



St. Colman's NS

# It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like a St. Colman's Christmas!

The lead up to Christmas is always a very exciting time in St. Colman's. This year is extra special as we celebrate the return of many of our much loved school traditions. The little and not so little elves have been extremely busy over the last number of weeks making crafts, decorating, learning lines and practising their songs and music to make this Christmas one to remember.

Kick starting the festivities is our Christmas Fair on Sunday the 4th of December followed by our school choir's performance with Mullingar Choral Society that evening in the Cathedral.

Our annual Christmas Carol Service is also making

a welcome return to St. Paul's on the 20th and the school hall will once again be filled with laughter and song with a host of heartwarming Christmas plays taking place from the 14th onwards.

I would like to thank our amazing staff, pupils and volunteers from our Parents Association for all their hard work over the last number of weeks in order to make all of this possible.

We are delighted to welcome our families back into the school and hope you can join us for some of these wonderful events.

I look forward to seeing you in the days ahead.

**Ger Beehan, Principal**





# Christmas Festivities at St. Colman's

## Important Dates for Your Calendar

### **Sunday 4th December - 11am - Christmas Fair, Cake Sale and Raffle.**

Join the whole school community for a wonderful festive morning in the school following the 10.30 Mass in St. Paul's. **Visit Santa**, enjoy pancakes from our crêpe stall.... have a good laugh at our Photo Booth.... pick up small gifts for granny, aunties, a neighbour or friend at our craft stalls.... Enjoy a coffee with friends and other parents. There'll be plenty of games and a rare chance to pelt a teacher with a snowball.

For the **Cake Sale** please get **making and baking** as we always have a wonderful array of homemade buns cakes desserts and breads. The school will be open from 9.30am on Sunday morning to drop off your baking.

### **Sunday 4th December - Cathedral Choral Society Carol Service**

St. Colman's Choir will sing at the Cathedral Carol Service on **Sunday 4th December at 7pm.**

### **Christmas Plays in St. Colman's**

**Wednesday 14th** 10.30am Ms. O'Dowd & Mrs. Deane's 4th Class Play

12:30pm Mrs. Lyons' 4th Class Play

**Thursday 15th** 9:15am Ms. Kelly's Junior Infants Play

10:45am Mrs. Walter's Junior Infants Play

12:00pm Ms. Costello's Junior Infants Play

1:15pm Mrs. Healy Donoghue's 2nd Class Play

**Friday 16th** 10am Ms. Casey's Senior Infants Play

11:30am Ms. Marren's Senior Infants Play

1:00pm Ms. Duffy's 2nd Class Play

**Monday 19th** 10am Mr. Shaw's 4th Class Play

12:00pm Mrs. Ginnell's 1st Class Play

1:30pm Ms. Kelly's 1st Class Play

**Tuesday 20th** 1:15pm Mrs. Gilligan's 5th Class Play

### **St. Colman's Carol Service**

**Tuesday 20th December:** All pupils from St. Colman's invite you their parents, grandparents, relatives, neighbours and friends for our joyful Carol Service in **St. Paul's on Tuesday 20th December at 11am.** We hope you will join with our choir, school orchestra readers and children in the pageant for a wonderful child-friendly, prayerful start to Christmas week.

**Wednesday 21st December** - School closes for Christmas holidays at 12 noon.

**Thursday 5th January 2023** - School reopens.



# So far this term

## Students Council news

The elections are over, the votes have been counted and the new student council members have been chosen.

We were delighted to welcome Minister Peter Burke, Deputy Robert Troy, Councillor Mick Dollard and Councillor Aoife Davitt to the school recently to take part in the presentation of badges to the newly elected members.

Ms Sinead Casserly, a colleague of Minister Burke, also attended.

Sinead is a past pupil and was in one of the first classes in the school back when it was founded.

Another special visitor was Mrs Mary Mulcair who was one of the original group who established the Student Council in April 2019.



## Halloween dress-up fundraiser

There was a huge response to our non-uniform/Halloween dress up day before mid-term. Well done to the students council for organising this and thanks to all who contributed to this fundraiser for a local girl Lucy Thompson. The final figure raised was over €1200.





