extra careful though, as generally they are data controllers.

"This means that the freelance is responsible for security," Mr McMahon stressed. "GDPR doesn't introduce a necessity for encryption, but you have to be secure, so it's advisable.

"Don't use free cloud back-up, and make sure that the servers are based in the EEA and that the password protection is okay."

Branch Cathaoirleach Norma Prendiville warmly thanked Mr McMahon for his helpful explanations of the implications of GDPR for us.

The training session was held in Bunratty Folk Park, County Clare, on 19th May. It was followed by a branch meeting and lunch. Some family members joined us to enjoy the attractions of the park in the afternoon.

Anna Nolan is a member of the South West branch.

New rules to ease access to court records

The right to seek permission for access to court records in civil and criminal cases by bona fide journalists has been confirmed in rules introduced over the summer by the Courts Service of Ireland.

The new rules, enacted as a result of the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018, end the grace and favour basis on which reporters have been granted access to court records and should assist accurate reporting of court hearings.

Séamus Dooley, Irish Secretary said: “The new guidelines have been welcomed by working journalists and clarify the entitlement of professional journalists to seek genuine access to accurate records. Over the years court reporters have been well served by officials but the lack of clarity over access has made life difficult for the media and public servants. Coverage of the courts is vital in a democracy.

“These rules are very welcome,” he said. “Now we need media organisations to provide the resources to cover the courts.”

The Data Protection Act 2018 specifically allows the court rules committees to draft rules to allow media to ask permission for access to information in court records, to facilitate fair and accurate reporting of court hearings. The committees have now finished the rules.

Court offices will have a clear basis for co-operating with bona fide members of the media.

According to Gerry Curran, Media Relations Advisor, the Courts Service intends to issue guidelines to allow bona fide members of the media to seek access documentation in civil and criminal court cases opened or deemed to have been opened in court. The service will liaise with court reporters on the logistics of this change.

It is important to note that the rules do not displace existing legal restrictions on reporting of certain types of court case (e.g. those affecting in camera proceedings or applying under the Criminal Procedure Act, 1967) and operate subject to any order or direction of the court in a specific case.

Brendan Ryan, CEO of the Courts Service, said: “These changes will underpin the media’s ability and right to access the necessary information to report on the vast and varied number of cases which the courts hear annually. The changes are a transparent measure to support the role of an independent courts system in our democracy, while respecting both the restrictions which apply to certain categories of court proceedings, and the control which a court exercises over proceedings before it.”

The following is the summary issued by the Court Service:

Media accreditation will be reserved for members of the press (print, photo, radio, TV, film, news agencies and online media) who represent a bona fide media organisation (formally registered as a media organisation).

Members of the media will be expected to possess identification sufficient to enable court staff, or if necessary a court itself, to verify that they are “bona fide”.

Sufficient accreditation is required which shows that the bearer subscribes to a national/international code of conduct and reporting standards. Production of the card will be both necessary and sufficient to demonstrate accreditation as ‘bona fide’. In other cases an application for accreditation must be made to the Courts Service in advance.

‘Bona fide’ members of the media could be deemed to be any or all of these categories:

A person who produces a valid current / in date National Press Card issued by the National Union of Journalists; or a person who produces a valid ID identifying them as a reporter / correspondent, employed by a national or regional or online news title or site which is a member of the Press Council of Ireland; or a person who produces a valid ID identifying them as a reporter / correspondent employed by a national or local broadcaster which is licensed by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland; or a person who produces a valid current / in date International Federation of Journalists Press Card.

Identification of Other Media Representatives as ‘Bona Fide’:

Where the above criteria cannot be met – and where the person might still seek to be treated as a bona fide member of the media - in order to establish accreditation and access to court information - a person will need to apply to the Courts Service Media Relations Office providing the information detailed below:

- Complete name as it appears on official photo identification;
- Date of birth;
- Nationality;
- Passport or other photo identification number (driver’s license, PPS, etc.); and
- Address and email address of the applicant.

Accreditation requests must be supported by a letter of assignment on official letterhead of a media organisation signed by the publisher or editor-in-chief, indicating the name of the media representative and duration of assignment; and any other information requested by the Courts Service.

Union mourns death of activist Richie Flynn

Richie Flynn, former Chair of the Dublin P&PR branch, died suddenly last month. He was 49.

Richie was the Executive of the Irish Farmers Association Aquaculture Division and served as a member of the NUJ's Irish Executive Council from 1993 to 1996.

The first editor of the Irish Journalist, Richie helped spearhead NUJ fundraising initiatives during the Irish Press dispute. He also served as a member of the ICTU Youth committee and was highly regarded in the wider trade union movement.

News of his untimely death has shocked colleagues in the media, agriculture, marine, and rural development sectors.

A graduate of Communications Studies at Dublin City University, Richie worked in the IFA's press office from 1990 to 1996. Richie retained his branch membership, and more importantly, his close friendships with NUJ colleagues, when he moved from the press office to pioneer development of the aquamarine sector. He is remembered for his engaging personality, sharp wit and incisive contributions to delegate conferences.

Richie was a former board member of the Marine Institute and chaired the EU advisory committee on aquaculture from 2001 to 2011. He also served as President of the European Shellfish Federation from 2012 to 2016.

Paying tribute, Séamus Dooley, Assistant General Secretary said, "Richie was a lifelong member of the National Union of Journalists, from his earliest days at Dublin City University.

"He was a tower of strength to Irish Press journalists during the closure of the Irish Press



Richie Flynn: A man of principle.

group and enthusiastically threw himself into fundraising events.

"One of the reasons he was so successful was that Richie was still a journalist at heart – he loved news and he understood how the media worked," Seamus said.

