



Richard O'Donnell - Erris

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Richard (Richie) O' Donnell -A filmmaker based in Mayo and Galway. Having grown up in Tipperary, he has spent much of his adult life in Erris where his mother is from. Richard has a degree in Theoretical Physics from Trinity College Dublin and a degree in Gaelige and History from NUI Galway. In 2006, Richard moved back from Dublin to Inver in North West Mayo and set up a small production company. After filming events on the Corrib Gas controversy for other television stations, he went on to film and direct 'The Pipe', a multi-award winning feature length documentary that has been broadcast in 25 countries around the world. He is currently finishing a documentary on the offshore resources of the North Atlantic, comparing the Irish state's approach to energy and fishing with Newfoundland and Norway.

Having recognised the vast resources of county Mayo, and their subsequent mismanagement, Richard became involved in a local initiative, which aimed to integrate small-scale energy generation, new technologies, education, efficiency schemes and 3rd level research. He has also been involved in recording and archiving people and music from the Mayo Gaeltachts, along with various cultural and educational initiatives in Mayo. All of this experience, along with trying to run a business based in rural Ireland, has led to a certain amount of frustration that the rich potential of the West of Ireland is not being realized because of a lack of vision and initiative in national politics. At a time when fishing and farming communities, and the larger towns they support, should be booming, large swathes of the county are stripped of their young people and vibrancy.

Mayo has always been a wealthy county in terms of its people, culture and resources, and with the right vision and initiatives, it should be able to provide long term, sustainable opportunities for all of people.

Liam Alex Heffron is an award winning entrepreneur, actor, filmmaker and advocate. Born in **Moygownagh - Ballina**, he inherited his parents' passion for social justice (his father, Billy, is a well known businessman, community leader and 2002 Dail candidate). Liam advocates for social and environmental reforms through his local Community Council and the Moy Valley Protection Group (in opposing industrial-scale wind farms).

Through the "First Independent Mayo" process, Liam is seeking to put his own political philosophy of social justice and rural revival before the people of Mayo;



"Ireland urgently needs 21st century solutions not 19th century politics, for our potentially terminal problems of rural economic decline, emigration and inept government – locally and nationally".

This philosophy considers that democracy is underpinned by an electorate who feel they are a vital part of the state and not subjected to it and harks back to the brave visionaries of Michael Davitt, Sean Lemass and Monsignor Horan, who saw the state implimenting brave policies to better the lives of their citizens. Beginning locally, political power must derive from the people not be enforced on them;

"This is not just about opposing huge wind-farms being imposed on vulnerable communities. People must feel their voices heard, have responsibility for local and community decisions, and see transparency and integrity in their governance, otherwise disengagement and cynicism continues. Social justice creates vibrant communities that benefit the country as a whole".

Liam has founded five companies, employing over 40 people and working with international corporations and civil authorities in designing their data / video surveillance systems including the Irish Police and Prison services and MBNA Bank. He qualified as Electronic Engineer from GMIT winning with his patented thesis the 1996 - 1997 NFEA awards and featuring on RTE's Late Late Show with his life saving toxic gas detection invention.

Liam studied drama at the Galway Theatre Company becoming a regular stage actor and director on the Galway circuit. He has written two stage plays, including a courtroom drama based on the Nally-Frog Ward murder trial. Liam has acted in the award winning Mobs America, The Hardy Bucks, Fair City and Rosna Run. He also hosted a web-TV interview series and has contributed to current affairs TV productions including the RTE documentary "**The Battle for Rural Ireland**".

Liam has produced films dealing with the issues of racism, social injustice and political corruption. Some efforts have been controversial - his satirical www.DUP.ie (a Unionist party agitating for the Republic to rejoin the UK) led to death threats - necessitating Garda protection.

In 2012 with the economic crash, after unsuccessfully trying to save his security business, Liam was forced to declare himself bankrupt. He is now writing a book on the social history of Mayo.

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Peter Jordan - Ballina

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Peter Jordan, 54, is son of the late Paddy Jordan, a member of the Mayo all Ireland winning team of 1950 and 51. After training in Dublin in the food and beverage trade, he got involved in the family business *The Railway Bar*. While keeping in touch with the family bar trade, he opened his own business, Jordy's restaurant, on lower Pearse Street in 1988, where he met his wife Anne. They have been married for 25 years and have two boys aged 16 and 19 years. They renamed the pub Paddy Jordan's and in 1994 embarked on a major expansion. They continued to run both businesses until 1998 when they sold Jordy's to enable them to devote all of their time to the running of Paddy Jordan's. As the business continued to grow they invested again in a larger kitchen and branched into outside and event catering in 2004 building the Paddy Jordan's brand into something that was synonymous with excellent food, professional catering and top class service, winning several awards.

