

## Track Record – Transparency in Local Government

The principles of open and accountable governance have informed my work as a public representative. I have outlined on the front page of this leaflet my work as a board member of the KWETB. Here is a small sample of other areas in which I have sought transparency and accountability.

- **The Riverbank County Arts Centre** - over the last number of years I have highlighted lapses in the governance of the County Arts Centre. I have raised concerns about conflicts of interest in the awarding of contracts and about a €63,000 loan recorded in the Arts centre accounts as a loan from the Council - a loan the Council say did not exist. **There has been no proper explanation or accountability for this €63,000 error.**
- **Kildare Town Swimming pool fund** - I have worked with Kildare Town residents to raise and report their concerns to the Charities Regulator regarding a decades old swimming pool fund reported to amount to approx €150,000. The status of the fund is being reviewed by the Charities Regulator.
- **Webcasting** - More than any other single change, webcasting of all public council meetings would significantly improve the transparency and accountability of local government and with it the fairness and effectiveness of how it administers public funds. After a sustained campaign to introduce webcasting of council meetings, **I received the support of a majority of the council to finally introduce webcasting. I would support the introduction of Webcasting of public meetings of all local authorities.**
- **Social Housing** - I have worked with residents of Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) in Newbridge, Kildare Town and Monasterevin to expose on a national level the governance issues arising in their housing associations. The governance of AHBs is a national issue.



Fiona with Kildare County U14s

### Fiona's Background & Interests

Fiona trained as a **general nurse** in NUH Galway. She subsequently completed a first class honours degree in **Law and Politics at NUIG**. This was followed by an **MSc in Communications, Advertising, and Marketing at NUI Jordanstown**. She brings with her a wealth of experience from;

- **The private sector** - ran her own company Privateseller.ie for ten years.
- **The voluntary sector** - Corporate Marketing Manager for Cerebral Palsy Ireland with responsibility for the nationwide rebranding from Cerebral Palsy Ireland to Enable Ireland.
- **The public sector** - originally trained and worked as a nurse and for the last five and a half years as a public representative with Kildare County Council.

Fiona is married to Bernard Healy, originally from **Kilcullen** who is a well known GP working at the coal-face of the healthcare system at **Moorefield Medical Centre** in Newbridge for almost 20 years. The family are involved in lots of different activities and clubs in the community including football, soccer, rugby and boxing. Fiona is a member of the management team for the LGFA Girls U14 County team. She recently completed her term as a member of the board of Sensational Kids and Chaired their Governance Committee.



With board members and CE of Sensational Kids



Family time - Fiona with her husband Bernard, son Ryan and daughters Erin and Freya

## Broadcasting & Podcasting

Fiona has presented her own show on Dublin City FM, has reported for TV3's Midweek Show and is a regular contributor for over 10 years to TV3s Midday Show/ Virgin Media's Elaine Show. Started recently, her 'Straight Talking with Fiona Mc' is already attracting very positive feedback from listeners.



### Straight talking with Fiona Mc



Podcast with Kildare Ladies Capt Grace Clifford re women in sport



With Cormac Nugent of Extinction Rebellion Kildare



With security analyst and former Defence Forces captain Tom Clonan

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  - iTunes/Spotify Podcast
- Straight Talking With Fiona Mc

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# Cllr. FIONA McLOUGHLIN HEALY

## INDEPENDENT

### Dear Constituent

During my campaign for LE14, I promised a new type of local politics based on principles of transparency and accountability. After over five years as a public representative I believe, more than ever before, that good governance is key to ensuring value for money, effectiveness and fairness in the distribution of public monies. It is an absolute necessity whether of Kildare County Council, the Education and Training sector, the FAI or the National Children's Hospital.

These principles have informed my work as a councillor. An example of this has been my role on the Board of the Kildare Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB) to which I was nominated by my Council colleagues in 2014. The KWETB is an organisation with an annual budget of over €100million, 25 schools across Kildare and Wicklow, 23,000 students and over 2,500 members of staff. From 2014 I started asking questions and raising concerns about the governance of the KWETB, including the process for selecting members; to the main Board; to the 25 school boards of management; to the interview and procurement panels. In 2017 the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) conducted an investigation of the 2015 accounts and found serious lapses in procurement and other issues including the use of 5 star hotels for staff meetings.



Some of these issues are currently under investigation by the Garda Economic Crime Bureau. As a former board member I was, and am proud of the teaching and auxiliary staff who continued to focus on their amazing students during a very difficult time. I particularly want to thank those who though fearful of speaking out brought issues to my attention. I hope that lessons learned in Kildare and Wicklow will impact on the governance of Education and Training Boards across the country.