"Journalists also knew he was a man of principle and the utmost integrity so they trusted him," he said.

Life was never dull when Richie was around. He was a devoted husband and loyal father. His father's recent death was a blow to Richie, who delivered a eulogy with characteristic style and humour. Richie never took himself seriously but he was serious and passionate about the things that matter to him – family, friendship, music, work and service to others.

Sympathy is extended to Richie's wife, Trish; his son Liam; daughter, Róisín; mother, Helen; and sister, Sinéad.

His funeral took place at St. Patrick's Church, Mohill, followed by cremation at Lakelands Crematorium, Cavan. Séamus Dooley and former Irish Secretary Eoin Ronayne, who worked closely with Richie, visited the Flynn home to extend condolences to Trish. George Kiely, Dublin P&PR branch, represented the union at the funeral.

Time to take a strong stand

November 2nd is designated as UN International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists and this year will provide a focal point for the union campaign in support of Trevor Birney and Barry McCaffrey.

The Irish office will be co-ordinating events. Branches are encouraged to consider how best

they can express solidarity not just with the Belfast-based journalists but with all journalists and media organisations targeted because of their work.

Branches and chapels who wish to organise a viewing of No Stone Unturned should contact info@nuj.ie.

FF media policy: Good idea, confused result

By Michael Foley

If Fianna Fáil's new media policy underlines one thing, it is the need for comprehensive inquiry into the media in Ireland, which might help inform Fianna Fáil's own media policy.

The party's recently published policy document, *Newspaper Publishing: A policy to sustain high quality journalism in Irish public life*, is to be welcomed as a signal that at least one political party is taking journalism and the media seriously. The pity is the document is confused and at times bizarre.

The reason for formulating the policy, we are told, is because the impact of the online environment and especially digital advertising has meant "Irish newspaper publishers are no longer able to allocate adequate resources to provide high quality journalism."

Other countries aid their newspaper industry, the document points out. In France, €262 million was made available in direct support to newspapers in 2016. Other examples are also cited.

The document was prepared by the party's spokesperson for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Timmy Dooley. In it he proposes a full cabinet minister be appointed for the media, so that all media issues come within one portfolio, something many in the media would welcome.

The headline-grabbing item is a fund to aid journalism or media or newspaper publishers; it's not quite clear which.

In government, it states, Fianna Fáil would develop strategies to support public service journalism – have fun defining that – through "innovative new schemes to support the work of journalists, through the dispersal of grant aid to support newspaper publishers in providing public service content at national and local level".

This would be overseen through a new Print Journalism Unit within the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. Why the BAI is puzzling. Its expertise is in broadcasting and working within a strong legal regulatory system under the Broadcasting Act – very different from print and even online.

The policy document says training courses for young journalists would be funded to address diversity within journalism. It is not clear what the relationship between this new training and that offered by the universities and colleges would be, if any. While one would be supportive of the essence of what the policy is trying to address, one suspects it is much more complex

than simply providing courses or funding internships for those groups not represented in the media today.

Mr Dooley does call for the establishment of what he calls an "expert group" that would "consider and make recommendations on how best to preserve the future of high quality national and local newspapers in Ireland". There would be particular focus on advertising and the role of digital search engines and social media platforms.

But if there is to be an expert group it must have a far wider remit than is outlined in this policy document and must include not alone the impact of social media on advertising, but diversity in journalism, journalism education, standards and ethics, fake news, employment, and above all ownership.

The document is to be welcomed. It recognises the importance and role of media in democratic societies, it sees the dangers to journalism in the decline in the numbers employed by newspapers and the role of dedicated newsrooms. It acknowledges the impact mega technology companies such as Google and Facebook are having on news media. It recognises a problem, but is unclear as to what can be done.

It is also unclear whether it is addressing journalism or newspaper publishers and if state aid should go directly to proprietors or to journalists. It is also confused about whether the funding to be dished out by the Print Journalism Unit could go to online journalists employed in some of the biggest online publishers in the country, including those owned by newspaper publishers, such as The Irish Times and Independent News and Media.

In its wish to help print journalism, the question arises: Would an online start-up hoping to establish a new hyperlocal, online publication be precluded from funding? Within the terms of this document, it would appear so.

The document addresses only print media and sees the threat to print media as an existential threat to journalism itself. Some of our members working in online media as well as in broadcasting might disagree. However, Mr Dooley is correct when he says there is a need for an inquiry or expert group. The Constitution guarantees a free press and if that is imperilled, it is the duty of politicians to address that. This policy document might be a first step.

Michael Foley represents the Republic of Ireland on the NUJ's Ethics Council



At the “Fighting for Freelances” seminar were (left) Niamh Parsons; Lord Mayor of Dublin, Micheál Mac Donncha; Bernie Ní Fhlatharta; Karan Casey; and Bláthnaid Ni Chofaigh; and (right) Ethel Buckley, Deputy General Secretary, SIPTU; Joe Cunningham, General Secretary Designate, SIPTU; Lord Mayor of Dublin, Micheál Mac Donncha; Ian McGuinness, NUJ Irish Organiser; and Michael Doherty, who heads the Department of Law, Maynooth University.

Celebrating Connolly with new campaign

The NUJ joined with other trade unions to mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of James Connolly by launching a campaign to assert the rights of freelance workers across the arts and media.

Held in the Mansion House in Dublin in June, the “Fighting for Freelances” seminar was organised jointly by the NUJ, SIPTU, the Musicians Union of Ireland and Irish Equity. The event was held on the first anniversary of legislation that enabled trade unions to represent freelance workers, following a campaign by the NUJ and SIPTU that was backed by ICTU.

