



Nottingham Irish Centre

CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2021

It's been a difficult and challenging two years where so many lives have been changed and disrupted by the coronavirus. And the virus is not finished with us yet, and there may still be a few difficult months ahead although hopefully this new variant will be milder and we are in a much better position due to vaccines.

Like all community centres, Nottingham Irish Centre has had to curtail our activities since the first lockdown in March last year. The Irish Centre committee has continued to function, and we have met regularly on Zoom and are now meeting again face-to-face. The new Nottingham Irish Centre website is now up and running and provides a focus for all Irish community groups to showcase their activities and services and the welfare services available to you through the Irish Centre should you need it. There are contact details on the website. The Golden Shamrock Club has resumed their Tuesday sessions and Comhaltas, the Irish music group and Eugene Murphy's Irish set dancing group will decide in the New Year whether the time is right to resume their sessions.

Our community support worker Bridget Kiernan has continued her work during the pandemic in providing both practical assistance with welfare and financial problems, and support to those who are isolated. Earlier this year we applied to Awards for All (the National Lottery charity) for a grant to employ another Community Support Worker. Our bid was successful, and we have now appointed a new worker who will start in the New Year and we will be able to offer an even better service to the Irish community.

As you probably know, Nottingham Irish Centre, like Irish centres all over the country, has struggled financially over the years. However, in 2015 we leased the premises and three years later negotiated another five-year lease. This has allowed community groups to continue to use the Members Bar and meant that we have been able to pay off our debts and to do some urgent maintenance work. The present lease ends in May 2023 and the committee has decided that we will not renew it and will use the next eighteen months to look at all options including selling the premises on Wilford Street and moving to a more suitable building. We will use this period also to reach out to our members and other

Irish Community groups to seek views on the future direction of the Irish Centre.

Due to the pandemic we have been unable to hold an Annual General Meeting and we feel the time is not yet right to do so. Hopefully we will be able to do so in the spring of next year when you will have the opportunity to make your views on the future clear. The committee will also bring any proposals to the membership, and you will have the final say on whether to accept or reject this plan.

May I wish a very happy Christmas and we hope to see you in 2021.

Pat Murphy

Chair,
Nottingham Irish Centre