One thing is for sure, the poll-topping vote I received in the Local Elections last May was not a vote for the status quo. It was a clear mandate to continue to challenge the unquestioning consensus politics that has pervaded the Kildare South constituency for decades, to the detriment of a large portion of its constituents. I would ask you to please consider giving me your number one to go on and represent you in the Dail not on the basis of enthusiastic election promises, rarely delivered, but on the basis of a track record in holding local government to account for their effectiveness in building sustainable communities and how and where they spend public funds.

With your help, a strong and truly independent voice will play a critical role in the next Dail and in the future development of the Kildare South constituency. Let's build on what we have started together, the gradual but important transformation of politics in the Kildare South constituency.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir

Fiona

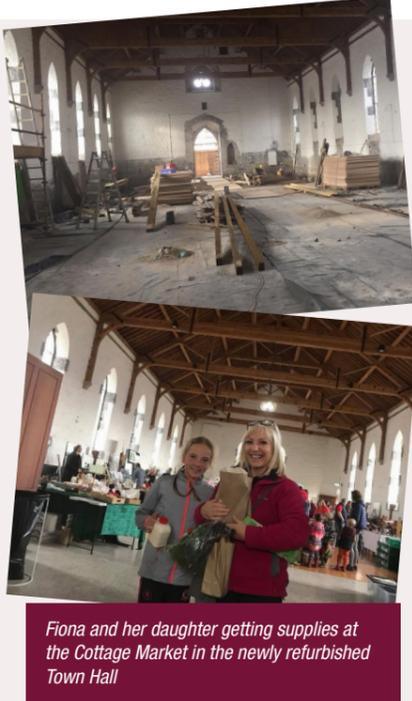


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• Courage • Accountability • Conviction



## Track Record - As A Local Public Representative



Fiona and her daughter getting supplies at the Cottage Market in the newly refurbished Town Hall

### Sustainable Communities need Social amenities and Youth Facilities

Shortly after first getting elected Fiona started a campaign to 1) complete the refurbishment of the old Town Hall in Newbridge and 2) to deliver a long-awaited and much needed skatepark for young people in the area. At the time Newbridge was one of the largest towns in Ireland that did not have its own town hall. And the decade long campaign for a skatepark had stalled. **The Kildare South constituency has one of the highest youth populations in the country. And yet we have a dearth of youth facilities in towns and villages across the constituency.** After a protracted campaign Newbridge Skatepark was officially opened in April 2019. It has already been a phenomenal success with young and old dropping phones and X-boxes to take to their skates and scooters! Newbridge Town Hall is now home to lots of community events and groups and is helping grow sustainable communities including the very popular and successful Newbridge Cottage Market.

### Protecting and Promoting Our Natural Environment, Greenways and Blueways

The Curragh Plains is a truly unique natural amenity of immense environmental, archaeological, cultural and historical significance. After 5 years of consistently highlighting the failure of the government and in particular of the Minister of Defence to deal with the littering, scrambling, overgrazing, dumping and illegal encampments on this unique amenity, significant funding was finally agreed in December 2019 between the Council and the Dept of Defence for a land management plan. And not before time. To quote Dr John Feehan at a November 2019 seminar on the Curragh Plains, the degradation of the Curragh Plains was a crisis when the task force first reported in 1998 but now 'nothing less than the mobilisation of real community concern for the Curragh is enough'. At this seminar we officially launched "The Story of The Curragh" Audio trail guide. This was an initiative Curragh Plains resident and advocate Mark Weld and I brought to Kildare County Council Heritage Officer, Bridget Loughlin. My thanks to the community of people who contributed to provide information about the Curragh's history, flora and fauna, archaeology, myths and legends, military history, grazing, equine industry and more. The Curragh Plains is an example of an environmental amenity that needs to be protected and managed well if we are to benefit in a sustainable way from the tourism opportunities offered by plans for Greenways and Blueways around the constituency.



### Public Transport and Cycle Infrastructure – Kilcullen, Caragh, Newbridge, Monasterevin

If we are serious about the climate crisis that has been declared we must offer safe inexpensive alternatives to cars. I want to extend my campaign to deliver new cycle lanes, local link bus services and bus shelters and for safe pedestrian routes to schools. My proposal that the council track the assessment and delivery of all requests for cycle lanes provides a way forward for all local authorities nationwide to measure and report on their progress in relation to the delivery of safe cycle lanes.