“This seminar celebrated the contribution of freelance workers, who make a huge contribution to the Irish media and arts sectors,” NUJ Irish Secretary, Séamus Dooley, said. “That contribution is frequently overlooked and freelance workers are

shamefully treated by many media organisations.

“Behind terms such as ‘atypical worker’ or ‘precarious employment’ are many workers who struggle to survive,” Séamus added. “Our joint union campaign will highlight the plight of freelance workers and will focus on the need to organise freelance workers so that they are properly remunerated and treated with dignity and respect.”

Speakers included Micheál Mac Donncha, Lord Mayor of Dublin; Séamus Dooley; SIPTU General Secretary Designate, Joe Cunningham; Michael Doherty who heads the Department of Law, Maynooth University; and Bláthnaid Ni Chofaigh chaired a panel that included Conor Mullen of Irish Equity, Niamh Parsons of the MUI, singer Karan Casey of Fair Plé campaign, and Colin Murphy and Bernie Ní Fhlatharta of the NUJ.



The seminar drew a full house to Dublin’s Mansion House in June and among the speakers was Séamus Dooley, NUJ Irish Secretary.

Belfast hosts #donoharmjournalism conference

By Angelina Fusco

Journalists are quick to highlight other people's wrongdoing, holding individuals and organisations to account, and rightly so. I certainly did that in my role as editor of BBC Newsline in BBC Northern Ireland. However, I believe journalists take little responsibility for their actions when it comes to dealing with those who have experienced traumatic events – caused by humans or the force of nature.

The recent Kerslake report (<https://bit.ly/2Mle55z>) into the Manchester bombing shone a light on unethical practices by many in the journalism family but generally we sweep these criticisms under the carpet by telling ourselves we don't do that – it's always someone else.

Every journalist is guilty at one time or another of producing a story without fully considering the impact on victims. I experienced it in my 30+ years of working through the Troubles of NI in the BBC and the Irish News. How many of us returned to those victims to ask if we had anything to learn or if we had caused any harm?

Having been awarded an Ochberg Fellowship by the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma in 2012 (www.dartcenter.org), I felt it was important to start a discussion about the issue of trauma and journalists' responsibilities to others and to themselves. I have delivered workshops on the topic for journalists abroad but always wanted to hold one at home in Belfast.

An opportunity arose when the Dart Centre Europe's psychologist Gill Moreton visited Belfast in June, and we organised a unique #donoharmjournalism conference at the splendid Duncairn Centre in North Belfast. The conference was made possible thanks to financial support from the Belfast and District and Derry and North West branches of the NUJ; Dart Centre, Europe; Channel56/Visionworks; WAVE; QUB.

The workshop sessions included an introduction to the facts and impact of trauma, mental and physical; a discussion about how to interview more ethically those who have experienced trauma, which is more challenging than interviewing the powerful but it isn't something journalists are taught in colleges or in workplaces; the sharing of proposed new guidelines that the media might use when interviewing victims, survivors and whistleblowers which are being produced by QUB and journalist/author Susan McKay, with input from the Dart Centre; and how journalists can protect



Journalist Susan McKay and event organiser Angelina Fusco

themselves when the demands are so great and how they can build resilience.

The most impactful session was on interviewing vulnerable people, when three victims of the Troubles, Paul Gallagher, Shauna Moreland and Rev David Clements, all members of the WAVE organisation, shared personal stories about positive and negative treatment by media.

It is important to note that this workshop was not solely Troubles-related but addressed how to deal with any trauma, tragedy or natural disaster. The facilitators also tried to address some of the issues of those working in news organisations, freelancers and independent productions.

To be honest, it was disappointing that fewer than 30 people attended, but that underlines how rare the opportunity to talk about these important issues has been up to now. Many journalists are not aware that there are better ways of working which respect both the vulnerability of contributors and the demands of good journalism. That is starting to shift. I was encouraged by the feedback which was very positive. The only criticism was that the session had been too short and that any future #donoharmjournalism conference should run for a full day. I hope the NUJ and other organisations will consider funding more regular events across Ireland.

A short video of the event can be found at <https://bit.ly/2nU8laV>

Crime of blasphemy not compatible with freedom of expression



By Séamus Dooley

The NUJ exists to defend journalists and journalism. The union's objectives are set out in the first rule in our rulebook, and while much has changed since our foundation those principles are immutable.

Rule (1) (iii) defines as a key objective, "The defence and promotion of freedom of the press, broadcasting, speech and information."

As a union representing professional journalists, we have a long tradition of not campaigning directly in elections or referendums. We in the NUJ do not engage in party politics. Our Code of Conduct demands that in their coverage of political campaigns, journalists should not be partisan and must adhere to the standards which have served us well.

Objectivity and impartiality are especially important as citizens go to the polls, and there are particular legal constraints placed on public service broadcasters.

The forthcoming referendum on blasphemy differs from previous referendums in that it directly relates to the right to freedom of expression. Article 40.1 (i) deals with fundamental rights and recognises the right of citizens "to express freely their convictions and opinions". The article is balanced by reference to the need to ensure that organisations of the media shall not use "their rightful liberty of expression" to undermine public order or morality or the authority of the State.

It goes on to state: "The publication or utterance of blasphemous, seditious or indecent matter is an offence which shall be punishable in law."

On October 26th there will be a referendum on the removal of that reference to blasphemy. Under the proposed wording the word "blasphemous" will be removed but the section dealing with seditious and indecent matter will be retained.

Under the Defamation Act 2009, blasphemy was made a crime punishable by a €25,000 fine. Until that legislation was introduced there was no law predicated on the constitutional prohibition, so the issue of blasphemy has never been a

burning issue.