## Christmas Shoebox Appeal generosity

Mrs Margaret Coyle, a representative from Team Hope, called to the school after the mid-term break to collect donations for the Christmas Shoebox Appeal. She was delighted with the huge array of donations that awaited her. She acknowledged that our Student Council members had worked hard organising the collection of the items from the classrooms and she was hugely thankful to all in St. Colman's for their generosity.



## Music lessons have resumed

We are delighted that Music lessons have resumed in the school. Third class are all learning the ukulele while some children from fourth class up are learning guitar with Justin

Ryan. Ms Duffy, Ms Casey and Ms Morris have been giving lessons in tin whistle, fiddle and violin. This is a great opportunity for the children and they are really enjoying it.



## Parents Association News

At a recent Parents Association meeting a new committee was elected. We are delighted that Ann Comiskey will be continuing in her role as Secretary while Eileen Mills has been elected as Treasurer and Dearbhla O'Sullivan takes up the position of Chairperson for the year.

We are extremely grateful to our outgoing members, Chairperson Barbara Judge and Treasurer Emer Mulvaney for all their hard work

and dedication.

We wish our new committee well for the year ahead. As the saying goes "Many hands makes light work!" so we encourage parents to come along to the some of meetings and get involved if possible.

The Parents Association are currently busy organising our Christmas Fair which will take place on Sunday December 4th from 11am-1pm so SAVE THE DATE.

## Christmas Fair

In preparation for the Christmas Fair a few parents have begun a craft club with children from fourth class along with a few of their siblings. The children really enjoyed their first sessions and you can look forward to having the opportunity to buy some beautiful handmade crafts on December 4th.



## Welcome to our new Junior Infants

Say hello to the newest additions to the St. Colman's family. Mrs Walters, Ms. Kelly and Ms. Costello all report that they have settled in really well and we are looking forward to seeing them all on stage in the coming weeks for their Christmas plays.





# Some news from last term

## Farewell and thank you to Principal Mary Garvey

It was with a heavy heart that we bade farewell to our wonderful Principal, Mrs Mary Garvey, in April of this year.

Mrs Garvey has been a pivotal figure in St. Colman's for 38 years and she will be sorely missed by all who were lucky enough to know her.

Mrs Garvey began as a substitute teacher in St. Colman's in 1981. She went on to have her teaching practice with us in 1982 and 1983 and then, on September 3rd 1984, Mrs Garvey joined the permanent staff of St. Colman's N.S.

The first class she taught was second class, but during her time as a teacher she has taught every class level and has spent time in Special Education. She has been instrumental in bringing many educational initiatives to the school which have enhanced every classroom.

In 2000, Mrs Garvey became Deputy Principal working alongside Mrs O'Sullivan. Mrs Garvey took this new role seriously and continued working to ensure that every classroom was equipped with all the necessary resources to help children of all abilities.

Mrs Garvey always had a keen interest in helping children with additional needs and it was during this time as Deputy Principal, that she stepped things up a gear by researching new approaches that would respond to the diversity of needs that are found in classrooms today.

When Mrs O'Sullivan retired in December 2010, everyone waited with bated breath to see who her successor would be. The news that it was Mrs Garvey was greeted with delight.

She took up the role in January 2011 and from that first day right up until this April, Mrs Garvey has worked tirelessly to



improve all aspects of school life for the students and their families, staff and the extended school community. At all times, Mrs Garvey endeavoured to make every child feel welcome and experience a sense of belonging.

She strived to remove any and all barriers to enable every student to achieve the maximum benefit from their schooling.

SNA Trish Murphy chatted with some of the students in last year's fourth class and asked them what comes to mind when they think of Mrs Garvey.

There was no shortage of replies... caring, helpful, choose time, Christmas fair, Communion parties, graduation night, stories and Gaelige over the intercom, dressing up as a witch on Halloween, bouncy castles, amazing school tours, good sense of humour, ice cream van, playground markings, 5K garden party and The Big Sing.

The replies just kept coming, which only goes to prove how much everyone loved Mrs Garvey.

