



## Sliabh a' Mhadra N.S. News



Looking back on the term since September, we can be happy that our school has coped well with the challenges of the pandemic. Thanks to the outstanding co-operation of you the parents and the pupils, together with the wonderful work of all our Staff – Teachers, SNAs, Secretary and Cleaners – and the support of our Board of Management, we have managed to remain open and have arrived at the Christmas Holidays.

Here are some news items from another successful term.

**Parents' Association:** The Parents' Association held their AGM on 29<sup>th</sup> September. The following officers were elected:

**Chairperson:** Aileen Nolan

**Vice Chair:** Paul O'Connor

**Secretary:** Elaine Carey

**Assistant Secretary:** Tina Egan

**P.R.O.:** Aidan Boyle

**Treasurer:** Liz O'Leary

**Assistant Treasurer:** Lisa Flavin

We are very grateful to these parents who hit the ground running in September and have been so energetic and enthusiastic in their role. We are very lucky to be supported by such a positive and hard-working Parents' Association.

**Shoebbox Appeal:** Once again, the pupils of Sliabh a' Mhadra remembered those children less fortunate than themselves. Pupils brought in shoe boxes full of gifts for children in less well-off countries. We collected 99 shoe boxes. It was wonderful to see the kind hearted pupils bring their boxes out to the collecting van. Thank you to the parents who helped to prepare the boxes.

**Board of Management:**

We are very fortunate to have a strong Board of Management who guide and direct our school.

**Chairperson:** Muiris Ó Laoire

**Patron's Nominee:** Fr. Brendan Walsh

**Community Reps:** Ailish Segal and Gerard Slattery

**Staff Rep:** Cathal White

**Parents:** Nora Diggins and Gerald Lynch

**Principal:** Breda O'Dwyer

Nora Diggins will step down from the Board at Christmas as her youngest child has moved to Secondary School. Therefore, we will be holding elections in January to replace Nora. We wish to thank Nora sincerely for the work she has done since coming onto the Board. More information on finding a replacement for Nora will follow in January.

**Hallowe'en Fundraiser :** Pupils and staff dressed up in aid of CHI Hospitals at Temple Street, Crumlin and Connolly Urgent Care on October 22nd. We also held a Hallowe'en parade outdoors this year. An enjoyable day was had by all. We raised €390 for CHI Hospitals. We received a lovely letter from CHI Hospitals thanking us for our donation. Maith sibh!

**Green schools:** The school and pupils will be engaging in the Green Schools Programme this year. This two-year cycle will focus on Global Citizenship, Litter and Waste. At the end of the two years we will hopefully be awarded a new green schools flag to add to the previous green flags that have been awarded. The newly appointed Green Schools Committee will oversee the implementation of our action plan and help with raising awareness and informing classes of the work that needs to be done. A whole school day of action will take place in the final term of the year.

**Green Schools Committee:**

3<sup>rd</sup> class: Conor James, Kara Carey, Maya Nolan

4<sup>th</sup> class: Patrick Kirby, Siún Daly

5<sup>th</sup> class: Kyle O' Callaghan, Freya Forde

6<sup>th</sup> class: Niamh Condon, Sive Purcell

**Christmas Market:**

On Friday the 10<sup>th</sup> of December the Parents' Association hosted a very successful and enjoyable festive Christmas Market Day. The whole day was magical. We were lucky enough to be inundated with home-made crafts, gifts and baked goods to sell at our Markets supplied by our very talented children, parents and locals. Danny Goggin was also a big hit on the day as he kept us entertained with some brilliant festive songs. The money raised will be used towards ICT for our school. A big thank you to the Parents Association for organising such a fun filled day and a day the children will not forget. Míle buíochas to all of you parents who supported the market - whether you supplied baked goods or other items to be sold or you came along to the Market and bought items.

### **Service of Remembrance:**

We also had the blessing of Majella's 'Friendship Bench' on the day of our Christmas Markets. The bench was kindly donated to our school by the Men's Shed in Ballyduff and was painted by our 5<sup>th</sup> class students last year along with our SNAs, Catherine and Sarah. Everyone did such a great job and the bench looked beautiful. Fr. Brendan came to the school and blessed the bench during our service of Remembrance. 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class played Silent Night on their tin whistles and sang two Christmas songs during the service. They did an excellent job.

**Outside Coaches:** Giles O'Grady coached 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes every second Tuesday in Hurling and 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> classes had John Barry every second Thursday for football.

**Credit Union Art Competition:** The whole school took part in the Credit Union Art Competition which was organised by Cara Credit Union (as distinct from Clanmaurice Credit Union as in years gone by). We were in competition with schools in the Tralee, Killorglin and Castleisland areas as well as the local schools that were in the Clanmaurice area traditionally. Therefore, we were delighted to hear that Aoibheann Daly (6<sup>th</sup> Class) won 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize in the 11- 13 Age Category and that the following pupils were awarded Certificates of Merit:

Aodhán O'Connor (2<sup>nd</sup> class), Caoimhe O' Connor (2<sup>nd</sup> class), Caleb O'Rourke (4<sup>th</sup> class) and Lexi Rochford (5<sup>th</sup> Class) were also awarded Prizes.

Congratulations and well done to these talented pupils.

**Maths Week:** We participated in Maths week from 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> of October. Each class engaged in fun and practical activities in the classroom to encourage a love of Numeracy. The children played Maths bingo games, Maths games online, worked with shopping catalogues on a budget, made 2-D and 3-d shape creations and many more enjoyable activities. 6<sup>th</sup> class also engaged in a live maths quiz through the maths week website and the feedback was excellent.