The NUJ opposed the inclusion of blasphemy in the Defamation Act 2009 and our stand was strongly supported at our Delegate Meeting.

In defending the inclusion of blasphemy, the then-Minister for Justice, Dermot Ahern, said the law was intended to ensure consistency with the Constitution.

It would have been more logical then to bring forward a constitutional amendment and there was a solid basis for such a move. The Law Reform Commission's 1991 Report stated that "there is no place for the offence of blasphemous libel in a society which respects freedom of speech", and said the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989 provided an adequate protection for outrage against religious belief.

The report of the Oireachtas Constitution Review Group 1996 concurred, finding that, "The retention of the present constitutional offence of blasphemy is not appropriate." The motivation for Ahern's law remains unclear.

It would be wrong to give the impression that the law has undermined the media but the very concept of a blasphemy law in our Republic contradicts our values. Those pluralist values include respect for the right to practice religion.

On a broader scale, Islamist states at the United Nations, led by Pakistan, have called for the wording of Ireland's law to be introduced internationally, in order to bolster their own laws against blasphemy and apostasy.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief has drawn attention to the fact that these countries favourably cite Ireland's blasphemy laws in defence of their domestic laws.

Defeat of the referendum proposal would be widely welcomed by these extremists.

It is for this reason that the NUJ favours the removal of blasphemy from Bunreacht na hÉireann and the removal of the crime from the Defamation Act 2009.

It is important that those who support the proposition ensure that there is an informed and respectful public debate focused on the right to protect freedom of expression.

Chronicling good news in Ballymun

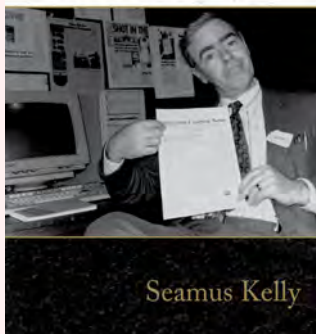
Irrepressible Ballymun-based freelance journalist Seamus Kelly is basking in the critical acclaim for his new book, "It's Written in Concrete", the story of his own paper, Ballymun Concrete News.

Seamus describes himself as someone with little formal education and is delighted to have been invited to give a lecture on his book and the philosophy behind Ballymun Concrete News at Trinity College Dublin.

In establishing the newspaper, Seamus saw as his mission the promotion of positive news coverage of Ballymun, a sprawling centre which had received far too much negative publicity over its undoubted social problems.

Seamus focussed exclusively on positive stories in the area from 1998 to 2006 and saw himself as an ambassador of good news. In the book he recalls producing the newspaper in his

IT'S WRITTEN IN
CONCRETE



apartment on a decrepit computer and a printer long past its sell-by date. Ballymun Concrete News went from a single-page newsletter to an eight-page tabloid, and according to the owner/editor/reporter reached an estimated 100,000 readers. It was an amazing feat of endurance.

He advocates "boots on the ground" or what John Horgan has called fresh air journalism, and Kelly could never be accused of being removed from his community.

In the book Seamus places emphasis on "uplifting stories" as providing a roadmap for the future of newspapers. It's a controversial thesis and while Seamus Kelly is no Pollyanna, many journalists will find his thesis simplistic. If journalism's function is to hold power to account, that does mean breaking the consensus and at times upsetting those in authority. By definition all the news that is fit to print will include bad news.

Seamus is justifiably proud of the paper and of the book and continues to use social media to promote his philosophy of an "alternative" approach to news.

"It's Written in Concrete" is available in Axis Ballymun, SuperValu on Main Street, Eason's in Omni Park and Clare Hall and Kenny's in Galway. SD

Phil Mac Giolla Bháin introduces 'The Squad' in his first novel

Journalist, author, and blogger Phil Mac Giolla Bháin has taken on a new challenge: "The Squad", a political thriller, is Phil's fifth book and his first novel.

"The Squad" (Frontline Noir, 2018) was launched this June at the Dublin Writers' Conference.

"The Squad" connects Ireland's post-conflict landscape with the global war on terror, as two ageing, former members of the IRA join forces to track down an ISIS gang operating in Ireland. In their race against time they call on the assistance of a retired Special Branch officer as well as two newcomers to Ireland, a medical doctor from Morocco and a young ex-paratrooper from Poland.

It's a story set largely in Dublin with a broader reach, as the team find themselves untangling an international plot that involves a CIA operation and shady government officials on both sides of the Atlantic.



Phil, a member of the Derry and North West branch, is also a member of the NUJ's Health and Safety Committee and New Media Industrial Council, as well as chairperson of the Irish Writers Union.

He had sketched out the story back in 2006, writing what he thought would be a treatment for a screenplay, and found an interested director who likened Phil's story to an Irish "Bourne Identity". But following delays in securing financing, Phil shelved the work. He returned to the story a couple of years ago - it took him a solid year to get a finished manuscript to his editor.

"It's entirely an invention," he said. The adventures continue: Phil has already begun to write the second book in the series.

"The Squad" is available at Waterstones, on Amazon and Kindle, and through the publishers, Frontline Noir, online at <http://frontlinenoir.com>.

New chapel is established at WLR FM in Waterford

A new NUJ chapel has been established at Waterford-based radio stations WLR FM and Beat 102-103.

New members have joined the NUJ as a result of the new chapel, which former Irish Executive Council Cathaoirleach, Damien Tiernan, helped to establish. Damien is chairperson of the Irish South East Branch and it was in that capacity he

helped to establish the new chapel. An acting MOC has also been appointed by the chapel to liaise with the Irish Office on any issues.

WLR FM and Beat 102-103 were owned by the Landmark Media group, whose newspapers, web sites and radio stations were purchased by The Irish Times in July. The chapel was established before the sale was agreed.

