



Bennekerry N.S. Newsletter



December 16th 2019

Where has that first term gone? It seems only a few short weeks ago since our Junior Infants joined us for the first time and yet they are now very much “part of the furniture”. Our last newsletter was quite recent but we wanted to update you with a few new developments and to ensure that you have all the correct times and dates for our Christmas performances and Carol Service.

Cumann na dTuismitheoirí: A new committee for our Parents’ Association is in place and they are full of enthusiasm and positivity. They have great plans for ways through which we can improve the overall school experience for our pupils. The committee members are...

Chairperson: Michele Bible
Vice Chairperson: Maresa Fitzhenry
Joint Secretaries: Bríd Kavanagh and Rachel Foley
Treasurer: Micha Donegan
Vice Treasurer: Mary Murphy

We thank them for agreeing to take on the task and wish them well with their endeavours. While the committee steer the work, all parents are welcome to any or all meetings. We thank especially outgoing committee members Olive Fanning, Colleen Scully and Frances Cole who have stepped down from their positions due to work and other commitments. While we are sorry to lose them, we are always glad to see people serve for as long or short a stint as their busy lives allow.

One of the most popular activities which the PA organises each year is the family fun quiz. As there are many raffle and spot prizes given out on the night, the committee have asked that you might keep them in mind and if you receive any unwanted Christmas presents. Donations of such gifts would be much appreciated.

Bailiucháin Éadaí: The first fundraiser of the year was a collection of unwanted clothing in the Bags2School initiative. Well over 200 bags were collected and €1028.50 was raised. Thanks to all the volunteers who were there to gather the bags and load the lorry. All monies raised will go towards improvements in conditions and resources for the pupils in our school.

Bord Bainistíochta Nua: Our new Board of Management met for the first time recently and we are delighted to have some very experienced members, along with fresh faces. The board is constituted as follows...

Chairperson: Mr. Edmund Burke
Patron’s Nominee: Fr. Tom Little
Principal: Ms. Tonia Cleary
Parents’ Nominees: Mrs. Colleen Scully
Mr. Paud O’Dwyer
Community Representatives: Mr. Niall Rennick
Mrs. Vivienne O’Neill
Staff Nominee: Ms. Deirdre Tomlinson

Cursaí Spórt:

Cóitseáil Cluichí: Since mid-term, our pitches have been a hive of activity with the many coaches that have come in to upskill our students. Both 1st and 2nd classes had Martin Hosey for Gaelic Football, the 3rd and 4th classes had Leo and Norah for hurling and camogie while the 5th and 6th classes had Gavin Whitney for rugby. We want to say a huge thank you to all our coaches who give of their time to develop both playing skills, discipline and enjoyment in the codes that they coach.

Bratach na Scoile Ghníomhaí: We are delighted to announce that Bennekerry N.S. has been awarded the coveted Active School Flag. This flag (ASF) is awarded to schools that strive to achieve a physically educated and physically active school community. The process aims to get more schools, more active, more often. In order to achieve the Active School status, we had to initiate a process by self-evaluating our current provision across 3 areas: Physical Education, Physical Activity and Partnerships. We also organised an Active School Week programme and are committed to having it as part of our annual school calendar. Only schools that can say 'yes' to all of the ASF success criteria (approx. 160 in total) can be awarded the active flag, and so it took considerable effort and co-operation on behalf of co-ordinators Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. Dempsey and Ms. Brennan, our Active School Committee and all staff members to achieve our goal. In mid-November, we were informed that our school would have a visit from an Active School Flag inspector to assess all the initiatives we had put in place. Our ASF committee were wonderful hosts on the day and the inspector was very impressed with our fantastic facilities and all the work that had gone on to make our school community more active. The flag remains valid for a period of 3 years. We hope to raise the Active School Flag in the spring term and will keep you posted when plans are more defined, and a specific date has been chosen.

Comórtaisí Iománaíochta agus Camogaíochta: We entered a boys' and a girls' hurling/camogie team into the Cumann na mBunscol indoor hurling blitz in November. The boys played Drumphea N.S, O'Leighlin N.S and Ballinabranna N.S to finish 2nd and qualify for the division 2 finals. Due to a mix up with dates, they didn't compete in the finals. In their competition, the girls played the Gael Scoil, Ballinabranna N.S and Drumphea N.S to also finish 2nd and qualify for the division 2 finals. In the subsequent tournament, the girls put in some excellent performances against Kildavin N.S., Glynn N.S. and Ballinkillen N.S. to finish in a very worthy 2nd place.

