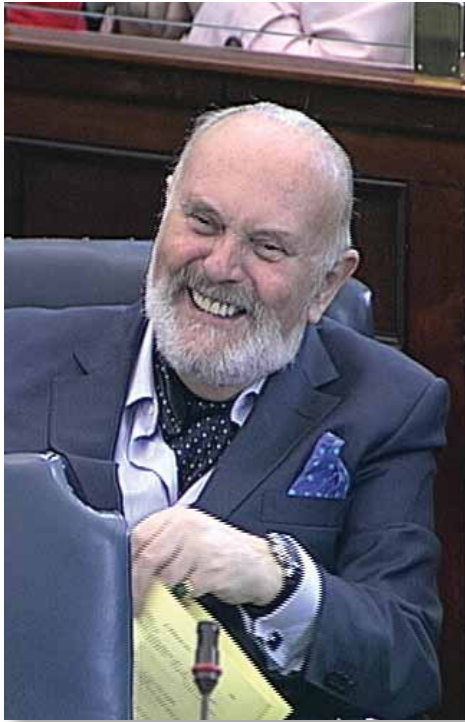




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# SUMMER/AUTUMN 2014 NORRIS NEWS SHEET



## STOP PRESS - DAVID NORRIS HAS THE SEANAD RECALLED TO DISCUSS GAZA

- see link to the discussion: <http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/debates%20authoring/debateswebpack.nsf/takes/seanad2014073100003?opendocument#B02000>

## Greetings from Trinity

Dear Graduate,

It has been some time since you heard from me and a lot has happened since! I was recently diagnosed with an inoperable form of liver cancer but was lucky enough to have a life-saving liver transplant in May of this year at St. Vincent's Hospital Dublin. It is thanks to the generosity of an individual, who sadly passed away, and their family that I benefitted. Having undergone this experience I believe that we should give our full backing to the proposed "Opting Out" of organ donation campaign and I will be doing what I can to support this very worth- while initiative.

Apart from this 2013/2014 was a very interesting year in the life of the Seanad. Not only did we have the Abolition of the Seanad Referendum but also the Abortion Debate, the debacle in the Department of Justice, the Bank Bailout and the establishment of the Banking Inquiry Committee.

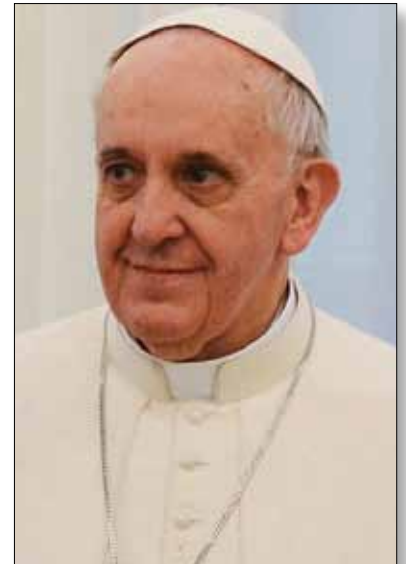
David Norris,

Autumn 2014

## Green Week Trinity - February 2014



As a major part of the educational component of a green campus the Green Campus Committee have organised a Green Week, now in its 12th year. Once again I was invited to launch the week. The event this year themed "Recycling Makes Cents" ran from the 17th to the 21st February. A number of new projects in the area of waste and recycling were rolled out which facilitated and encouraged all campus users to recycle. The targets set by the Trinity Green initiative are to reduce waste tonnes by 20% by 2020, recycling rate of 50% by 2016, zero waste to landfill, provide litter bins at least every 100m and to reduce hazardous waste by 10% by 2020. Trinity and in particular the Green Campus Committee are to be congratulated for their endeavours.



## Invitation for Pope Francis to Address Seanad

In response to a motion put forward by David Norris:

Seanad Éireann consequent upon the unanimous decision of the Committee on Procedures and Privileges to add the name of His Holiness Pope Francis the First to be included among the most prominent distinguished visitors to be invited to address Seanad Éireann, strongly supports this invitation and requests the Government to assist in making the formal arrangements necessary for such a visit which may naturally include meetings with the President, An Taoiseach and political leaders.

the Seanad has agreed unanimously to invite Pope Francis to address the upper house. The reason I proposed such a visit is that there are very few world leaders who have any kind of vision at all. In the person of Pope Francis, we have someone with a prophetic, compelling and comprehensive vision. He has changed the entire climate of debate within the Roman Catholic Church, allowing for genuine dialogue. Christendom is in a perilous state. This is a man who has spotted the iceberg and is trying to turn the Titanic around.

Senator David Norris

Seanad Éireann, Dublin 2, Telephone number 01 618 3104, Fax number 01 618 4155, [david.norris@oireachtas.ie](mailto:david.norris@oireachtas.ie)







## Reform of the Seanad

I have been raising the issue of reform of the Seanad for many years. Ten reports were published yet no Government did anything to act upon them. Now following the defeat of the Government parties in the Referendum the Government has introduced the Seanad Electoral (University Members) (Amendment) Bill which will replace the current two university constituencies with a single six member constituency and an extension of the franchise to all holders of a degree or equivalent qualification from an institution of higher education in the State.

