

**Marie Ward**  
Chief Executive

Our ref: C/088/2021

15 April 2021

Mr Anthony Tohill CEO  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Council Offices  
Circular Road  
Dungannon  
BT71 DT

Dear Mr Tohill

RECEIVED  
22 APR 2021  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Comhairle Ceantair  
**an Iúir, Mhúrn  
agus an Dúin**  
**Newry, Mourne  
and Down**  
District Council

**Re: Notice of Motion – Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy**

At a Meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council held on Wednesday 7 April 2021, the following Notice of Motion was unanimously agreed:

**“This Council recognises women’s concerns across the UK and ROI after the disappearance and subsequent murder of Sarah Everard. It has placed a spotlight on the safety of women and girls. This Council is to:-**

- **Request the Northern Ireland Assembly initiate a Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) strategy.**
- **Endorse and promote the Women’s Aid petition calling for a VAWG strategy to be implemented.**
- **To form a task force to develop a publicity campaign promoting safety apps and engaging with the PSNI, Women’s Aid and Soroptimists Great Britain and Ireland.**
- **Ask other Councils to do the same.**
- **We will write to the Minister for Justice begins work on developing a Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, as a matter of urgency.**
- **In addition, this Council agrees to consider developing a financial support fund for women’s groups across our district and declares its commitment to making our area a safe place for everyone and acknowledges that women should feel safe in in public places everywhere”.**

Members of Newry, Mourne and District Council unanimously agreed to this Motion and urge your Council to support it.

Yours faithfully

**Marie Ward**  
**Chief Executive**

Oifig an Iúir  
Newry Office  
O’Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry BT35 8DJ

Oifig Dhún Pádraig  
Downpatrick Office  
Downshire Civic Centre  
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road  
Downpatrick BT30 6GQ

0330 137 4000 (Council)  
council@nmandd.org  
www.newrymournedown.org

Ag freastal ar an Dún  
agus Ard Mhacha Theas  
Serving Down  
and South Armagh



Planning Department  
Mid Ulster District Council  
50 Ballygronan Road  
Magherafelt  
BT45 6EN

20<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**TIME SENSITIVE DOCUMENT – REPLY REQUIRED**

Our reference: - JB-02887758200

Dear Sir or Madam,

**REMOVAL OF PUBLIC PAYPHONE:**

I am writing to advise you that I have received a request to remove the kiosk at 1 The Diamond Junction Main Street Polmeroy BT70 2QP by Joanne McGurk of Mid Ulster Council. As a result we have completed an assessment of the area and the need for a payphone at this location. During our assessment we discovered that the payphone has received very low or no use during the past twelve months and we are proposing to recover it and permanently cease service at this site.

Our obligation to provide a Universal Service will be maintained, as there are other kiosks within the vicinity. The nearest alternative kiosk is at Gortindarragh Road Junction Pomeroy Road, Gortavoy Bridge. BT70 2TY.

Before we can remove a kiosk we have an obligation to consult with relevant public bodies on the proposed removal. As part of the consultation process it is a requirement that the Council reply in writing to BT after 42 days and within 90-days giving their comments or any objections received from the local community. Further information on the consultation process can be found at: <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/consultations/uso/statement/removals.pdf>

If you do not reply, it will be taken that the council and interested parties have no objection to the permanent removal of this payphone.

A notice of our proposal is being displayed in the kiosk and a copy is enclosed with this letter for your information.

If you require any further information or have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me via email at [btpcfo@bt.com](mailto:btpcfo@bt.com)

Yours faithfully  
Jim Blanch

BT Payphones - Commercial Field Officer

**From Personal Details Removed/Redacted**

**Sent:** 05 May 2021 18:03

**To:** [mccoubreyf@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:mccoubreyf@belfastcity.gov.uk); [lordmayor@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk](mailto:lordmayor@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk); [mayors.secretary@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:mayors.secretary@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk); [mayor@derrystrabane.com](mailto:mayor@derrystrabane.com); [democratic.services@nmandd.org](mailto:democratic.services@nmandd.org); [committees@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:committees@midulstercouncil.org); [alison.mccullagh@fermanaghomagh.com](mailto:alison.mccullagh@fermanaghomagh.com); [Mayors.Office@midandeantrim.gov.uk](mailto:Mayors.Office@midandeantrim.gov.uk)

**Subject:** Fwd: Institutional Abuse

Dear Mayor/Chair/Chief Executive

I am an adoptee, activist and advocate associated with the notorious Mother&Baby, Magdalen institutions and Workhouses which operated here in NI, as well as the Republic of Ireland and further afield, for over 150 years. There has been an ongoing campaign for variant justices, truth and disclosure as a result of myriad allegations of crimes and abuses perpetrated on a large proportion of girls, women and children who spent time in the institutions.

