

Dear Parent this is a one agenda letter so it will be short and to the point. Please read it when you get a moment as it affects all students of the school.

Just prior to Christmas I wrote a Facebook post which I will attach below here. It was a frustrated response to sports structural funding nationally while arts structural funding in Galway remains at a steady nil. The post and follow ups reached almost 12,000 people and I received a huge amount of mail in relation to the matter. Subsequent to this I set up meetings with Politicians to press the case further. There is genuine support from a handful of these and they correctly make the point that for effective change to happen then we need to make certain that there are local people and representatives pushing the national agenda. As a combined group there is every reason to believe that we can bring about change. As a result of this I decided to host an evening in the school to highlight the matter further. We will have politicians, councillors and educators from all areas of the city.

At this juncture I would like to invite all parents to attend on the night in question. I do not have a list of attendees as yet so I cannot be certain how many seats we will have to offer. But based on concert attendance to date in the school I imagine we should be able to cope on the night with reasonable numbers of parents. Obviously I would like to see a large turnout so that the message of interest is clearly sent out. The corollary of that is easier made, in that if no one turns up then the politicians will do nothing.

The format for the night is very straight forward. We will open with about 30 mins of music to be given by both Students and Staff. Thereafter there will be a handful of speeches and we will close the evening with some light refreshments. In total the nights presentation will last about 90 mins.

Original Facebook post.....

The manner in which sports clubs and in particular the GAA has managed to gain such influence with policy makers in this country is one that I watch each year with envy. Not that I begrudge them anything. Both my sons play Hurling for the local club and it has been a hugely positive experience for them, and our entire community. But today the sports capital grants got €56 million. Guess how much capital funding music in Galway has received in the past 20 years, 30 years, 40 years.....nothing. And though organisations like ourselves are now

bigely thankful for the awarding of MEP funding, this must been seen in context. From 2019 Galway city will receive a total of €200,000 a year. That is less than the annual budget needed to run MCnG (we get zero grant assistance), and it is to be spread across the needs of the entire city. Currently 9% of children living in Galway city have access to formal music education. So the need is very considerable. None of this money can be used as capital grants so Galway remains one of the largest cities in Ireland with no dedicated physical home for a School of Music. Not to mention any subsidy towards the cost of providing a living wage for teachers or a reduction in fees for students.

In 2020 I suspect Galway will become one of the only European cities ever to become a capital of culture with no school of music, no dance facilities, no major art gallery, and no acoustically designed concert hall. I know that our primary currency is the quality of the musicians, poets, dancers and artists etc who live here. But if the time is not finally here to redress this outrageous imbalance and give tangible support to all these wonderful artists, then when? This is not the remit of local government who have very limited resources to make such infrastructural investment. It is the work of National Government. Galway has elected representatives who have not uttered a single word of dissent in the Dail on this subject..... with an election coming sooner than anyone really wants..... Properly managed, less than that €56 million would build and equip every single one of the arts spaces mentioned. That's what we could then call a legacy....

Details of the event

Location: The Hall in Presentation National School.

Date: Friday Feb 23rd

Time: 7pm sharp. Latecomers will not be admitted to this one.