

Model Delia was the picture of natural beauty as she posed in a bridal dress by Olwen Bourke and held Cora Cummins' ceramics for this year's Design and Crafts Council Ireland Future Makers Awards. The event, which supports budding designers and craftspeople and which was held in Dublin's RDS yesterday, is the qualifying competition for the RDS Craft Awards. Photo: Photocall



Gaeltacht school in plea for more Irish language support to aid Ukrainian pupils

Half of students in small Connemara primary school are from Ukraine

KATHERINE DONNELLY

A Galway Gaeltacht school saved from closure by an influx of Ukrainian pupils is now facing a new challenge.

Half the pupils at Bunscoil Cholmáin in Connemara are Ukrainian and the principal says she needs more language support teaching hours to live up to the Irish-only rule for junior classes.

As a participant of the Department of Education's Gaeltacht School Recog-

inition Scheme, it must immerse pupils in the Irish language for the first two years - with no English allowed.

Principal Róisín Ní Chualáin, one of two teachers in the school, takes junior infants, where seven of the 12 pupils are from Ukraine. Some arrived in the early spring and formally started junior infants this month.

A couple of years ago, the school, in Muigh Iúis, Carna, was facing closure, with enrolments predicted to drop to four this September, but the arrival of the Ukrainians breathed life into it.

With the new influx, local families were encouraged that the school had a future and more enrolments followed, bringing the total to 18 at the moment.

"It's great the school has stayed open because of the new kids. They are brilliant, and young children that age can

absorb anything. I remember the first day they arrived here on the bus and they didn't know where they were and they were so young, and now they are thriving," said the principal.

But she said the school needs more support while it integrates the new pupils, while also living up to its Irish language remit. "The school has a language support teacher for three days a week but we really need a language support teacher for five days a week," she said.

"They will learn Irish and they are learning Irish. They are learning the words and they have the *cupla focal*, but we need to be able to give time. It is not easy when you are managing a class of four-year-olds.

"If they are older, we can manage but when they are four or five, it takes a lot of time. The days when I have the

language support teacher in the class, it is fantastic."

The principal has appealed the language teacher allocation to the Department of Education and is awaiting a response.

This week, a great asset arrived in Bunscoil Cholmáin in the form of the first Gaeltacht-Ukrainian colouring book, aimed at young primary-school age children.

The book, a co-production between Galway Regional Development and the parents' group Tuismitheoiri na Gaeltachta, offers pupils and their parents an at-a-glance translation of some key vocabulary, in a fun activity.

Michael Mac Donnchadh, who had the idea for the colouring book when he worked with Galway Regional Development, said it would allow children to interact with each other and then with

the parents at home. The book also has a QR code on the front, linking to an online sound file. "It is great because it is Irish and Ukrainian. When I press play, it says the word in their native language, and then in Irish. There is no English in it," said Ms Ní Chualáin.

The Gaeltacht text was translated into Ukrainian by Irish-speaking Ukrainian Nadia Dobrianska.

"I first heard Irish at 14 and I fell in love with it. I'm from Kyiv and I started learning there. I have now lived in Cork and Belfast," she said.

Sorcha Ní Chéilleachair, of Tuismitheoiri na Gaeltachta, said it is a very special project. "It is very important for the integration of Ukrainian children into the Gaeltacht community and it also highlights the need for extra resources for Gaeltacht schools."

PUBLIC NOTICE

Having had regard to the provisions of Section 42B(1) of the Industrial Relations Act 1946, the Contract Cleaning Industry Joint Labour Committee hereby gives notice that it has formulated proposals for fixing the minimum remuneration and working conditions of workers in relation to whom the Committee operates. Copies of the proposals are available at the request of the Contract Cleaning Joint Labour Committee on the website of the Labour Court at www.labourcourt.ie

Any person wishing to make representations in the form of written submission in relation to the proposals should do so in the form of written submission, by 5pm, on or before, 10th of October 2023. Any such representation should be sent by post to The Secretary, Contract Cleaning Industry Joint Labour Committee, Landsdowne House, Landsowne Road, Dublin 4, or by email to jlcsecretary@enterprise.gov.ie

Representations received after that date shall not be considered.

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Call to cap mortgage interest rate at 3pc

GABIJA GATAVECKAITE

The Government should cap mortgage interest at 3pc at no cost to the taxpayer, according to People Before Profit Solidarity TDs.

Dublin South West TD Paul Murphy said people are being "crucified" with hundreds of euro in extra payments per month. He said a cap on the amount of mortgage interest banks can charge should be set by Government.

"People are being absolutely crucified, hundreds of thousands of people are facing extra bills every month of €300, €400, €500, that is simply unaffordable for many at a time when banks

are engaged in extraordinary profiteering," he said.

"It's very simple - we have a bill to say that a cap on mortgage interest rates should be introduced, that nobody is able to be charged more than 3pc."

The Government previously set a cap on the amount which moneylenders can charge and Mr Murphy said the same can be done to all banks.

"There's no cost to the Exchequer of doing it. A year-and-a-half ago, the Government introduced a cap on the amount of money that can be charged by predatory moneylenders, short-term pay-day loans," he said. "We're simply saying this should be done across the

board in terms of mortgages to say that banks cannot legally charge more than an interest rate of 3pc."

Mr Murphy welcomed comments from senior ministers in recent days which indicated the Government is looking at bringing in mortgage interest relief targeted at those at risk of losing homes in the Budget.

"Something is better than nothing for people. But it's a bit like the energy than nothing but the Government just does these things without actually interfering in the market, without dealing with the fundamental issue, which is the profiteering," he said.