When the recession started the business came under pressure and by 2011 it had declined by 35%. In April 2013 it was put into receivership by the ACC bank and Peter became unemployed. Not a man to be idle he moved up a gear by giving even more time to his community which he had been supportive of since 1994 with his involvement in the Ballina Tidy Towns. Now he is one of its key directors. In the late nineties he travelled to Heuston railway station in Dublin with Mick Hogan, another member of the committee with an artist's impression of a renovated exterior of the station to ask CIE's property maintenance management for permission to allow the Tidy Towns FAS scheme to remove the dash, repoint the old stonework and restore the old timberwork of the exterior. It is the exterior one sees today. Peter is one of the main organisers of The Annual Good Friday clean up in the town and in 2015 there were 1.2 tons of litter collected on the day.

In 1998 the late Sean Hannick from Killala and Sean Clarke Chairperson of Mayo IFA formed a group called Action 98 of which Peter was voted secretary. Action 98 was formed out of a frustration at the FF govt of the day's attitude to rural Ireland and their reluctance to apply for objective 1 status for the Border, Midlands and the Western region and in February 1999 the Western Development Commission was formally established as a statutory body and Objective 1 status was applied for and later granted. He is a council member of the Ballina Chamber of Commerce and is currently pushing a Love Ballina Campaign by promoting a collective buy in from different organisations and individuals from the town and the surrounding area. Since he became a member of the Ballina Chamber Council, the Chamber has opened a year round tourist office on Pearse St and worked in conjunction with Ballina UDC to set up a marketing office to drive the Mayo North brand. This office in 2015 will have 31 events throughout the calendar to drive tourism numbers in the area.

He represents the Ballina Chamber of Commerce on a Tourism Steering committee incorporating BallinaUdc, Failte Ireland, local hotel representatives, the Mayo North marketing office and a number of Mayo County councillors.

Stephen Manning is a married father of three children, one of whom has special needs. He has lived in Dundalk and Tuam, more recently returning to Co. Mayo where he has been resident for over ten years, living in west, central and east Mayo. His family has roots in the Ballinrobe area. Stephen lived and worked abroad in various roles and occupations, most notably in sports instruction and higher education, where he taught at schools, colleges and universities.

He is currently the owner of *CheckPoint Press*, a specialist book publisher, as well as being the Administrator of the *Integrity Ireland Association* – a voluntary, citizens-driven network and support group which has been set up to tackle corruption, cronyism and cover-ups in Irish institutions particularly in the areas of law enforcement, the legal profession and the Courts.

Stephen believes that true democracy is being seriously undermined here in Ireland and that the institutions of the State—most notably central government—are being shamelessly, yet knowingly subverted and manipulated by vested interests, at the great personal and cultural expense of the people of Ireland.

“It is time to return real democratic power to the people of Ireland, and that begins with a radical reform of the current broken political system and of the institutions of the Irish State – many of which are clearly unfit for purpose.”

Stephen is inspired by the *1st Independent MAYO* initiative which he sees as a truly ground-breaking approach to restoring grass roots political representation to a largely disillusioned and disenfranchised populace. The idea of diverse independent candidates pooling their resources in a collaborative competition where each can be assessed ‘on merit’ by the voters in face-to-face local debates is a welcome break from the usual practice of mainstream political parties simply imposing *their* chosen candidates on the electorate. The history of party politics in this State has become so tarnished and contaminated by the constraints of party membership (such as not being able to vote according to one’s conscience, or according to one’s pre-election promises) that surely, it is time for a different approach. By encouraging the electorate to vote for genuinely independent representation, we can begin to return true democracy to the political process and thereby strip vested interests of the undemocratic influence they wield over established parties.

Areas of immediate concern to Stephen are:

- Rescuing politics from the grasp of career opportunists by derailing the proverbial ‘grave train’ and linking TDs wages to the average working wage.
- Ensuring the restoration, protection and development of rural Ireland.
- Establishing a genuinely independent ‘statutory oversight body’ staffed by credible, qualified professionals, to deal with the historical problem of corruption, cronyism and criminal cover-ups in Irish State agencies.