**Science Week:** We celebrated Science Week 2021 in November with classes from Junior Infants to Sixth class partaking in a wide range of activities and experiments throughout the week.

The children engaged in a variety of experiments including making lava lamps, how to make raisins dance using carbonated water and how to make slime. As a Science STEM activity the children made paper chains using a limited amount of paper and time.

We watched many live science webinars during the week including a webinar on forces from scientists in MTU. We borrowed the 'Tom Crean Box' from the museum which included a huge treasure chest full of navigational equipment and some science resources. The children had a fantastic week and we look forward to Science Week 2022!

#### **Healthy Eating Week and Food Dudes:**

Our Annual Healthy Eating Week was held on October 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> 2021. The Food Dudes Programme was reintroduced to our pupils. Each child received a portion of fruit and vegetables to sample each day. The school was supplied with healthy eating DVD episodes and curriculum-based activities. An enjoyable week was had by all!

#### **Cash for Clobber:**

On Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> October we held an old clothes collection. We received a cheque for €424. We would like to thank everyone who donated bags of old clothes. It was a great success.

#### **Christmas Cards:**

The children had the opportunity to design their own Christmas cards this year for families and friends. Their drawings and designs were printed on the cards making them very individual to each child. Thank you to the Parents' Association for organising this.

### **Ballyduff GAA:**

The Ballyduff Minors had a very successful year this year both in hurling and football. In September, they won the 2021 County Minor Hurling Championship and more recently they won the North Kerry Football Championship. There was great excitement when we welcomed both teams to our school. It was great to see many of our past pupils on the successful teams. The children were extra happy when some team members announced there was no homework that night.

### **Parent/Teacher Meetings**

Parent /Teacher Meetings were once again held over the phone on the week of 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> of November. We hope you found them helpful. If you ever need to contact your child's teacher, just drop an e-mail to them. Their e-mail address is easy to figure out. Mine is [breda.odwyer@sliabhamhadra.ie](mailto:breda.odwyer@sliabhamhadra.ie) and the other teachers are in a similar format.

### **Santa Claus:**

There was great excitement when Santa visited the school on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> of December and gave every child a selection box. The event was captured on camera by a photographer from The Kerryman.

### **Sacraments**

3<sup>rd</sup> Class received their First Holy Communion in September, while the 6<sup>th</sup> Class of 2021 were confirmed by Fr. Brendan in October. 2<sup>nd</sup> Class received the Sacrament of Penance at school yesterday, 21<sup>st</sup> December.

### **Carbon Dioxide (CO2) Monitors**

In October the Department of Education provided the school with 5 CO2 Monitors to measure the amount of CO2 in the classroom. The Board of Management provided funding for three more so that there could be one in every classroom and also in the Special Education Rooms. The monitors remind us when to freshen up the atmosphere, whether it is by opening windows and doors or by evacuating the room for a five minute break. Classrooms can be quite cold and staff and pupils frequently have to wear coats.

## **Air Purifiers**

A few weeks ago we received a very pleasant surprise, when Berth Sheehy of Energywise Ireland arrived at the school with six Daikan Air Purifiers. To our astonishment, he announced that he was **donating** them **free** of charge to the school! He provided one for each classroom. Berth and his wife, Rosemarie, run the very successful company Energywise Ireland and have three children attending our school. They felt that by providing the Air Purifiers that it would offer another layer of protection to pupils and staff. These Air Purifiers contain Hepa Filters which trap 99.97% of particles that are 0.3 microns or larger in size. We are told that the smallest objects that the human eye can see are around 70 microns. The idea is that the Hepa Filter will trap and kill the viruses circulating in the classroom. This is of great benefit to the school community as it means that although we still have to keep the CO2 levels as low as possible, we know that if we fail to do it that the viruses in the air will be caught by the air purifier. Thanks to Energywise Ireland and to Berth and Rosemarie, we were among the first schools in the country to have a Hepa Filter in every classroom. We cannot thank them enough for their very generous gift to Sliabh a' Mhadra N.S.

## **Mask Wearing**

The Department of Education introduced a new directive recently requesting that all pupils from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Class wear masks. Our pupils adapted very quickly and co-operated with this rule from the beginning. A little bag for your child to keep their mask in while they go out to play is necessary. A zip lock bag will suffice – although I have seen other very handy, sealable bags by some pupils. In the event of your child forgetting their mask, we have a small quantity of children's masks and we can provide the child with one of these.

## **Reading**

As all of you know, the importance of Reading for our children cannot be overstated. I would appeal to you to encourage your child to set aside some quiet time to read every day over the holidays. From comics to newspapers and novels to magazines, any type of reading is beneficial. Senior pupils will read themselves while younger pupils will need to engage in shared reading or have a story read to them. Books make wonderful presents at Christmas time.

## **Beannachtaí na Nollag**

On behalf of the Staff and myself, may I wish you a very happy, enjoyable and safe Christmas. Although it will be a quieter Christmas with a limit on the number of contacts we may have and restrictions on the hospitality sector, I hope you have the opportunity to relax with your loved ones and that we will all be able to return to school on Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2022, refreshed and ready for a new term.

*Nollaig Shona agus Athbhliain faoi mhaise daoibh go léir.*

*Le gach dea-ghuí.*

***Breda O'Dwyer***