On the 12 th January 2021 the Republic of Ireland's Commission of Inquiry into Mother and Baby Institutions 2015-2021 published its long-awaited Report and then this was followed by a NI Government-Commissioned academic Report published on 26th January into same and other institutions. Contents of the Reports, which directly and inextricably affect the victims and survivors of both States, due to extensive and prolonged people trafficking across the two jurisdictions, highlight harrowing testimonies and present factual details of heinous human rights violations on many vulnerable women and children. The litany of crimes and abuses include arbitrary detention, physical/emotional and psychological maltreatment, forced and illegal adoptions, rape, harsh living and working conditions, little or no maternity care, lifelong servitude, forced unpaid labour even whilst heavily pregnant, high infant mortality rates, human trafficking etc etc.

The Roman Catholic Church, three main Protestant denominational Churches, Barnados, the Salvation Army, NSPCC, private adoption agencies, doctors, Solicitors, State agents/agencies were heavily involved in the vast network and system in running, managing, facilitating and funding the institutions which were also intricately connected to various children's institutions such as orphanages, industrial/reformatory schools and baby 'homes'. The Local Government Councils/Authorities were integral in the same system in terms of maintenance of the institutions and persons held within, whether under referral predominantly by social services, court and probation and police, family and clergy and themselves on occasion. Girls as young as 9 years old, women as old as in their eighties, were incarcerated, housed, worked and died in these institutions largely not by their own volition.

Too many babies, infants, children and women died under neglectful and inhumane circumstances that were avoidable, unnecessary and unjust. Many died and were buried without dignity, honour, humanity or religious ceremony that was denied to them in life. Many are disappeared. Many are unknown. Many are unmarked and unacknowledged in their resting place. The unknown and unanswered questions remain. The veil of secrecy around the dead, echoes the unjustifiable and unjustified shame, stigma and guilt corroding the hearts

and minds of those left behind. We are deserving of inalienable human rights to live, to identity, to heritage, to burial, to decency, to family and to humanity.

Victims and survivors have been given recent assurances by governors that we will be given a rightful and long-awaited place at the table of construction and design of a process to statutory investigation, customised in their framework of human rights and proper mechanisms to address the ongoing injustices that require urgent attention, given the complex and highly sensitive needs thus far dismissed.

We are courteously asking that the respective Councils step up to the mark and do their utmost within their remit and resources to support our valiant calls for every possible measure to be taken to assist the people affected. This invariably **means robust motions of support for the bespoke statutory investigation and requisite parallel legislation**, social and medical measures (including housing/renovation and surgical prioritisation), family tracing resources, release and access to personal and institutional records pertaining to individuals and essential bilateral cross-border co-operation on such matters, adoption legislative reform, **urgent legislation for comprehensive and forensic investigation of grounds of former relevant institutions** with necessary scope to excavate/exhume/identify/re-inter remains where possible and practicable.

We would also call on each **NI Council to issue its own sincere apology bolstered and legitimised with remedial proposals** to the victims, survivors and families associated with the institutions for the significant role played with the said institutions and their part in abdicating its responsibilities in duty of care, monitoring and supervision to those affected as made evident in the recent Reports. Each council should consider **local memorialisation** where appropriate and respectful of consultation with victims/survivors in order that the past, and the people subjected to gross uncivilised conduct, are acknowledged and remembered. This neglected history with perpetual hurt must be added to educational curriculum despite the shame and disgust of what occurred. Each contemporary Council area had several institutions within its geographical and council boundaries even under historical configuration. There are currently plans agreed and developments endorsed to build inappropriate facilities including children's play-parks on sites of former institutions despite the cruel and sinister history of child abuses and crimes i.e. Good Shepherd Convent/Marianvale, Newry. Is this really the society that we have now become so dehumanised and de-sensitised to past, present and future suffering, that money, profit and greed are supreme to civility and humility, respect and dignity. One in four families on this island are affected by the issues. Most do not know it...yet. Such were the levels of cover-up, illegality, criminality, secrecy, forgery and falsification of certificates.

