

June 9th 2015

Dear Fellow Candidates;

In the overall interests of transparency, I copy below an email just received from Eddie Farrell which is self explanatory. This email has come on the back of a very disturbing phone call from Eddie at 1pm today that made reference to erroneous and highly defamatory materials on the internet - some of which are the subject of longstanding efforts by my family to clear our good names - on which basis apparently, Eddie has 'offered me the opportunity' to withdraw from the 1st Independent Mayo process on the grounds that 1st Independent Mayo has now decided that I am not a suitable candidate.

I asked Eddie to name the other decision makers, but he would not do so, saying only that it is enough that he has made this decision.

To say that I am dismayed and deeply offended at the suggestion that I withdraw - especially after investing so much sincere effort, time and money into the process - would be a great understatement. Eddie has not, in my opinion, furnished me with even ONE solid or legitimate reason for making such a request - which, by its very nature is profoundly offensive and defamatory to me personally. Furthermore, his email will undoubtedly be seen as highly distressing and offensive to those members of *Integrity Ireland* who are bravely fighting for justice in the face of clear and obvious wrongdoing by various authorities - authorities it seems whom Eddie now appears to be at pains NOT to offend - this being one of the alleged 'reasons' for excluding me from the process?

I advised Eddie that I would absolutely NOT withdraw from the process voluntarily on these spurious and unfounded grounds, whereupon he stated that he would be excluding me forthwith. I made it clear to Eddie that he was making a great error of judgement, and that he needed to rethink the situation and get back to me once he had done so. Unfortunately, he decided to send the email below instead.

By sending this email advising that I am to be excluded from the 1st Ind Mayo process - and by quoting incorrect facts and alluding to defamatory allegations which I have already successfully dealt with in the Courts, Eddie is putting me in the unfortunate position of having to defend my good name all over again, and defend my right to participate in this supposedly 'open political process'.

I am therefore asking each of you for your support as I respectfully insist that Eddie immediately withdraws this offensive email and confirms my participation in the upcoming meeting in Belmullet - for which I am already fully prepared. I believe that Eddie's actions in making the offensive phone call and sending this email below are completely outside the spirit of the process as it was sold to us in Foxford and Ballina, and if he persists in standing over this position, that I will have no alternative but to defend my good name in public and seek appropriate redress - and that, undoubtedly, and very unfortunately, will do little to inspire public confidence that the 1st Ind Mayo project is indeed an 'open collaborative competition' as advertised, and something that the electorate can have full confidence in.

My counter-proposal to Eddie is that he withdraws this highly offensive email immediately - or, that he steps aside as facilitator, on the grounds that he has now utterly compromised the integrity and fairness of the process.

I look forwards to feedback on this matter from any of those involved, and state 'for the record' that I absolutely do NOT accept the basis or contents of Eddie's email below - nor his authority to make such a decision without due and proper consultation with everyone involved - and most especially with myself. My position is that if anyone involved in the 1st Ind process has any *legitimate* reasons for objecting to my continued participation, that I will happily address those issues in an open and transparent manner because as far as I am concerned there is absolutely nothing that I am aware of (other than insidious innuendo and mistaken perceptions - or, an alternative hidden agenda perhaps?) that would justify Eddie's seemingly-misguided demand that I resign from the process. After all, aren't we supposed to be presenting '*varied and different independent candidates*' to the local electorate so that THEY can decide who THEY want to represent THEM? When did it become Eddie's job to censure or exclude anyone? Weren't we told repeatedly that the whole purpose of the 1st Ind project was to bring about REAL change - by presenting capable, truly independent, determined candidates who were willing and able to take up the challenge? I believe it's fair to say that I have wholeheartedly engaged with this process in an open and sincere way, and am as much committed to the collective aspect as to the individual aspect. And judging by the responses on social media, that at the very least, my participation is garnishing a good deal of attention which is being driven towards the 1st Ind project. By trying to exclude me from the process in this unjustified, discriminatory and autocratic manner, Eddie is making an absolute nonsense of the supposedly 'democratic process' which (he tells us) lies at the heart of the 1st Ind Mayo initiative.

If this is Eddie's understanding of 'democracy in action', then perhaps we should all be rethinking what it is we have signed up to here, because in my view, Eddie has just managed, in one fell swoop, to tarnish not only my good name and that of the general *Integrity Ireland* membership, but has now also seriously undermined the stated purpose and ethos behind the 1st Ind Mayo initiative. We know for a fact that certain mainstream media outlets have been directed NOT to cover *Integrity Ireland* activities - purely because we ARE shaking up the status quo here in Enda Kenny's own back yard. Eddie's actions in trying to unilaterally exclude me from this political process - whether it is his intention or not - will absolutely play right into the hands of those vested interests who would so dearly like to see us silenced. It will be a terrible irony if a supposedly 'new and inspiring' political initiative which is being sold to the public on the basis that it is 'truly open' and 'truly democratic' falls at the first fence because of unjust, undemocratic and autocratic decision-making on the part of its lead spokesperson. I do hope that the point has been clearly made folks - and I do sincerely apologise if my delivery has caused any inadvertent offence. But sometimes, there is no room for equivocation.

There is really only one practical solution here. Eddie must withdraw his email or resign from the project. Because I WILL be continuing in the process until such time as I choose to withdraw, or, until such time as there is some legitimate reason why I should not continue.

By the way guys - I also had a long conversation with Liam about this situation and about his surprising decision to withdraw yesterday, and I have encouraged him to reconsider on the grounds

that it is almost impossible not to get 'dirty' when trying to clean up a major political mess - the very reason we all got involved in the 1st Ind Mayo process in the first place..?

'For the record' folks, I am NOT the subject of any HSE investigation - nor of any other Garda investigation - and I told Eddie this. But apparently he hasn't listened. I am however suing the State for various illegal acts committed by some high-profile authority figures - and if that constitutes grounds to exclude me from the 1st Ind Mayo process... then surely, anyone who has had the guts to take on the authorities in the Courts should likewise be excluded - right? I think the absurdity of the situation speaks for itself.

I am willing to allow Eddie until midday tomorrow to withdraw the offensive email - failing which, I must reserve the right to act in defence of my good name; in defence of the good name of the *Integrity Ireland* membership and community; and to seek appropriate redress via whatever legal options are open to me.

Please feel free to call me if you wish.

Kind regards to all.

Stephen Manning

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1st Independent Mayo prospective candidate
and a Member of Integrity Ireland

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