

In Profile

Damian O'Farrell (Independent)

Personal Details

I am married to Cora O'Farrell (nee Coffey) and we have two young children Caoimhe and Cian. We have lived in Griffith Court in the Fairview/Marino area for the last 14 years. My family is originally from the North Inner City and they moved to Furry Park in Killester where I was born. I have lived on the North Side of Dublin all my life. I work in administration in the Financial Services industry.

Voluntary / Community Work

I have worked in a voluntary capacity for Samaritans for the last 10 years. Samaritans provides confidential non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those, which could lead to suicide. I have also been involved in the training of new volunteers.

I was a member of the Board of Directors of INNIU Credit Union Ltd for 14 years. I am proud to have been very involved in the biggest co-operative movement in Ireland, as both a director and a credit union member.

I also act as an advocate for individuals who have suffered child sexual abuse. This involves

believing and supporting the individual as they attempt to empower themselves to seek help and/or restitution to improve their lives.

I have lobbied for reforms in relation to Child Protection.

I am an active member of Griffith Court Residents Association.

At present I coach an u11 boys basketball team in the Dublin Leagues and formerly coached underage soccer teams.



Political work / experience

I have worked as Finian McGrath T.D.'s Campaign Manager for 3 successful election campaigns, over the last 10 years. I have contributed to and been part of a very dedicated



team and I certainly wasn't surprised to hear a senior political journalist during the last general election campaign say, that Independents have to work three times as hard as a Party Candidate for every one vote.

I have been doing constituency clinic work for Finian since 1999, dealing with a wide variety of issues and I look forward to meeting again many of the people I've worked with over the years.

Memberships / Interests

Griffith Court Residents Association
Unite Trade Union
Marino & District Credit Union
Amnesty International

Sport has played a big part in my life. I've participated in GAA, Soccer, Chess and for many years played Basketball with Killester. I frequently attend League of Ireland Soccer games and was fortunate to be in Stuttgart when Ray Houghton put the ball in the English net. I particularly enjoy supporting the Dubs and my perfect afternoon out is attending a Dublin Championship game in Croke Park with my family, preferably a September afternoon!

There is a committed team behind me drawn mainly from the voluntary sector and I am honoured they have put their faith in me to be their Candidate. Independents rely totally on the

support of private individuals to work for and/or fund our campaign and any support is very welcome. I can be contacted at 086 2148177 or damianofarrell@gmail.com

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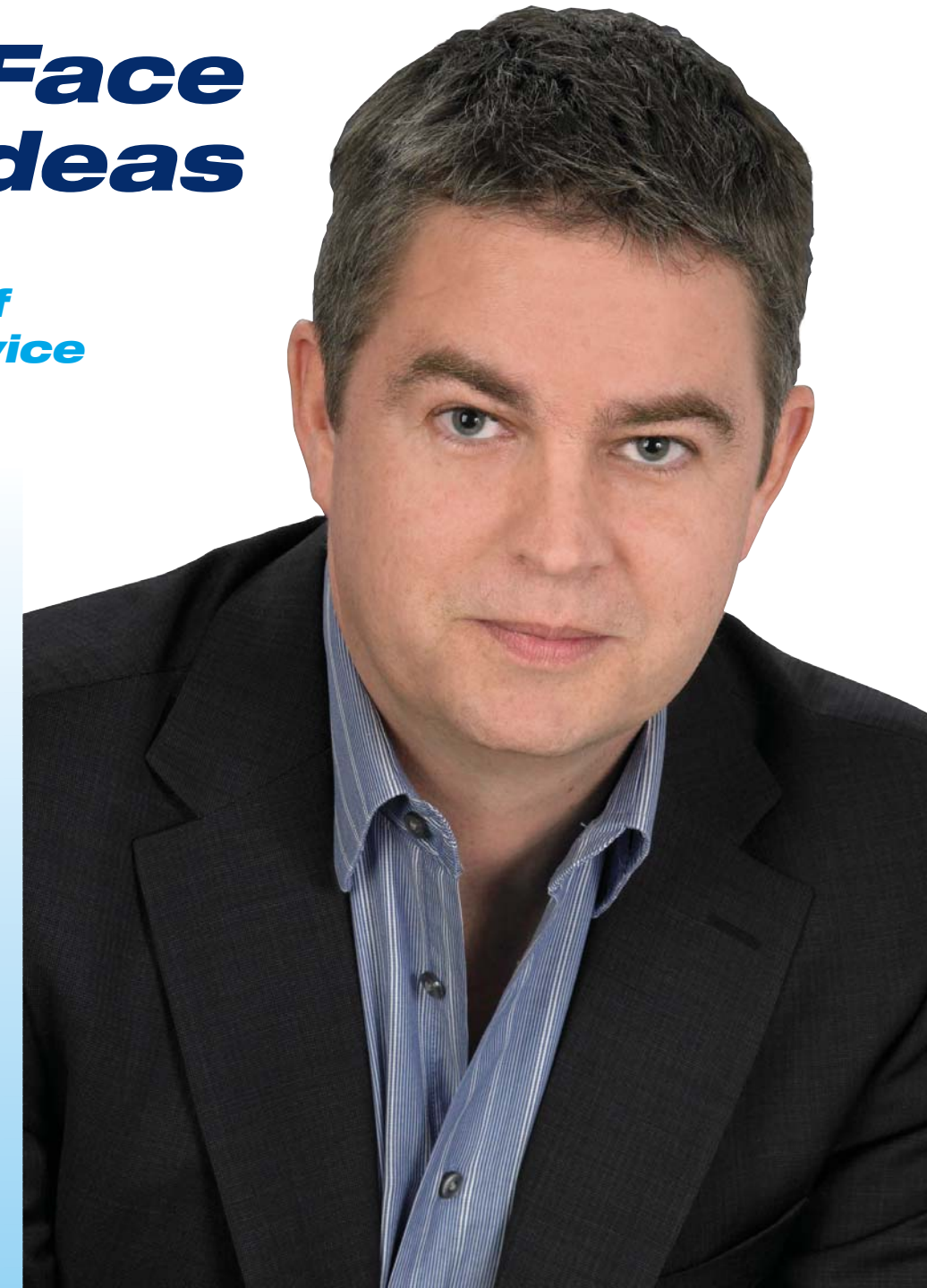
Local Elections 2009 – Issue January / February 2009