Boys: **Conor Buggy, Luke Campion, Dylan Farrell, Eoin Ryan, Seamus Bible, Se Stafford, Peter Lynch and Mark Buggy.**

Girls: **Anna Mulhall, Keira Doyle, Ava and Tara Lynch, Ella Fanning, Laila Hutchinson, Sarah Keenan and Paige Challoner.**

Unfortunately, a rugby blitz, which was to be hosted by Carlow Rugby Club and facilitated by Gavin Whitney and I.T. Carlow rugby students, was cancelled due to poor weather conditions which rendered the pitch unplayable. We don't know yet if it will be rescheduled but are hopeful that it may be.

Karate: Congratulations to **Seán McNally** (3rd class) won a bronze medal for karate in Waterford on 16th November.

Sraithchomórtas an Fhómhair: As was mentioned in our last newsletter, the Autumn League saw a great turn out again of boys and girls from 4th to 6th class with nearly 130 children competing. Well done to all who participated, and the certificate awards ceremony will be held in the school hall on the morning of 20th December, the day we get our holidays. We look forward to the morning and see who is crowned the coveted Footballer of the Year Award along with the many other awards that are up for grabs!

Gleacaíocht: Carlow Gymnastics Club is one of the most successful in the country in the field of acrobatics. Acrobatics is an infusion of choreography and complex acrobatic elements such as balance, flight, strength and flexibility and is performed in different partnership combinations. At the recent ATT Cup which was held in Abbotstown on 10th November, several pupils from the school won medals and helped the Carlow club be crowned Grade 1-5 and IDP ATT Champions and also FIG levels ATT Champions. Among the medallists were **Millie Nolan** (5th class), **Hannah Beth Lawlor** (5th class), **Ali Donoghue** (5th class), **Tara O'Neill** (6th class), **Emma O'Neill** (4th class), **Anna Mulhall** (6th class), **Chloe Holohan** (5th class), **Emily Lanigan** (6th class) and **Lara Fanning** (3rd class). Maith sibh a chailíní.

Tíreolaíocht: **Eddie Keenan** (4th class) was a winner of the Geography Quiz at Presentation College, Carlow's open evening. Well done Eddie.

Seó Teilifíse Speisialta: While the Late Late Toy Show is looked forward to with much anticipation by almost everyone in Ireland, it is made all the more special for us here in Bennekerry N.S. when one of our own appears amongst the performers. This year **Hannah Beth Lawlor** (5th class) danced her way to glory alongside Ryan Tubridy dressed as Olaf from “Frozen”. Hannah Beth enjoyed the experience greatly and we all enjoyed watching her.

Aisteoirí Óga: Other performers from our school who have recently treaded the boards are **Fallon Cotter** and **Joanne Cranny** (5th class) and **Evan Woods** (4th class) who took part in “A Christmas Tale” in the GB Shaw Theatre on December 7th and **Holly Harmon, Róisín Brennan, Keira Doyle, Síofra McMahon, Auriel Curran** and **Ruby Mc Garry** who have just completed a run of “Sleeping Beauty”, this year’s Christmas extravaganza by Striking Productions.

Seó Eile: As a special treat, the pupils attended a performance of Aladdin in the school hall on 25th November. It was a most entertaining show and some of our pupils even got to feature as Wishy Washy and other somewhat dubious characters! If happy faces and shouts of “He’s behind you” are a good barometer of levels of enjoyment, this touring company really hit the jackpot.

Cártaí Nollag: The pupils designed some beautiful Christmas cards this year and the finished products were printed and sent home in plenty of time for posting. A total of €1,131 was raised through this project and the funds will be put to good use by the school.

Health and Personal Hygiene: Recently you all received a letter from the HSE which highlights the symptoms of influenza and the winter vomiting bug, and the importance of personal hygiene in the battle to prevent the spread of these illnesses. If you failed to receive the letter or cannot find it, a copy has been posted on this website under the “Parents” tab in the dropdown “School Communications” section. The information is valuable and practical, and children should be reminded to make a habit of following the recommended procedures. I have also posted some information relating to workshops provided by the Primary Care & Child Psychology Services in Kilkenny which run in the new year.

Turasanna Scoile: The two 1st class groups visited the GB Shaw theatre on 28th November to view a play entitled “Susie and the Story Shredder”. In the play, children’s stories are banned in the kingdom of Levitas. King Levi says that stories make your brain go fuzzy and your hands turn green. It was Susie and Shredder’s job to enforce the King’s law, shredding stories from dawn ‘til dusk, but Susie read a story for the very first time and realised that stories aren’t so scary after all. Our pupils too learned the value of stories and reading. We hope Santa will bring plenty of books this Christmas as the gift of reading is a gift for life and it is often said that reading has the power to take you places when you have to stay where you are. We will run our very successful Reading Resolutions programme again after Christmas, and if Santa has provided age appropriate, interesting books, it will be all the more enjoyable.