Compromise breaks deadlock in Celtic Media pay talks

Journalists at Celtic Media have voted in favour of a compromise reached with management via the Workplace Relations Commission's Conciliation Service. The company owns The Anglo-Celt, Connaught Telegraph, Westmeath Independent, Westmeath Examiner, and Meath Chronicle.

The NUJ had been seeking full pay restoration, albeit phased, to cuts that our members had incurred during the recession. However, the company argued inability to pay, which combined with the proposed takeover of the business by INM, led to lengthy delays to the talks.

However, after INM and Celtic Media agreed that the sale of the latter to the former would not proceed, WRC conciliation (which began before the INM overtures) resumed.

As part of the WRC agreement, the company committed itself to enter discussions with the union in September 2019, with a view to beginning pay restoration in January 2020, with the aim of achieving full restoration as soon as possible. If there are any potential financial blocks that would prevent this from proceeding, the company has agreed to raise them immediately with the union.

For their part, the journalists have agreed to co-operate with new digital publishing technology, including page make-up in the newsroom. It was agreed that the primary purpose of editorial is to write and produce copy, that templates would be used to speed up the process and that pre-press support would be available as a back-up. The company will provide full training on the systems.

As an interim measure, pending talks on full pay restoration, the company has agreed to pay a total of €1,000 to each journalist. Half of this was



issued in July this year in the form of One4All vouchers and another €500 in the vouchers will be issued next July.

Furthermore, the company has agreed to provide all journalists with mobile phones from October 1st this year, which will replace existing mobile phones and allowances.

Celtic Media has also agreed to re-enter talks about a house agreement.

Irish Organiser, Ian McGuinness, thanked the FOCs of the five chapels for the work and support in getting to the point where a compromise agreement was reached: "Without local reps to co-ordinate the long-running negotiations, and feedback information from our members, it wouldn't have been possible to achieve this agreement. It goes to prove that if you are organised in your workplace you can achieve results for your members."



Pictured at the annual awards dinner of the Northern Ireland Press Photographers Association in June are (from left) Belfast and District Branch Secretary Ciarán Ó Maoláin, his wife, Mary, NIPPA chairman Freddie Parkinson and Marie and Gerry Carson, branch chairman.

NUJ members who received recognition at the Northern Ireland Press Photographer of the Year Awards include:

Photographer of the Year – Liam McBurney; Runner-up photographer of the year – Hugh Russell, Irish News; Politics – Colm Lenaghan, Pacemaker Press (1st), Liam McBurney (2nd) Niall Carson, Press Association (3rd); Features – Mal McCann, Irish News (2nd), Mal McCann, Irish News (3rd); People – Niall Carson, Press Association (1st), Liam McBurney (2nd); Individual study – Hugh Russell, Irish News (2nd), Simon Graham (3rd); Picture story – Mal McCann, Irish News (1st), Liam McBurney (2nd), Michael Cooper (3rd); Business/PR – Hugh Russell, Irish News (3rd); Sports feature – John McVitty, Impartial Reporter (1st), Liam McBurney (2nd); Sports action – Hugh Russell, Irish News (1st); News – Kevin Scott, Belfast Telegraph (2nd); National Merit Awards – Liam McBurney, Alan Lewis, Life Member (Photopress), Colm O'Reilly (Sunday Life).

Court privilege under review

THE NUJ will be making a submission to the Law Reform Commission (LRC) on its review of the law concerning privilege from defamation for reports of court proceedings.

The LRC published a paper on its website, an *Issues Paper on Privilege for Reports of Court Proceedings under the Defamation Act 2009* (LRC IP 16-2018).

Full details on <http://www.lawreform.ie>.

As noted elsewhere in this edition, court coverage is of enormous interest to NUJ members and the issue of court rules and privilege is extremely important.

Comments to info@nuj.ie.

Framework document opens the door for negotiations at Examiner

The group of unions at the Irish Examiner and its sister publications and radio stations has agreed a framework document with the new owners of the Cork-based daily national newspaper.

In July, The Irish Times took over Landmark's range of media, including The Irish Examiner, Evening Echo, BreakingNews.ie, seven local newspapers and the majority shareholding in WLR FM, as well as smaller holdings in two other stations.

As soon as The Irish Times takeover was confirmed, management met with the group of unions, which consists of the NUJ, SIPTU and UNITE, to discuss the future. The new owners committed to maintaining the core identity and independence of the various titles.

The first step in the talks involved the unions and management agreeing a framework

document, which lays out the procedures that will be used in negotiations on terms and conditions of employment, and consultations on all other matters. The signing of this document now opens the door for both sides to bring any issues they want to the table for collective consultation and negotiation.

The group of unions at the Irish Examiner and its sister media has been revitalised and Ian McGuinness, NUJ Irish Organiser, has been appointed as the chairperson. Ian praised the work of all the NUJ reps, particularly current FOC, Sean O'Riordan, and Deputy FOC, Noel Baker, for the role that they have played in keeping the union alive and well at the Cork offices in recent years.

He added that the NUJ will be working closely with full time officials and reps from SIPTU and UNITE, to raise any issues their members want them to bring to the table with management.

Three per cent for Irish News freelances

Freelance journalists working shifts in The Irish News have been given a pay increase of 3 per cent, backdated to April 1st this year.

Late last year the NUJ submitted a pay claim on behalf of its members at the Belfast-based newspaper and union members voted in favour of the company's offer of 3 per cent, payable at the start of this year. However, despite the union stating that it was negotiating for all its members, the company claimed the NUJ did not specifically lodge a claim for freelance members and the pay increase was therefore only applied to staff at the paper.