I have lobbied the NTA to consider all options open to them to deliver extra rail carriages for commuters to address overcrowding on trains from Portarlinton and Kildare and the punitive cost of commuter tickets from Newbridge. The NTA committed to consider all options, including the possibility of sourcing of safe, second hand rail carriages rather than waiting for the delivery of new carriages at some point after 2021.



Delivering a petition for a cycle lane between Caragh and Naas to the Council



With area engineer outside Scoil Eimhin Naofa Monasterevin

## Policy Priorities

### Accountability in Government

- Robust system of governance controls on all major capital projects to ensure cost overruns such as the National Children's Hospital do not occur again
- Introduction of strict criteria for appointment to the **Boards of publicly funded bodies** to ensure that adequately trained and qualified people only, are appointed to these boards. And board members to **serve no more than two terms**
- If elected, regular public meetings/forums in the Kildare South Constituency to hold me accountable
- Introduction of **webcasting of all Local Authority** public meetings
- **Strengthening of Freedom of Information Act** to ensure greater transparency and accountability in decisions made by the institutions of the State.



Ongoing traffic congestion in Athy

### Transport and Sustainable Development Policy

- Increased subvention for our Public Transport Services
- **Additional rolling stock** to provide capacity on train services serving the towns in the constituency
- Information sharing between councils working on sustainable development projects
- Will seek a substantial increase in **funding for a network of cycle lanes and cycle facilities** in the main towns in the Kildare South constituency
- Will seek to have the Kildare South constituency being designated as **"Clean Tech/ Green Energy Hub"**
- Seek engagement and input from **Land Development Agency** to harness the full potential of the main urban centres in the Kildare South constituency.



Portarlinton Town Centre

### Policy on the Environment and Climate Action

- More **ambitious targets for renewable energy generation**
- Increased ambition on climate targets for 2030
- Along with support for just transition for Bord Na Mona workers support for all workers impacted by the transition to cleaner and renewable energy sources
- Requirement that all Local Authorities sign up to the **All Ireland Pollinator Plan**
- Additional tax incentives for landowners/farmers to convert some of their land use from **farming to forestry**
- Public consultation for a long-term plan to deal with the inevitable fall off in tax receipts raised from non-renewable energy sales.

### Health

- The introduction of **well-being budgeting to measure long lasting impact of policy measures on quality of people's lives**
- Additional funding and resources for **mental health services** in the constituency
- Moving our health service towards far **greater use of technology** to reduce bureaucracy and paperwork
- Implementation of Sláintecare
- Greater **investment in Primary and Community Care.**

### Education & Apprenticeships

- Increase in funding and supports for ASD (Autism Support) units in the constituency
- Additional **funding for early intervention supports** in primary schools
- Opening of a second level Educate Together school in Kildare South in the Newbridge/ Kildare area
- Significant expansion in **co-operation with businesses of the apprenticeship programmes** in the State to the non-trade sector
- Increase in school places in locations of Kildare South that are under severe pressure.
- A National social media education policy to help students and teachers manage the use of devices and social media Apps to help curb the intrusion of devices on mental health.

### Policing & Defence

- Fairer allocation and distribution of Gardaí to the Kildare South Constituency
- A Community Policing Unit and Drugs Unit for Newbridge Garda Station
- I support an independent statutory pay review body to review the pay and conditions for our Defence Forces.



Protesting for pay restoration for our Defence Forces

### Housing

- Significant increase in construction of social and affordable housing by Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies to address the housing and homelessness crisis
- Seek support from the Land Development Agency (LDA) for development on state lands of sustainable communities in urban areas of the Kildare South constituency where the problems are most acute
- Regulation and oversight of Approved Housing Bodies (AHB's).

### Small Business Tax Policy - Regeneration of towns and villages

- **Reduce the headline rate of Capital Gains Tax to 22%** to make investment in small businesses more attractive
- Increases in funding from the **National Fund Levy to be ring fenced for subsidised staff training** through the Skillnet programme
- Increase the **Earned Income Tax Credit for the self-employed to equal the PAYE Tax Credit.**
- Simplify and reduce cost for SMEs of the existing Research and Development Tax Credit regime
- Local authorities have been using commercial rates to balance their books as evidenced by significant increases. This is not sustainable. We need the **Independent Valuation office valuing premises not local authorities**
- Simplify the current Keep Scheme for small to medium enterprises.
- More funding from the URDF and the Rural Development Fund for the constituency

Follow my campaign on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter and if you would like to help #TeamFMH you can contact me at fiona@fmcloughlinhealy.ie or call 086 781 1012

VOTE  
NO. 1