Myself and/or others are also happy and willing to **present our noble cause to your council meeting** at a convenient time in the near future if you can see merit and value in hearing the voice too frequently unheard. Protestant and Catholic victims and survivors are united in this despair. Their grief, loss and pain does not discriminate. Give us hope, in a chance to represent and lead.

We look forward to hearing from you soon. Third time lucky...

Respectfully

**Personal Details Removed/Redacted**

Marie Ward  
Chief Executive

Our ref: C/111/2021

7 May 2021

Mr Anthony Tohill CEO  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Council Offices  
Circular Road  
Dungannon  
BT71 DT



Comhairle Ceantair  
an Iúir, Mhúrn  
agus an Dúin  
**Newry, Mourne  
and Down**  
District Council

Dear Mr Tohill

**Re: Notice of Motion – Dental Services during Covid 19 Pandemic**

At a Meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council held on 4 May 2021, the following Notice of Motion was agreed:

**“That this Council notes the severe impact that the Covid-19 crisis has had on people and communities across our district; offers our thanks and support to health service workers who have gone the extra mile to keep our communities safe; congratulates the Minister for Health on the successful implementation of the vaccination programme; expresses concern at the delay and disruption to routine health and dental services during the pandemic; further notes that women who have given birth have not been able to access the promise of free dental care in pregnancy and the 12 months following delivery of their child due to the cessation of dental services and; agrees to write to the Minister of Health asking him to explore an extension to the 12 month free dental care period for mothers who have given birth during the Covid-19 pandemic period.**

**This Council to also write to the other 10 Councils seeking their support for the Motion”.**

Members of Newry, Mourne and District Council expressed strong support for this Motion and urge your Council to also support it.

Yours faithfully

**Marie Ward**  
**Chief Executive**

Alison McCullagh  
Chief Executive



Fermanagh & Omagh  
District Council  
Comhairle Ceantair  
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

Our Ref: Democratic Services

Date: 7 May 2021

Email: [democratic.services@fermanaghomagh.com](mailto:democratic.services@fermanaghomagh.com)

**To: All Council Chief Executives in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland**

**Re: Motion - Protection of Native Honeybees**

At its meeting held on 4 May 2021, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council resolved that details of a Motion which it adopted at its April Council meeting, should be circulated to all Councils across the island of Ireland.

**“Given Fermanagh & Omagh District Council’s commitment to the All-Ireland Pollinator Scheme, and noting previous Council decisions taken in relation to reducing the use of harmful pesticides, reducing grass and hedge cutting and encouraging protection and promotion of natural habitats for our bee population, this Council calls on the British Government, and on the relevant Stormont & Dáil Ministers, to oppose the importation of Italian honeybees onto this island, and to move to completely ban such actions in future.**

The recently publicised move by a Kent bee keeper to avoid the import ban by importing 15 million Italian bees into Britain, via the island of Ireland, poses a serious potential threat to thousands of hives, to our native bee population and to its future viability.

The Ulster Beekeepers Association and Low Country Native Irish Honeybee Association have expressed serious concern in relation to the small hive beetle and to the potential threat posed to native black Irish honeybees (which academic studies have established as the “best gene of black bees in Europe”). These worries have been echoed by beekeepers in Britain.

Mindful of such risks, FODC calls on the British & Irish Government, as well as on the relevant Ministers in Stormont, Dáil Éireann & Westminster, to stop the import of Italian bees into Britain via the North of Ireland, as well as onto the island of Ireland, North and South, with or without the intent of forward exportation”.

The Council trusts you will support the Motion and the actions detailed therein.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alison McCullagh".