A New Face Fresh Ideas

**With a Proven
Track Record of
Community Service
and Hard Work**

Supporting:

- Senior Citizens;
- Children and Education;
- People Affected by Suicide;
- People with Disabilities;
- People affected by Sexual Abuse.



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People Centred Politics



I am taking this opportunity to introduce myself and give an overview of **some of the broader issues I believe in and stand for.**

My decision to enter the race for Dublin City Council came about as I was outraged by the recent Budget attacks by this Government on our young and elderly. I wanted to do more than complain and decided that I should offer people a credible alternative to the current status quo of party politics.

The Government Parties are so out of touch with the ordinary, decent citizen that it is shocking!

I have no family connection in politics whatsoever and I am a first time election candidate. I was selected on ability alone to run as the Independent candidate.

Our economy is now in recession. Vital services which were already under-resourced and inadequate and which should have been remedied during the Celtic Tiger years, will get unacceptably worse. It is just not good enough.

It is vital that a message is sent to all political parties and the government parties in particular that scarce resources must not be wasted and must be put to best use.

Crime

Serious crime is on the increase and I believe that the following strategies should be implemented:

- A numeric & visible increase of Gardai on the beat in local communities;
- The role of the Community Garda to be given more status within An Garda Síochána and more resources should be given to the Community Garda area;
- A top to bottom reform of the An Garda Síochána to be undertaken;
- Laws should be implemented consistently and our bail laws need an urgent and total overhaul;
- More options should be provided for our young people to make better and more enjoyable use of their spare time e.g we have no municipal swimming pool in our area;

- The provision and organisation of alternative leisure and sporting outlets including more use of the Arts e.g. music, drama, art;
- Additionally more resources and services should be made available to victims of crime.

Problems caused by alcohol and drugs have accelerated. Binge drinking is on the increase. The most recent Alcohol Bill should be binned, as the wants of vested interests in the drinks industry and Leinster House have taken precedence over the needs of the community.

The Bill really makes no attempt at tackling the problems caused by alcohol in our society. Industry self-regulation will not work. The availability of points of sale should be decreased instead of increased, there should be much tighter controls on advertising and higher enforceable penalties for those found guilty of selling alcohol to the under-aged.

Education



Over the past ten years, the fabric of schools has been enriched by many changes. Most notably there have been increased numbers of children with special needs attending mainstream schools and greater numbers of newcomer children with diverse needs in terms of language and culture. Without the backup of adequate resources such as a reduction in class size and the provision of specialist support teachers, these changes present challenges for addressing the needs of all children.