The 6th class attended a workshop called “The Ugly Creature Roadshow” which was organised by EUREKA Science and Technology Festival. The workshop explored the incredible biology of the animal kingdom’s most monstrous creatures, especially bugs. It focussed on the adaptations which make them amazing and asked how such hideous creatures evolved in the first place. The show featured videos, demonstrations and lots and lots of audience participation. Presenter Simon Watt’s tagline is “We can’t all be pandas” and he highlights the fact that all creatures, no matter how ugly, have their uses and make valuable contributions. Perhaps there is a lesson there for humans also!

Seachtain Eolaíochta: On November 28th Paul Finch visited our school and delivered his amazingly creative ‘Pedal Power’ Workshop where he demonstrated how to power items simply by pedalling a bicycle. The children were in awe as he powered fans, kettles, bubble machines and smoothie makers all through human power. The amount of effort required to light a regular lightbulb in comparison to an LED bulb was quite amazing and really demonstrated how **much less** energy LED bulbs require. He was engaging, enthusiastic and most of all it was a fun and interactive workshop teaching the children about energy and the fact that energy has to be created and should not be wasted. There was also a huge emphasis on recycling, with Paul teaching the children about recycling electrical goods safely at your local WEE centre and how wind, wave and other renewable energy are the way forward. This was a most enjoyable and informative workshop and inspired us to continue our work towards creating a greener world.

Ullmhúchán do na Sacraimintí: The Enrolment Ceremony for First Holy Communion took place on Wednesday 6th November while the Enrolment Ceremony for Confirmation was on 14th November. Pupils hung crosses on our memorial tree to remember loved ones who have passed away during this month of the Holy Souls. A special service for the Confirmation class to mark Advent and focus on the Rosary took place in Askea Church at 8pm on Tuesday 3rd December. The Holy Communion classes and their families continue to participate in Sunday masses in the parish in preparation for their big day in May.

Ceolchoirm na Nollag: The school is buzzing with excitement at the moment and the halls are regularly filled with the sound of music and laughter as the junior pupils are busy practising for their Christmas performances. These will take place on Wednesday 18th December at the following times...

Junior Infants	1:00pm
Senior Infants	1:15pm
First Class	1:45pm
Second Class	2:15pm

The infant classes will finish at 2pm as normal, but if you are attending and wish to take your child home with you when his/her performance is over, just call to the classroom door and the teacher will pass him/her over into your care. Older siblings may be collected too, but a written note should be given to their class teacher(s) so that they can be sent to the Infant classrooms in preparation for collection. If some of you wish to stay in the hall to see older siblings perform, the Infant teachers are happy to look after the younger pupils in their classrooms until the adults are ready to collect them. All pupils will get a chance to view the performances on Tuesday 17th so we ask you **not to bring Infants in to the hall on Dec. 18th**. Space is limited and seats are required for the grown-ups.

Seirbhís na gCarúl: There will be a Carol Service in the Church for 3rd -6th class pupils on **Thursday 19th December**. This provides some time out so that the pupils can reflect a little and focus on the true meaning of Christmas. Unfortunately, the children themselves fill the Church so there is no room for parents. However, **there is a Parish Carol service in St. Mary's Church Bennekerry at 8pm that same night**. Some of our pupils will be reading while our choir will sing Christmas Carols. Everyone is welcome as the parish and school join to celebrate together at this special time of year.

Maisiúcháin Nollag: The tradition in our school whereby each family decorates a wooden ornament to hang on our Christmas tree continues. The names of the pupils who attend the school are written on the back of each decoration, and in this way, every child in the school is represented on our tree in the front hall. The tree is looking lovely and symbolises the inclusive nature of our school, where each individual is valued, and creativity is encouraged.

Éadaí Nollag: We have noticed a huge improvement in compliance with correct school uniform recently and we thank you for your efforts in this area. Please ensure that your child has a **plain navy tracksuit bottom** for P.E. days. I have noticed a few with very visible stripes which is not in keeping with our regulation uniform. If everyone adheres to the rules, it is easier for you as parents to insist that your child conforms. Ní neart go cur le chéille!

In a break from the norm, and to add to the festive cheer on the day of the holidays, **December 20th**, the pupils may wear Christmas jumpers or their red P.E. jumpers with their tracksuit bottoms. Santa hats or other Christmas regalia may also be worn. Track-suit bottoms and P.E. jumpers may be worn by pupils on Thursday 19th also. We will be **finishing at 12 noon** and will **reopen on Monday 6th January 2020**.

Finally, on behalf of myself and all the team in Bennekerry N.S., I wish to thank you for your continued support, co-operation and the many kind words which we have received. It only remains for us to wish you all a very happy Christmas and we hope it will be a special time for each and every one of you.



Nollaig aoibhinn agus Athbhliain faoi mhaise daoibh go léir.