

LIVERPOOL'S STERILE NEW STYLE FAILS AT FOOTBALL

Ken Early
Sports Monday



“ We need a nationwide campaign to encourage people to eat in local, independent restaurants

Una Mullally
Opinion



CUSTOMER SERVICE COMPANIES NEED TO TAKE LEAF OUT OF CREDIT UNIONS' BOOK

Conor Pope
Pricewatch

Taoiseach confirms election will be held this year

Date towards the end of November seen as most likely for general election

Minister for Housing signs order increasing campaign spending limits

CORMAC McQUINN
Political Correspondent

Preparations for an early general election are ramping up as Taoiseach Simon Harris confirmed publicly for the first time yesterday that he expects to go to the people this year.

A date towards the end of November is seen within Government circles as the most likely time for the election to be held.

Mr Harris is due to meet Tánaiste Micheál Martin and Green Party leader Roderic O'Gorman this evening with the timing of the election set to be discussed.

The Taoiseach said yesterday he has “no intention of springing a surprise on my Coalition colleagues” and he believes the Government will “amicably agree a time period” for the election.

“I’m conscious it is ultimately my constitutional prerogative,” Mr Harris said. “That’s something I take seriously, but the election won’t be far away at this stage.”

Mr Harris said he wanted a series of measures passed before going to the polls including the Finance Bill – which brings in tax cuts announced in the budget – and the setting of new housing targets.

But he told The Irish Times: “I expect the election to be in 2024.”

Supplementary budgets

The Finance Bill and other measures such as supplementary budgets for some Government departments still need to be completed before the Dáil can be dissolved.

This will likely push the calling of the election out until after the Dáil returns from its midterm break early next month – putting November 22nd or 29th in the frame as possible polling days.

Fine Gael will hold its final two selection conventions – Cavan-Monaghan and Dublin North-West this week.

Minister for Social Protection Heather Humphreys’s surprise announcement at the weekend that she will not contest the election has left a hole

in Fine Gael’s Cavan-Monaghan ticket.

Mr Harris has said the party will fight for two seats there, saying there has already been “lots of interest” from people who want to run for Fine Gael in the constituency.

Mr Martin appointed Minister for Finance Jack Chambers as Fianna Fáil’s director of elections yesterday, another step in his own party’s preparations.

Post-election reimbursement Separately, the Minister for Housing Darragh O’Brien has signed an order increasing campaign spending limits and post-election reimbursement for candidates.

It means that candidates in five-seat constituencies will be able to spend up to €58,350 – €13,150 more than under the old limits – while the limit will increase to €48,600 in four-seaters and €38,900 in three-seaters.

The maximum sum that can be reimbursed to a candidate goes from €8,700 to €11,200, provided they are elected or get more than a quarter of the quota.

Mr Harris maintained pressure on Sinn Féin as he said its leader Mary Lou McDonald should correct the Dáil record after she said a young person who was sent inappropriate texts by former senator Niall Ó Donogháil was 17.

The young person has said that Ms McDonald owes them an apology for Sinn Féin’s “disastrous” handling of the matter and also told the Sunday Independent he was 16 at the time.

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■ Humphreys says she will not contest election

■ Hutch considers election run to unseat McDonald

■ Five economic flashpoints that could sway voters
Eoin Burke-Kennedy, page 12

Storm Ashley Power outages and flight cancellations amid strong winds



■ A fallen tree blocks the road outside Barna village in Galway during Storm Ashley yesterday afternoon. Storm Ashley causes havoc with power outages and disruption at airports: page 3 PHOTOGRAPH: JOE O'SHAUGHNESSY

Unqualified teachers filling primary posts

CARL O'BRIEN
Education Editor

Primary school leaders say a crisis in teacher supply is forcing schools to rely on individuals without teaching qualifications to plug gaps in the classroom.

A national survey of primary schools also found there were almost 1,000 vacancies due to difficulties finding staff to fill permanent, fixed-term and long-term substitute teaching posts.

The problems are most acute in greater Dublin, Wicklow and Kildare, where more than half of schools reported unfilled teaching posts.

Schools affected by staff shortages were having a “profound” impact on the quality of education and expect the problem to grow worse over the coming months.

The poll was carried out by

the Irish National Teachers’ Organisation (INTO), in partnership with the Irish Primary Principals’ Network and the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association.

A total of 1,305 schools participated in the survey, representing 40 per cent of all primary and special schools, which was conducted between September 30th and October 7th this year.

The survey found that schools are increasingly forced to rely on individuals without any teaching qualifications to cover short-term teacher absences, with 745 such individuals employed in the first five weeks of the new school year.

In addition, more than 1,100 registered teachers who are not qualified for the primary sector were working in primary and special schools.