Children deserve the best. Teachers want to deliver the best. The Budget proposals militate against both. Many children needing individual support are not getting it and are being swallowed up into larger

classes and falling further behind. Some children with minor difficulties are not being identified. Brighter children are losing out too, as their teachers strive to help those with difficulties,

Some lateral thinking is required and simple cost-cutting measures, which don't withdraw the rights of children to a proper education, are easily achievable. e.g. Review lease and rental of prefabs (some schools are paying out up to €50,000 per year). Cease costly distribution of Dept of Ed. and Science publications to schools which cost €7.5 million in the past five years alone. Alternatively these publications could be accessed on the Department's website and thereby saving tax payer's money.

Disability

In the Budget, no reference was made to funding for additional respite or day residential services. At the moment, respite beds are being used as residential beds. This lack of respite care places a tremendous strain on families with children with disabilities. In the Dublin area, there are currently 240 parents over the age of 70 still

caring for their son or daughter at home. Most of these elderly parents live in North Dublin. This situation regarding respite care, along with many other issues relating to disability, is disgraceful and I intend to shout loudly for the rights of people with disability and their families.



Environment

Dublin Bay belongs to the people of Dublin and not to the Port Company. I have worked closely with Finian Mc Grath TD on all issues relating to Dublin Bay and I am totally opposed to the infill of the 52 acres. A decision from An Bord Pleanála on this matter is due in March 2009.

Many of the schools in our area have been awarded Green Schools Flags from Dublin City Council. The hard work and dedication which children, their teachers and whole school communities have put into achieving these flags is amazing. The impact of the learning from this initiative is huge and shouldn't be underestimated. Households too have made huge strides in relation to recycling. The challenge now is to make even more of an impact on the community's approach to waste, energy conservation and care for the environment.

Health

We should be aiming for excellence in quality of care and access for everyone irrespective of their means. People shouldn't have to wait for hours to be seen in an emergency department. People shouldn't have to wait in pain for elective operations such as joint replacements.

One of the areas we should be resourcing more, is care in the community. Patients with chronic conditions (i.e. long term conditions) such as bronchitis, diabetes, asthma, and heart failure could be

treated by multi disciplinary teams including doctors, advanced nurse practitioners, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and social services. These professionals could care for patients in less acute community hospitals and / or in their own homes.

This would impact on the service which could be provided in Accident and Emergency, as more vital acute hospital beds would be available and waiting time and quality of care would improve immeasurably.

Suicide

Over 600 people die annually in Ireland by suicide and Ireland has the fifth highest rate of suicide among its youth population (particularly males), in Europe. Further research into the underlying causes of suicide and serious attempts at prevention of suicide is required.

This requires earnest commitment on the part of Government.

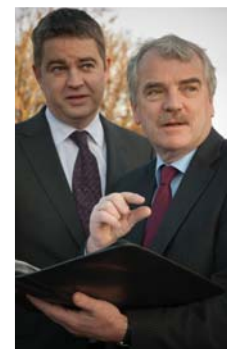
If anyone wishes to contact me regarding any issues relating to suicide, I'd be more than happy to hear from them.



Senior Citizens

Senior citizens have a right to access free health care. The fact that attempts were made by the Government parties to withdraw their Medical Cards was scandalous. The withdrawal of Finian Mc Grath TD's support for the Government, as well as the dignified manner in which senior citizen groups protested, resulted in the Government doing a u-turn and coming up with revised Medical Card proposals.

The confusion and fear experienced by senior citizens (including my own parents) was outrageous and was one of the main motivating factors for my decision to seek election. I will stand up for the rights of Senior Citizens and will work with them to address other issues such as pension provision, crime, fear and loneliness.



Finian McGrath T.D. (Independent)

I am so pleased and excited that Damian O'Farrell has decided to stand as an Independent Candidate in the June '09 local elections. Damian has been my Election Campaign Manager and a driving force within my team for our last 3 successful campaigns. Damian O'Farrell is also a close strategy and policy advisor of mine and was instrumental in my decision to withdraw my support from the Government. As is very evident in Damian's personal profile he is very much a

people centred person who has worked tirelessly serving the community in a voluntary capacity over many years including the Credit Union movement and Samaritans.

Damian O'Farrell is a person of the highest integrity and would make the best possible councillor this community could have.

Finian McGrath T.D.