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George O Malley is married with one in family. Born and raised in Co. Mayo. Honours graduate in mathematics and the sciences. Small-holder and forest owner. More than 10 years teaching experience at second and third levels in Ireland. In excess of 25 years national and international experience across Europe and Russia in the areas of forestry, natural resources, environment, sustainability, community, rural and SME development. He has co-ordinated and led several international projects and proposals throughout Europe from the Balkans to the Baltics up to €30 million. George has worked alongside the EC, World Bank and nationally-funded development projects.

George's key strengths and experience include strong leadership capability including a clear vision for the future of rural Ireland with a passion to put the heart back into rural Ireland and with a single-minded determination to pursue this. He is committed to radical reform across the board and has a strong ability to work with a wide range of stakeholders. George is experienced in the development of strategy with emphasis on the sustainable utilisation of natural resources for the benefit of the people.

George O'Malley believes that most of the issues relevant for Ireland, Mayo and rural communities are way beyond the talking phase; however lip-service continues to suppress action. In addition to the crisis issues pertaining to our health service, Irish Water, all issues arising from the banking crisis and forced immigration; he has identified the need to elaborate a medium-to-long term fully-resourced strategy for rural Ireland, ring-fencing sufficient financial resources to implement at least one large-scale project and to enabling the provision of viable off-farm employment opportunities as key objectives for Mayo.

George O'Malley possesses a strong sense of justice and fair play. He is committed to putting risk takers and primary producers first and to speaking for those who can't. He is trenchantly opposed to the "status quo" approach to the way in which things are handled in Ireland, rails against all that has brought this country (rural Ireland in particular) to where it's at; and is determined to unapologetically fight the predominately cavalier approach to tackling the issues that affect all of us. He is a clear thinker, straight talker and a good communicator. He is an avid supporter of Gaelic games, having played club football in five counties, and is a follower of traditional Irish music.



Dermot Rice - Ballina

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Dermot Rice, a Ballina man and father of three children, has contributed to many voluntary events in his community.

His recent work experience is as a Media Advertising Manager and more recently as a Technical Recruiting Manager into the US Corporate market. His first employment was at Quinn's Pharmacy, then at United Drug Plc in Ballina, and later with the Western People's advertising team in Castlebar. After eighteen months in that local paper he was promoted to the role of Commercial Manager at the Sligo Weekender which he managed for the following three and a half years. During this time he also attended Cork Institute of Technology and was awarded a BA in Sales.

For more than three years Dermot has been opening and closing deals with some of the world's largest enterprise in the USA for PCS Ireland Limited from his County Mayo base. Dermot has broken major new business deals with several Fortune 500 companies in his current role. He is also well known locally for his talents as a DJ and has a great passion for music.

Dermot believes that the current political system does not represent the people; he is adamant that both the Government and the Opposition have tragically failed us and that democracy has been eroded as elected representatives have pursued their own agenda, neglecting their constituents.

Dermot is totally opposed to the current Fine Gael/Labour coalition Government for the following reasons: Non-delivery for the people of Mayo, a Justice System that is not fit for purpose, neglect of our Education System, tragic mismanagement of our Health Service, crony-ism, cover-ups, corruption, lies, non-accountability, blatant waste of our resources and the forcing of unwanted utilities like Irish Water against the wishes of the people.

If elected, Dermot will represent all of the people of Mayo directly and his loyalty will be to the people - not any political party whip. He will put the interests and needs of the people before those of big business and party politics. He will work diligently and honestly and ensure the people's voice is heard and heeded in DailEireann.

He will fight tirelessly for jobs, farming, health and educational reform, a better infrastructure and the restoration of confidence in our Justice System. Dermot will listen to the concerns and wishes of the people and act accordingly. He knows that Mayo people feel strongly about many issues like unemployment black-spots, forced emigration, water charges, fracking, pylons, turf-cutting, windfarms, seaweed harvesting, school, barracks and post office closures, and other issues that matter to the people of this constituency – Dermot will make these issues his business and is determined to get results for Mayo. He wants to hear about other issues that Mayo people care about and invites people to contact him about these.