The survey found most schools are forced to reallocate special education teachers to mainstream classes to cover staffing gaps – a practice which deprives the most vulnerable students of vital support.

Many schools are also forced to split classes up into other classrooms when a substitute teacher cannot be found, disrupting children’s education.

INTO general secretary John Boyle said the findings paint a “deeply concerning picture of an enormous crisis”.

“The shortage of teachers, especially in urban areas, continues to grow, and the heavy reliance on unqualified staff is an alarming development,” he said. “We must act now to ensure no child is regularly being left without a qualified teacher throughout their primary schooling.”

Mr Boyle said the scale of the problem requires progress on issues such as financial incentives, job stability and career progression.

Minister for Education Norma Foley has said that there are now more teachers than ever working in the Irish education system with almost 79,000 employed, while there are a record 122,000 on the Teaching Council register.

She has pointed to a 20 per cent increase in teaching graduates over the last five years and a 13 per cent increase

in the number of teaching posts allocated to primary schools as a sign of her department’s efforts to address teacher supply issues.

Ms Foley has also said the current public sector pay deal will mean that teachers’ starting salary will increase to €46,000, rising to a maximum of €85,000 per year, which compares well internationally.

➔ ‘There are times when we’ve had no applications for vacant positions’: page 4

Attacks on Gaza and Lebanon intensify

Israel was last night preparing attacks on sites linked to the financial operations of Lebanon’s Hizbullah group.

It told residents to leave areas around those sites immediately, as it intensified assaults there and in Gaza.

The warning came hours after Israel said it hit Hizbullah’s intelligence headquarters in the Lebanese capital Beirut, while officials in Gaza said rescuers were still recovering people from the rubble after an Israeli attack on Saturday that killed dozens.

“Residents of Lebanon, the IDF [Israeli military] will begin attacking infrastructure belonging to the Hezbollah Al-Qard Al-Hassan Association – get away from it immediately,” the military’s spokesperson said in a statement on X.

The Hizbullah-linked financial institution has more than 30 branches across Lebanon including 15 across central Beirut and its suburbs.

In the northern Gaza Strip, officials said rescuers were still recovering people from the rubble after an Israeli attack on Beit Lahya that left 87 people dead or missing, according to the health ministry – one of the highest death tolls for months from a single attack.

Israel said it was investigating reports of the incident.

With US elections approaching, officials, diplomats and other sources in the region say Israel is seeking, through military operations, to try to shield its borders and ensure its rivals cannot regroup. – Agencies

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Portmarnock Golf Club may take swing at hosting Women’s Open

CORMAC McQUINN

Just a few years after electing its first women members, Portmarnock Golf Club has now set its sights on hosting the Women’s Open.

The Cabinet will hear tomorrow how bringing the Open Championship (often referred to as the British Open) and the Women’s Open (originally the Women’s British Open) to the north Co Dublin club could lead to an economic injection of almost €340 million.

The estimate is contained in an analysis of the benefits of hosting the tournaments at

Portmarnock – which elected its first women members in the club’s more than 120-year history in 2022 – that is to be submitted to the Government by Minister for Sport Catherine Martin.

She secured Cabinet approval in July to explore potential bids to bring the Open Championships – which have never been held outside the UK – to Dublin.

Economic impact assessment Since then, an economic impact assessment has been carried out and discussions with the organisers, the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews,

have led to the prospect of Ireland hosting multiple Open tournaments.

Portmarnock’s proximity to the city and the airport, and its capacity to host large crowds are among the reasons it is considered to be a leading candidate for the event.

Hosting three Opens over several years, as well as at least one Women’s Open, would result in a cumulative gross economic impact of some €338 million, according to the analysis.

It is estimated that 245,000 tickets would be sold each year the tournament is held in Portmarnock.

Weather

Dry with spells of sunshine and scattered showers. Highs of 12-15 degrees in moderate to fresh southwest winds.

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Home News

Joke row: Sinn Féin and RTÉ are embroiled in a dispute after Mary Lou McDonald accused the broadcaster of electoral interference over a Late Late Show joke: page 3

Luas: Eamon Ryan will seek Government approval for Dublin’s next Luas line tomorrow: page 3

World News



Blackout: Millions of Cubans awoke yesterday to find their homes still without power after another partial grid failure overnight: page 6

Business Today

Housing: The average cost of delivering a two-bed apartment in Dublin is now as high as €592,000, according to the Department of Housing: page 12

Banking: UK neobank Monzo has tapped former Stripe executive Michael Carney to lead its push into EU: page 12

Sports Monday

Rugby: Ciarán Frawley’s availability for Ireland’s opening Autumn Nations Series clash with New Zealand is in doubt due to an injury.

Gaelic Games: Cuala earned their first Dublin football title with a 0-14 to 1-10 victory over Kilmacud Crokes.

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