**Alison McCullagh**  
Chief Executive

**John Ball**  
Head of Arts Branch

**Level 7**  
**Causeway Exchange**  
**1-7 Bedford Street**  
**Belfast**  
**BT2 7EG**

Telephone: 028) 9051 5690  
e-mail: [John.Ball@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:John.Ball@communities-ni.gov.uk)

Date: 11 May 2021

Mrs Jacqui Dixon  
Chief Executive - SOLACE  
Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council  
Mossley Mill  
Carrmoney Road North  
Newtownabbey  
BT36 5QA

Email: [jacqui.dixon@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk](mailto:jacqui.dixon@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk)

Dear Mrs Dixon

### **UK City of Culture 2025 competition**

I am writing to you to inform you that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) are preparing the launch of the City of Culture 2025 Competition during week commencing 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

DCMS have provided the attached background information which includes high level detail on the approach to be taken this time around.

I would be grateful if you could circulate this as appropriate.

Yours sincerely

**JOHN BALL**

## **UK City of Culture 2025 competition**

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is preparing to launch the 2025 UK City of Culture competition.

UK City of Culture is a UK-wide programme, developed in collaboration with the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The competition is run every four years, inviting places across the UK to bid for the title and set out their vision for culture-led regeneration.

UK City of Culture is a transformational moment in a place's growth and this year's competition is an opportunity for places and communities to put culture and creativity at the heart of their recovery plans. The success of previous winners Derry/Londonderry, Hull and Coventry demonstrates how the title can drive positive economic and social outcomes, develop lasting local, national and international partnerships, and bring people together. It can also strengthen communities, build a sense of place and inspire local pride, celebrating and boosting local and grassroots arts and culture, and attract new investment and tourism.

We also know that the bidding process itself can have a positive impact on a place, by articulating a vision for the future, listening to local residents, bringing partners together, and establishing a cultural strategy that is integrated in local inclusive growth plans.

In response to feedback from previous competitions, this year we are introducing a lighter touch expression of interest. This phase will begin in late spring and invite places to set out their vision and how they would meet the core criteria. We know that places are already thinking about bidding for the 2025 title as a key part of their recovery plans and we want to encourage others to do the same. The Department and Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 plan to run an information workshop for prospective bidders in early summer.

The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport will announce further details of the competition and workshop soon.

**From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure  
Nichola Mallon MLA**

Cllr Cathal Mallaghan  
Chair, Mid Ulster District Council

[Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org)

Room 708  
Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 8GB  
Telephone: (028) 9054 0540  
Email: [Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

Your reference: C060/21  
Our reference: CORR-0657-2021  
12<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Dear Cllr Mallaghan

### **Restoration of former Great Northern Railway between Strabane and Derry**

Thank you for your email dated 7 April 2021, detailing Mid Ulster District Council's support for recent motions passed by Derry City and Strabane District Council to examine the feasibility of re-connecting Strabane to the railway network along the route of the former Great Northern Railway. I have already been in detailed correspondence with John Kelpie, Chief Executive of Derry City and Strabane District Council, on this matter.

You may be aware that in 2013 the Department for Regional Development held a public consultation on a number of future railway priorities, including re-opening former lines such as the Strabane-Derry line. Its conclusions, published in 2014 as The Railway Investment Priority Strategy, stated that it may not be economically viable to re-establish rail links in rural areas with lower population densities, but there could be the potential to extend the rail network in key locations.

Since becoming Minister for Infrastructure, I have been clear that my priority is addressing regional imbalance, better connecting communities and, importantly, ensuring that we shape our places around our people, for our people, and with our people. Putting more and more cars on the road is no longer a viable solution to our transport needs. In that regard, it is clear that our rail network, whilst relatively small, presents a unique opportunity to improve the sustainability of our transport operations, and I am heartened that the Council shares these values of sustainable transport.

An ambition to connect all areas of Northern Ireland through expansion of the rail network would require significant levels of funding well beyond that currently made available to my Department. While recognising the severe budgetary constraints at

present, I am clear, however, that this should not limit our ambition in planning to transform peoples' lives.

As you will be aware, the Department is currently preparing a new Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTNTP) which will set out my priorities for future development of the main road and rail networks to 2035. This will include high level assessments on a variety of potential rail extensions and new routes, in association with Translink. I am keen to examine how best to optimise the existing network through increased frequency of services and reduced journey times; whilst also looking at practicalities of expanding the network. I expect to publish the Draft RSTNTP for consultation towards the end of this year and I would welcome your input into expanding rail services across Northern Ireland and the North West.