However they have not introduced any other reforms regarding the remaining politically dominated panels in the Seanad. What does this mean? Quite simply it means that the political parties will continue to control the election of their members to the Seanad. For example of the 60 members of the Senate 43 will be elected by 1,000 Councillors, whereas those seeking election to the university panel will have to canvass approximately 800,000 voters with the remaining 11 being nominated by the Taoiseach. Is this fair? Of course not. I believe all those with a third level qualification should be entitled to vote but the system should be reformed in such a way as to ensure the political parties do not attempt to acquire dominance over the university panels the way they have with the remaining vocational panels. More than 20 years ago I suggested that the nominating bodies should be expanded to include all of the people of Ireland, with three seats set aside for anybody who does not fit into the bodies, the system of Taoiseach's nominees should be abandoned and the seats distributed among the diaspora and Northern Ireland, as well as an additional three seats for the universities, so that they are manageable, and three seats for people who do not fit in elsewhere but this came to nothing. This Government like its predecessors is loath to relinquish control over the voting system in the Seanad! What can be done about this? Unless people lobby for reform of the vocational panels nothing will change. This Government and forthcoming Governments will continue to dominate the Seanad and make it even more difficult for University members to introduce legislation which can make a difference. Please bear this in mind when next talking to your local TD.



### Government accused of 'invasion' of university Seanad seats

Senator David Norris says intention clear in remarks made by Minister Phil Hogan, while Senator Seán Barrett accuses Taoiseach of 'revenge' on Independents

Marie O'Halloran

Wed, Mar 12, 2014, 01:00

The Government has been accused of preparing for political parties to "invade" the six Seanad's university seats via its legislation to extend the vote to all colleges.

Trinity College Senator David Norris said this was quite clear in remarks by Minister for the Environment and Local Government Phil Hogan that provision would be made for an alternative arrangement for the filling of casual vacancies on the "replacement candidates list" system that operates for the European parliament elections.

"Nothing could demonstrate more clearly that the Government proposes to invade these seats," said Mr Norris.

He was speaking during a Seanad debate on the General Scheme of the Seanad Electoral (University Members) (Amendment) Bill, under which 800,000 college students would be eligible to vote for the university panels.

Mr Norris said "of the 60 Seanad seats we will have 800,000 people electing six members, 1,000 electing 43 and one person electing 11. Is that what the Minister calls democracy?"





David at Blackrock College Radio Nov 2013



David Norris and Friends at the Cancer Society Coffee Morning, September 2014.

## Norris calls for drugs centre to be on Ailesbury Road

Seanad

MARIE O'HALLORAN

The next drugs rehabilitation centre or shelter for the homeless should be established on Dublin's Ailesbury Road, the Seanad has heard.

Independent David Norris criticised the plan by Dublin City Council to take over a hotel on the corner of North Great George's Street and Parnell Street to house homeless people.

He said the north inner city had had "enough of being ignored and regarded as a dumping ground for every self-help

or alcohol rehabilitation centre or the next homeless centre located in Ailesbury Road" - in one of Dublin's most expensive residential areas.

The Independent Senator said there was "plenty of property" on the exclusive road as a result of the financial collapse "that would be well able to accommodate some of these unfortunate people, where they could get the kind of treatment they need in the kind of circumstances they are entitled to".

Homeless services Labour's Aileen Hayden said she accepted Mr Norris's bona fides on the location of homeless services.

"At the same time there are 153 families living in hotels at the moment and the bottom line is that we need homeless accommodation."

Ms Hayden, chairwoman of Threshold, the national housing charity, said most of these services were in the inner city "because that is where the people who need them are located".

The people who needed these services had to have access to them. "Public transport is an issue in that context. There is a bona fide reason for locating these services in the city centre."

Meanwhile, during the Order of Business, Independent Senator Jillian van Turnhout thanked hotels and venues that refused to host the so-called toddlers and stars beauty pageants.

Mr Norris, who lives on North Great George's Street, said: "Let's see the next drug

organisation for people with alcohol and drug problems or who are homeless"

Mr Norris said he was on the side of the "underdog". He added, however, that he was not saying "not in my backyard. I am serving notice on the authorities - our backyard is full."

He questioned what respect that showed for homeless people that they would be put in "sacred bunk in temporary accommodation".

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## Banking Inquiry

The unilateral action of the Government parties in imposing two additional members of the Senate has seriously compromised the Banking Inquiry.

I used my vote at the initial meeting of the Committee on Selection to ensure that the Banking Inquiry would be fully independent and not in a position to be used for political advantage. The action of the Government in using its voting strength in Seanad Eireann to alter this is regrettable.