Dualta Roughneen - Kiltimagh

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Dualta Roughneen is a chartered Civil Engineer with a Masters in Human Rights. He grew up in Kiltimagh and went to school in St Louis Community School prior to attending NUI, Galway (UCG) to do an undergraduate in Civil Engineering in 2001. He worked with Coffey Construction in Cork and Limerick for one year before moving to Mayo County Council to work as Assistant Engineer on the extension of Rathroeen Landfill.

From 2001, he started travelling to work overseas – voluntary as an Engineer in Ethiopia on school building projects for three summers until 2003 before accepting a voluntary role with GOAL as an engineer in the North East of Afghanistan for year. Leading from this he spent nearly three years in North Korea as a water engineer for Concern Worldwide and project manager before working in Sudan (Darfur) and Liberia in Engineering roles.

In 2008 he returned to Ireland to carry out a MSc in Human Rights in UCD, completed in 2009 and since then he has worked as Emergencies/Disaster Risk Management Coordinator in Plan Ireland, based in Dublin but supporting humanitarian responses directly in Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Cameroon, Philippines, Central African Republic, Sierra Leone for conflict, typhoon, cholera, Ebola, and hunger crises. (And now in Nepal)

He recently published as an author 'The Right to Roam: Travellers, Human Rights and the Modern Nation State'; and 'North Korea: On the Inside, Looking In'. He has written regularly for Catholic Newspapers on social justice and life issues, among other things.

He is interested in participating in the **First Independent Mayo** Process, but being based in Dublin with a job that involved frequent travel, means that he may not be able to participate in as much town hall meetings as he would like, especially should overseas humanitarian crisis arise during that period. His involvement in **First Independent Mayo** stems from a range of issues but mainly due to the fact that politics and representation in Ireland has been reduced from a reasonably strong democratic process to a procedural approach that no longer represents a genuine democracy. The election of candidates aligned with existing political parties is not the election of individuals but the rubber stamping of a government that acts unaccountable to its constituents for the duration of its term in government. While one individual candidate will not change this, the FIM process has the potential to be replicated in Ireland, creating a forum for a stronger civil society engagement in politics, that will challenge the existing party political system. 'The treatment of referenda results by the previous Fianna Fail led governments, particularly in relation to the Lisbon Treaty, the introduction of abortion legislation, the creation of Irish Water- all of which were opposed by large portions of the population, were driven despite this and without any sense of accountability for these actions', he says.



Dr Lucy Weir-Erris – Considered candidacy but prefers now to help facilitate the process

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Lucy Weir is a published writer, researcher, and educationalist. She is originally from Scotland, but has lived in Erris, Co Mayo, where her husband comes from, for 17 years. She has worked extensively in 'developing' countries (she was a Voluntary Service Overseas volunteer three times) and remains committed to raising awareness of social, political and environmental issues.

Lucy has worked extensively with people with learning difficulties, and with people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. She has worked with other marginalised groups too. Her experience and her research has taught her that it is more important to focus on the process than the outcome when it comes to seeking a fairer, more equitable society. She is not seeking political power but is interested in supporting the work of First Independent Mayo, particularly as it relates to exposing and challenging party-based, tit-for-tat politics, tribalism and nepotism. She would like to see the development of an alternative political culture which does not rely on building a personal power-base, on success based on 'who you know', and therefore on the widespread exclusion of diverse voices who could contribute to our policies and practices.

She would like to see politics addressing the culture of fear that is being allowed to establish itself in society. Fear creates greed, since greed is based on fear of losing out. She would like to see much better, clearer, and more fairly enforced legislation in relation to planning, tax, and the environment. She would like to see legislation drafted and applied to the field of social inclusion so that people who would like to contribute to society are facilitated, and not ignored. She would like to see far more focus on personal responsibility, on critical thinking, and on sharing knowledge about how to engage with the political process, wherever, and whoever you are. This process of public participation is essential if we are to have a fully flourishing democracy.

In Mayo, and in Erris in particular, the questions of rural regeneration are the most central and the most urgently in need of addressing. Lucy is interested in genuine rural regeneration that supports all residents, and not just a select few. She is interested in supporting whistle-blowers, and in making sure that those who are concerned with the common good are protected in their work to expose corruption, intimidation, unfairness and other acts of injustice.

Lucy strongly believes that in supporting the process of encouraging independent candidates to participate in politics, that culture of distrust and fear can and will change. Therefore she will do everything she can to support and encourage those who are standing as candidates, even if their political views are not entirely aligned with her own.