I am also of the view that Northern Ireland cannot operate in isolation as we seek to better connect our citizens. In that regard, I have reached agreement with Transport Minister, Eamon Ryan TD, to extend the feasibility study into high speed rail between Derry-Belfast-Dublin-Cork to a Strategic All Island Rail Review that will allow us to consider our rail connectivity across the whole of Ireland. This Review will consider how we connect all parts of Ireland through our rail network and will critically examine where we can make the greatest impact.

I am ambitious for our rail network and am keen to do all that I can to explore how we can progress rail improvements within the limited budgetary envelope that we have. I also want to ensure that any proposals for changes to the rail network include operational and financial viability and have a very clear focus on the part that rail can play in growing the all-island economy, improving the ability of people to connect with and access opportunities and addressing regional imbalance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Mallon', written in a cursive style.

**NICHOLA MALLON MLA**  
**Minister for Infrastructure**



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50 Stiles Way Antrim BT41 2UB  
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MOSSLEY MILL  
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[antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk](http://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk)  
@ ANBorough

Dear Colleague

**RE: Recognition of the Resilience and Bravery of Children during the Covid 19 Pandemic**

I am writing in relation to a recent Council motion regarding the challenges faced by school children during the Covid 19 pandemic which asked officers to:-

*"provide recommendations as to how we as a Council can show recognition of their bravery, determination and resilience during this difficult time."*

Officers developed a range of projects to be delivered through Borough primary schools in June and brought these proposals to the April Council Meeting. At the meeting Members approved the proposals but also noted that there are school children resident in our Borough who attend schools in neighbouring Council areas, therefore they requested that I write to each Council suggesting that you might wish to consider a similar initiative to recognise school children.

Should you wish to find out more about our specific plans please do not hesitate to get in touch with me on [Ursula.fay@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk](mailto:Ursula.fay@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely

Ursula Fay  
**Interim Deputy Director of Community Planning**



**Oifig on Aire Stáit**  
Office of the Minister of State

**Our Ref : C/ CE - 2020/510**  
**Your Ref : C232/20**

**18<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

Cllr. Cathal Mallaghan,  
Mid Ulster District Council,  
Cookstown Office,  
Burn Road,  
Cookstown BT80 8DT  
**Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org**

Dear Cathal,

I refer to your request for excavation works at Kilmainham Gaol, to uncover remains of Joe Brady, Daniel Curley, Michael Fagan, Thomas Caffrey and Tim Kelly in the Invincibles Yard.

The Office of Public Works is aware of the current campaign led by the National Graves Association to exhume and reinter the five people known as the Invincibles in Glasnevin Cemetery. Requests such as this are of a very sensitive and delicate nature and there are a number of matters to consider, both in terms of the significant practicalities involved and the ethical issues. While the general area of the site of the graves in Kilmainham is relatively well known, there is no detailed plan showing definitively exactly where individuals were interred and even were it to be precisely located, there would be practical issues involved in positively identifying the remains. It is understood from contemporaneous accounts that after execution, the remains were buried in quicklime and this would render an exhumation and positive identification very difficult, if not impossible.

Kilmainham Gaol is a National Monument and an iconic and much respected site in the context of the national independence struggle in particular. The fact that it is also a grave location adds a significant resonance to its penal and historical significance and there is a strong opposing view to the current campaign that believes that the grave should not be disturbed and the remains should be left within the confines of the Monument.



**Oifig on Aire Stáit**  
Office of the Minister of State

Finally, The Office of Public Works clearly understands that any move to undertake an exhumation and re-interral project would certainly not be undertaken unilaterally and would have to be considered and approved in the first instance as a policy matter, which is outside our remit.

I trust this clarifies the position.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick O'Donovan,  
Minister of State at the Office of Public Works and Flood Relief

**From:** eCorrespondence (Dfat) <Dfat-Correspondence@cloud.gov.ie>

**Sent:** 16 April 2021 16:21

**To:** Philip Moffett <Philip.Moffett@midulstercouncil.org>

**Subject:** Response to your correspondence - DFA-MCO-01792-2021

Reference No: DFA-MCO-01792-2021

Dear Cllr. Mallaghan,

On behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence, Mr. Simon Coveney T.D., thank you for your correspondence of 15 March 2021 which was transferred to this Department for attention by the Taoiseach's Private Office.