I fear that in these circumstances the Inquiry will be reduced to a game of political football and the Irish people will gain nothing.

## Shatter has 'tragic flaw of arrogance', says Norris

Seanad  
MICHAEL O'REGAN  
Independent Senator David Norris said the controversy surrounding Minister for Justice Alan Shatter was like a Greek drama. "He has a tragic flaw of arrogance and an inability to resist the temptation to smear anybody who gets in his way."

take any joy in saying that. I know he is a very clever, remarkable man."  
He said Minister for Finance Michael Noonan, when coming to Mr Shatter's defence on RTE's Prime Time, had "unintentionally hung him" when he said the Minister should only resign if there was a serious situation involving incompetence or malpractice. "Can anybody today deny that this is a serious situation or that it involves both incompetence and malpractice on behalf of the Minister?"

Fianna Fáil justice spokesman Denis O'Donovan said what had happened in the justice area in recent months put the original 1982 Galbo "innuendo" in a "jenny place".  
"Very strong life jacket" He was deeply concerned that former confidential recipient Oliver Connolly was pushed overboard, as had former Garda commissioner Martin Callinan. "If I were in the position of the Attorney General or the secretary general of the Department of Justice I would want to be wearing a very strong life jacket in the current climate, given what is going on."

Martin Conway (FG) said the systematic Garda recording of conversations was deeply troubling.  
All sides paid tribute to the late Nicky McPadden TD, a member of the Seanad before being elected to the Dáil. Fine Gael colleague Catherine Manning said Ms McPadden had bravely fought an illness. "She was a beautiful person."

## Call for cold-weather shelter for rough sleepers

Seanad  
MICHAEL O'REGAN  
Independent Senator David Norris called on the Government to set up a cold-weather shelter for the homeless.

gation such an initiative, so let us do so."  
Mr Norris said all that was needed was basic equipment, including showers, mattresses, coffee and soup. "If such rudimentary facilities were available, people sleeping in the open could obtain shelter and avoid freezing to death," he added. "Unfortunately, people regularly die of hypothermia in this country."  
Homeless people should be provided with the necessary in-

formation to secure accommodation, he said. "In addition, members of the public could be provided with a helpline number via street placards to assist the homeless," he added.  
Cardboard box Mr Norris said some homeless people could be difficult and awkward. "A lady once lived across the road in a cardboard box on the steps of our office which were located there many years ago," he added. "She did

not want to go anywhere."  
Supporting Mr Norris's call for a cold-weather shelter, Paul Bradford of Fine Gael said it was an issue which should be pursued by the Seanad.  
"That the matter is before us to reflect on the fact that while there is a positive and welcome degree of economic progress, there is still, to put it mildly, a subset of society that is living on almost unacceptable levels of reduced means," he added.

## Norris says attempt to evict woman a 'disgrace'

Seanad  
JIMMY WALSH  
Criticising the attempted eviction of a terminally ill woman from a house near Crabe Park last Wednesday, David Norris (d) said justice to Senator Norris that a "reflexive" prayer was recited.  
"I really disapprove of it as a Christian because I think it is heinous," the Senator said.  
He asked whether any member who believed in the prayer thought Jesus Christ would be

throwing a woman of a certain age and her daughter out on the street with nowhere to go.  
He criticised the women's neighbours who had joined in solidarity to prevent the eviction. The older woman had been too frail to be moved into an ambulance.  
Public good "It's a disgrace. It's a reproach to every public representative in this country, and certainly I'll ever hear about this kind of thing going on anywhere near me in future. I will be down there doing my best."

and medical institutions.  
Breán Mallon (d) said events following the death of Fi Sinné Mollay in Clon, Co Offaly, 28 years ago amounted to the kind of miscarriage of justice about which we had spoken so much since questioning when they had happened in other jurisdictions.  
The jailing of innocent people was akin to the absence of proper investigations and trial in relation to an untimely death, he said. "It seems to me that there is more than a prima facie case that that is the case here."

Senator says he voted FF's Marc McSharry onto banking inquiry to make it 'truly independent'  
Fiach Kelly  
Sat, Jun 14, 2014, 01:00  
There were scenes of uproar in the Seanad this week when the Government added two more members onto the inquiry and re-established its majority. Speaking in Guernsey yesterday, Mr Kenny defended the decision to add two extra Government Senators.  
Senator David Norris rejected accusations the vote, which saw the Government lose its majority on the banking inquiry, was a "stroke" by Fianna Fáil. Mr Norris said he cast his vote to ensure the Government was in the minority and make the inquiry "truly independent" and above party politics.  
Mr Norris yesterday released a statement, from St Vincent's Hospital, saying, "It was my deliberate and informed vote that created this situation."



David Norris, the Palestinian Ambassador and Friends at the Gig for Gaza Event in the Olympia Theatre, September 2014 Photograph courtesy of Niall Fennessy (www.livethroughalens.com).

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