The NUJ wrote again to the company, and held another meeting with management, to claim the same 3 per cent should be paid to both freelances working shifts in the newspaper and columnists who write for the daily publication. While the company conceded the 3 per cent for those working freelance shifts, it would not

apply the same increase to fees paid to columnists, as it claimed agreements with those journalists were a separate issue.

Irish Organiser, Ian McGuinness, said: "While the NUJ welcomes the payment of an extra 3 per cent per shift to freelance journalists in the newsroom, it is illogical not to apply the same increase to columnists. Just like their employee colleagues and those working freelance shifts, they are hit by inflation and deserve to be protected from it.

"The columnists in The Irish News are high profile, produce high-quality content, and attract high levels of readers to this newspaper. The union will therefore not be taking 'no' for an answer and will insist in the months and years to come that columnists must be appropriately remunerated, in line not just with inflation but the high-quality content they produce."

Meanwhile, the newspaper has also agreed to talk to the union about a house agreement.

Belfast members receive their NUJ Gold Badge



Golden duo: Bob Miller and Gerry Carson.
Photo: Ciarán Ó Maoláin.

Two Life Members from the Belfast and District Branch were among a handful of activists approved by the 2018 Delegate Meeting in Southport for the award of one of the Union's highest honours, the NUJ Gold Badge.

Gerry Carson, Chair of the Branch and Cathaoirleach of the IEC, and Bob Miller, who has held many chapel, branch and national offices, were also presented by the Branch with prints by Armagh artist Lorcan Vallely as a mark of appreciation of their long service.

Their service has included countless hours of advice and representation to individual members, as well as involvement in the thankless committee work that keeps the union's wheels turning.

Tuam Herald pay and workload issues addressed

The NUJ Chapel at the Tuam Herald has lodged a claim for full pay restoration of the 10 per cent cut its members took during the recession.

The union has proposed that the restoration be phased in over four years. However, pending full pay restoration, the chapel has also put a number of other issues on the table for negotiation. These are: the provision of mobile phones, laptops for reporters, a Christmas bonus, and an annual payment of a One4All voucher.

The chapel is not demanding simultaneous concession on all of these issues but has tabled

them, as they may offer both sides flexibility while negotiating the eventual pay restoration.

Meanwhile, the union welcomed the company's agreement to have regular meetings with chapel officers to discuss issues relating to workload and stress. Given that these issues are common across the media industry, the aim of such meetings is to pinpoint what is working well in the newsroom and also try to flag up potential areas of concern for both sides.

The union has also welcomed the swift move by management to fill a post that became vacant recently.

Conference aims for better work, better lives

Irish Congress of Trade Unions General Secretary, Patricia King, told the ICTU Women's Conference this summer that equality for women has not been achieved.

In pointing to issues that women face in the workplace, Ms King cited the growing gender pay gap, structural and systematic impediments that have resulted in a preponderance of women in low-paid work, CSO figures that show women perform the majority of homecare duties, and deficient family leave provisions.

She said sexual harassment also leads to ill health and people forced to resign, calling it a health and safety issue.

Ms King also said that women are underrepresented at senior levels in the trade union movement.

The biennial conference, held in June in Enniskillen, drew 160 delegates, including NUJ members Bernie Mullen, cathaoirleach (job share), IEC; and IEC members Kathryn Johnston and Carolyn Farrar. Therese Caherty attended as chair of the Trade Union Campaign to Repeal the 8th, to take part in a fringe event on the 32-county trade union survey on Abortion as a Workplace Issue.

Under the theme, Better Work, Better Lives for Women Workers, conference debated and passed motions on a range of issues, including



Two of the NUJ delegates at the ICTU Women's Conference, Carolyn Farrar and Bernie Mullen, Cathaoirleach, IEC (job share), which was addressed (below) by Patricia King, ICTU General Secretary.



women and leadership in the trade union movement, the housing crisis, precarious employment, childcare, support for breastfeeding, and workplace policies that support women through menopause. Conference also supported the work at the International Labour Organisation to create a new international labour standard to address sexual harassment.

Remembering Martin

September 28th marks the anniversary of the murder of Sunday World journalist and NUJ activist Martin O'Hagan.

To mark the anniversary the NUJ will be writing to the British Prime Minister and An Taoiseach, again seeking the reopening of the murder investigation under an independent, international expert.

Irish Secretary Séamus Dooley said recent police raids were designed "to silence those who, like Martin, sought to shine a light into the

darkest corners."

"Martin was killed in 2001. The failure to properly investigate the murder and to secure convictions is a stain on the history of the PSNI. The arrests of NUJ members, the failure to deal with evidence of police collusion and cover-up over the Loughinisland massacres, must be viewed against the backdrop of the inaction on Martin's death. Like Loughinisland, his murder cannot be described as 'unsolved'. The identity of his killers is known to the PSNI. Rather, we are faced with a refusal to act on available evidence and we are entitled to ask, 'Why?'

Freelance Forum returns in October

The next Freelance Forum will take place next month, with sessions on reporting family law, specialised reporting beats, how to catch commissioning editors, and more.

The Freelance Forum is a regular one-day event designed to keep freelance journalists up-to-date with the latest developments in their industry. Aimed at writers, photographers, and PR practitioners, and hoping to cover print, broadcast, and online media, the forum is organised by Dublin Freelance NUJ branch with support from the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland.

The next forum will take place from 9.30am to 4.30pm, Monday, October 15, at Buswells Hotel, Molesworth Street, Dublin.

Attendance at the Forum is €10 for NUJ members and €20 for non-members.