Recent demolitions and the overall human rights situation in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory remain a high priority for the Minister. Set out below are some of the actions that Ireland has taken on this issue.

On 26 January, Minister Coveney raised the issue of the demolition and confiscation of Palestinian-owned structures at the UN Security Council during a debate on the Middle East. Minister Coveney called on Israel to halt these demolitions and to allow for legal construction for Palestinian communities.

The full statement can be consulted at the following link: <https://www.dfa.ie/pmun/newyork/news-and-speeches/securitycouncilstatements/statementsarchive/statement-by-minister-coveney-at-uns-c-debate-on-the-middle-east-including-the-palestinian-question.html>

On 5 February, Minister Coveney made a statement on the demolitions in Humsa Al Bqai'a (also known as Khirbet Humsa) in which he called on Israel, as the occupying power, to fulfil its obligations towards this community and to cease its harmful practice of evictions and demolitions of Palestinian property. The full statement is included below and can be consulted at the following link: <https://www.dfa.ie/news-and-media/press-releases/press-release-archive/2021/february/statement-by-minister-simon-coveney-on-israeli-actions-at-humsa-al-bqaiia.php>

On 18 March, Minister Coveney met with the Israeli Ambassador on a range of issues, and conveyed in the strongest terms Ireland's concerns on demolitions of humanitarian aid and the issue of settlements. Minister Coveney has also raised the issue of demolitions directly with Israeli counterparts during his visits to the region. Irish officials continue to monitor the situation closely, and the Representative Office of Ireland in Ramallah has visited the site in recent weeks along with EU and non-EU representatives. Ireland's Ambassador in Tel Aviv raised this case with the Israeli authorities on 25 February. Ireland's concerns have also been conveyed to the Israeli Ambassador in Dublin. The EU's Spokesperson for External Affairs issued a statement on the matter on 9 February, which is available at the following link: <https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/92880/israelpalestine-statement-spokesperson-demolitions-palestinian->

[structures\\_en](#)

Ireland, the EU, and the wider humanitarian community continue to support those impacted. The West Bank Protection Consortium (WBPC), of which Ireland is a contributing member since 2017, protects vulnerable Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, through the provision of humanitarian assistance. Following recent events, the Consortium is providing emergency shelter and support to affected families. Ireland, through its programme of humanitarian and development assistance, will contribute €200,000 to the WBPC in 2021 to support the continuation of this important work. While our primary concern is the hardship and injustice that demolitions and confiscations cause for Palestinian families, the question of recompense for humanitarian relief is also being pursued through the West Bank Protection Consortium, including directly with the Israeli authorities.

Irish officials continue to raise this issue at the UN. On 25 March, Ireland's Permanent Representative to the United Nations reiterated our concerns at the UN Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East. The full statement by Ireland's Permanent Representative can be consulted at the following link: <https://www.dfa.ie/pmun/newyork/news-and-speeches/securitycouncilstatements/statementsarchive/statement-by-amb-byrne-nason-at-uns-c-briefing-on-the-middle-east-including-the-palestinian-question.html>

The Minister continues to raise human rights issues in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory directly with his Israeli counterparts when visiting the region. On 24 February, the Minister reiterated Ireland's steadfast support for the Middle East Peace Process in his opening statement to the UN Human Rights Council. Ireland will work to ensure that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains high on the international agenda, including during Ireland's tenure on the UN Security Council.

Yours sincerely,

Nora Delaney  
Private Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs

An Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais,  
Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta  
Department of Further and Higher Education,  
Research, Innovation and Science



**Cllr. Cathal Mallaghan**  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Cookstown Office  
Burn Road  
Cookstown  
BT80 8DT

15 May 2021

Dear Cathal,

Thank you for your warm letter, which I was very pleased to receive.

I am happy to hear that the Mid Ulster District Council welcomes the continued participation of students in the Erasmus programme.

The scheme's positive impact and lasting legacy for students in your district area is welcome feedback.

I wish all the students from your district the very best of luck with their studies, and I wish you and your fellow councillors continued good fortune in the vital work undertaken on behalf of all living in Mid Ulster

Yours sincerely,

Simon Harris T.D.  
Minister for Further and Higher Education,  
Research, Innovation and Science