The programme:

10am to 10.30am - Opening address: Dr Carol Coulter, adjunct professor of law, NUIG, on Reporting family law cases

10.30am to 11.30am - Science reporters: Specialised reporting beats, with Kevin O'Sullivan, science and environment editor, Irish Times; Carmel Doyle, freelance journalist and editor; and chair, Maria Delaney, freelance journalist.

11.30am to 1pm - Commissioning editors: What they want in a pitch, with Rachel Collins, editor, Irish Times Magazine; Niall Toner, Sunday Times lifestyle editor; and chair, Bernie Ni Fhlatharta, freelance journalist.

2pm to 3.15pm - Using LinkedIn as a platform for Journalism, with James Upsher, corporate communications manager, LinkedIn; and chair, Kieran Fagan, freelance journalist. This session is based on the feedback and best practice examples that LinkedIn has received from journalists around the world. Attendees are invited to come with ideas they are currently researching, and all attendees will receive a complimentary upgrade to LinkedIn Premium Business for one year.

3.15pm to 4.30pm - Podcasting for promotion and profit, with Naomi O'Leary, freelance journalist; Alan Maguire, comedian; Ciara O'Connor Walsh, freelance journalist and podcast producer; and chair, Margaret Ward, freelance journalist.

All speakers appear in a personal capacity.

For enquiries, contact

dublinfreelancenuj@gmail.com, or send your registration fee to: Helen Taylor, NUJ, Second Floor, Spencer House, Spencer Row, off Talbot Street, Dublin 1. Mark envelope Freelance Forum.

Alpha confirms sick pay applies to RoI members

Alpha Newspapers has confirmed that it has extended its sick pay policy to its two papers in the Republic of Ireland.

NUJ members in the Tullamore Tribune and Midland Tribune are now entitled to four weeks' full pay while sick, per rolling 12-month period. In addition, staff with five years or more unbroken service with the company are entitled to a further four weeks on half pay per rolling 12-month period.

The additional four weeks on half pay were negotiated for staff in the north late last year as part of a pay deal. Their colleagues in the

Republic understood that they were not entitled to any sick pay until the company confirmed that it was applying benefits to all members, regardless of whether they worked in the north or south.

The confirmation from the company came during pay talks. While the company is not giving an across-the-board pay increase to its journalists in the Republic, it agreed with the NUJ to engage in looking at a number of pay-related matters, including the provision of pensions and discussions around a Christmas bonus, as well as another limited pay-related matter.

NUJ hosts Finnish j-students in four-day visit

Nineteen Finnish students learned about the Press Ombudsman's office and the challenges facing journalists, when they attended an NUJ-organised event at the Teachers' Club in Dublin.

The journalism students attend the Swedish School of Social Science, an autonomous Swedish unit at the University of Helsinki, and were on a four-day visit to Dublin to learn more about Irish journalism.

Peter Feeney, Press Ombudsman, gave a detailed talk on the work undertaken by his office and the Press Council, illustrating his points with interesting cases he dealt with. He also explained the international context of press councils, including those in Scandinavia.

Meanwhile, Ronan Brady, Irish Executive Council member and lecturer in journalism at Griffith College Dublin, addressed the related issues of press freedom and media ownership in Ireland.

During a conversation with the Finnish guests, it emerged that their concerns about starting a career in journalism



Visiting Finnish journalism students with Peter Feeney, Press Ombudsman, and Ronan Brady, Irish Executive Council member and lecturer in journalism at Griffith College.

are the same as Irish students' worries. They said they were worried about making mistakes in a real newsroom scenario and concerned that the workloads they will face would be difficult to cope with.

NUJ Irish Organiser, Ian McGuinness, outlined the work of the union in Ireland and explained it was part of an international union that encompasses journalists in a number of nations and states.

Ian said that unions address issues of concern like those raised by the students (making errors and heavy workloads) by trying to support young journalists in unionised workplaces.

He ended the event by advising the Finnish students to join a trade union when they start their working lives, in order to fight for quality journalism and stand up for their rights as workers.

Extra day off for Derry

Journalists at the Derry Journal are to be given an extra paid day off this year, to make up for the fact that their public holiday entitlement is one less than their colleagues in the Newsletter and Mortons.

The public holiday anomaly was one of the many issues that the NUJ hoped to resolve in house agreement talks with management. Each of the chapels (Derry Journal, Newsletter and Mortons) at Johnston Press has their own house agreements, which have not been updated for many years and which contain different terms and conditions.

The house agreement talks, which were under

way earlier this year, were put on hold while JP reorganised structures and posts within the company. This took longer than expected, hence the prolonged delay to house agreement talks.

As a result the Derry Journal NUJ members were again due to get one less public holiday than their colleagues. Upon asking for them to be granted an extra day off this year – as it had not been their fault that the reorganisation of the company took so long – JP conceded the request. However, it did so on a without precedent basis to what would be discussed in the house agreement talks.

The long-stalled talks are due to get under way again in the coming weeks.

Crucial recruitment campaign to kick off in November

The week beginning November 12th has been designated as Recruitment Week, kicking off the campaign, “Strength in Numbers – Building Your Union”.

The move comes in response to the decision of the NUJ Delegate Meeting to reject an increase in membership subscriptions, calling membership growth the only way in which current services can be maintained.

Among the highlights of the week will be a Dublin event including the screening of the documentary, “No Stone Unturned”, accompanied by a panel discussion, as well as events to be held by chapels across the island of Ireland.

The Irish Executive Council approved the proposal for the campaign at their September meeting.

Plans will begin next month, when IEC members are to meet branch officers and contact key chapels in their sector or constituency to seek support for the campaign. The campaign will target non-members across the sectors, including freelancers and students.

All IEC members and branch officers will be called on to take an active role in Recruitment Week, which will mark the beginning of a concerted effort. Every member will be asked during the week to undertake steps to recruit at least one new member.

INM NI talks on pay and house agreement ongoing

Talks with management in the Belfast Telegraph and Sunday Life have restarted in relation to pay and a house agreement.

The talks, which began well over a year ago, were stalled due to a number of factors. However, the NUJ Irish Organiser, Ian McGuinness and chapel rep, Steven McAlister, met with local management and HR earlier this year.

The NUJ lodged a pay claim on behalf of its members and handed over its proposals to change the existing house agreement at the company, which has not been updated for approximately 15 years.

Meanwhile, limited car parking spaces have been made available for staff at the company’s new Pilot Street car park. The company has said that the granting of this is not a contractual entitlement and the car park will be open to staff from Monday to Saturday, from 7 am to 7 pm.

The opening of the car park to employees had been significantly delayed by factors outside the control of the company. There are also a number of car parking spaces adjacent to the newspapers’ Clarendon Dock offices but not enough to cater for all staff, which resulted in employees having to park at the old company car park in the city centre and take a shuttle service to the offices.

NUJ pushes for house agreement in The Irish News

A house agreement for The Irish News remains a priority in that workplace for the National Union of Journalists.

During discussions earlier this year with management on pay-related matters, the company indicated that it would at least be willing to consider a proposal from the NUJ on a house agreement. However, it subsequently refused to engage on such a document.

The NUJ therefore asked for the Labour Relations Agency to get involved to see if an agreement could be reached. The Agency acts as an independent third party in mediation or conciliation of disputes.

Following contact between the LRA and The Irish News, it emerged that while the company believed its policies cover the relevant issues, it was willing to consider proposals from the union. No talks were held at the LRA between the union and management.

The NUJ Irish Office has drawn up a new house agreement and submitted it to the company for its consideration.

The union, including the chapel at the newspaper, will be seeking meetings with management to discuss this document.

Contracts breakthrough at RTÉ

Following a protracted campaign led by the NUJ, journalists and other workers employed on bogus self-employed contracts are set to have their right to proper employment contracts vindicated at RTÉ.

Up to 157 workers at RTÉ may have been misclassified as self-employed, resulting in their losing out on certain employment benefits, according to a review of employment status by Eversheds Sutherland.

The Eversheds Sutherland report showed that of the 433 contracts reviewed, 106 – or 25 per cent – were assessed as "having attributes akin to employment" and requiring individual review.

A further 51 contracts – 12 per cent – were found to have attributes akin to both employment and self-employment and would also require review, though after the first cohort of 106.

The remaining 276 were deemed not to be normally considered as employees, so no further review would be required.

Séamus Dooley, Irish Secretary, said: "The RTÉ trade union group is now engaged in a comprehensive process with RTÉ. By the end of the year the majority of those falsely identified as 'freelances' should finally secure proper contracts. There are many issues to be resolved, including the issue of back-payment to those wrongly denied sick pay, holidays and maternity entitlements. The report merely proved what the NUJ knew – that the state broadcaster was treating employees as 'freelances'.

"This was unacceptable and our campaign has finally yielded results," Séamus said. "It is an exasperating process but at this stage an Eversheds expert is slowly and painstakingly examining each contract. We need to get this right and to end this practice once and for all."

EDITOR'S NOTE

Standing strong, standing together

The arrests of journalists Barry McCaffrey and Trevor Birney, and police raids on their homes and the offices of Fine Point Films, makers of the documentary, "No Stone Unturned", have sparked anger and outrage here and abroad.

This is a shocking attack on media freedom.

The NUJ and its members stand with Barry and Trevor, supported in solidarity by ICTU, Amnesty International, the families of the men who were murdered at Loughinisland, and those who have signed the NUJ petition condemning the arrests. This isn't over.

We are always stronger when we stand together. Today, in the face of increasing assaults on media integrity and media freedom, this is more important than ever.

* * *

The NUJ will also stand with trade unions, political parties, students' unions, housing agencies and community groups at the Raise the Roof rally called by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to demand action on the housing crisis.

The rally takes place at Leinster House from 12.30 to 2pm on Wednesday, October 3rd. All members who can attend are encouraged to attend, to make their voices heard on this critical issue.

* * *

The Irish Journalist wants to hear from you. If there is something you would like to see covered, let us know.

You can contact the Irish Journalist by email at irishjournalist@nuj.ie. Please do.

Raise the Roof on October 3rd!

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions has called a rally outside Leinster House on Wednesday October 3rd, to demand action on the housing crisis. The rally is scheduled to run from 12.30 to 2pm.

The rally is supported by a wide range of trade unions, housing advocates, campaign groups and civil society bodies, under the umbrella of Raise the Roof. This includes Fr Peter McVerry, the National Homeless & Housing Coalition, the Union of Students in Ireland, the National Women's Council and other civil society groups.

The rally is timed to coincide with an agreed cross-party opposition motion on the housing crisis that will be debated in the Dáil that

afternoon. The agreed motion calls for the building of more public housing, action on rent and secure tenure in the rental sector, an end to evictions into homelessness and the establishment of a legal right to housing.

These demands mirrors the key principles set out in the Congress Charter for Housing Rights.

The rally presents a significant opportunity to send a clear message to government from all sectors of society that we must see urgent and radical change in housing policy, if the crisis is to be properly addressed and resolved.

Congress is urging all affiliate unions to maximise their efforts and ensure that message we send on October 3rd is loud, clear and unambiguous.



RAISE
the
ROOF
 On October 3rd

Homes For All

#RaiseTheRoof #HomesForAll #Oct3rd