A week of festivities in the school, including classroom visits, a garden party for parents and families and a fun day for all school pupils, ended with a Mass held in St Paul's Church on the Friday morning, officiated by Fr Phil Gaffney.

Students, staff, parents, past pupils, former staff and well wishers gathered to wish Mrs Garvey all the best, as she enters the next chapter of her life.

Many contributed to the celebration, all with kind words to say. Our school choir sang some very well chosen hymns and songs that were special to Mrs Garvey. As the Mass drew to a close, everyone sang a St. Colman's version of 'Walking on Sunshine'.

This fantastic fun-filled and sometimes emotional week culminated in a loud and cheerful send off, when all the children and staff gathered outside the school.

A guard of honour was created by the fifth and sixth classes and Mrs Garvey left in her newly decorated car to the cheers and applause of the crowd!



# Colman's joins in Fleadh fun and already planning for second year!

STUDENTS, staff, family and friends of St. Colman's joined forces to celebrate the All Ireland Fleadh Cheoil's homecoming to Mullingar this year.

The All Ireland Fleadh returned to Mullingar in August, in what was a welcome return to the place where Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann was founded in 1951, bringing half a million visitors to the town.

St. Colman's NS marked the event in June with a series of musical performances, presentations and a fundraiser.

Organisers Ms. Sinead Duffy and Ms. Bríd Clarke reeled in talented members of the wider school community for the events.

A traditional music concert was performed for every class in the school. Trad talent on show included Philip Clarke on piano accordion, Olive Kilbane on fiddle, Noel Battle on harmonica, Ms. Sinead Duffy on piano, Ms. Bríd Clarke on céilí drums and Ms. Aine Casey on fiddle. Their selection of reels, jigs and hornpipes showcased the best of trad music for each child from Junior Infants up to Sixth Class. Talented pupils who performed in this concert were Irish dancers, Amy from last year's fifth class, and Brooke and Ali from last year's second class, as well as Darragh McCabe from last year's fifth class who played guitar.

The following day was another showcase, with Joe Connaire chairperson of Westmeath Comhaltas and the Fleadh Executive Committee, and All Ireland Fleadh toppers, his daughter Ellen on tin whistle and Irish dancing, Aoife Dunleavy on banjo, Anna Dunleavy on guitar, and St. Colman's SNA June Shanley on sean nós dancing.

There was a display of Irish traditional musical instruments and Ms. Clarke organised a

quiz and presentation which was delivered throughout every classroom in the school.

A non-uniform day was organised with funds raised going to the Fleadh, and throughout the week, events had children and staff clapping their hands and tapping their feet.

"Hopefully we have inspired some children to take up Irish music and dancing", said Ms. Clarke and Ms. Duffy. "We hope it's the first of many."





# Colman's boys take home Cumann na mBunscol trophy

A St. Colman's NS, Mullingar panel laden with talent was in spectacular form in the 2022 Division 2 hurling final at TEG Cusack Park, with a second half hat-trick from Manus Kelly and a superb displays from captains Jack Connaughton and Eoghan Beehan earning the school its first title in a decade.

Gallant St Michael's NS, Castletown Geoghegan, whose never-say-die spirit was epitomised by captain Billy Whelan and top scorer Daniel Masterson, were unfortunate to meet such a well-drilled and physically imposing side, who would have given Division 1 opposition a

run for their money. St. Colman's led 2-10 to 0-1 at half-time, with goals from Eamonn Gannon and Eoghan Beehan complemented by points from Connaughton (0-4), Cian Matthews Tyrrell (0-2). Beehan, who had 1-3 in total in the first half, scored the pick of the goals, rifling the sliothar home on 17 minutes.

The Mullingar school introduced a raft of subs in the second half, but they seemed to be as strong as the starters. After play resumed, Connaughton found the net within seconds, but it was sub Manus Kelly who caught the eye with a scintillating hattrick. The best of these

goals came on 39 minutes, when he smashed to the net after an inch-perfect ball from Gannon.

Jack Devine (0-2), Matthews Tyrrell and Cillian Breslin also found their range for the winners, while for Castletown, captain Billy Whelan picked off two decent scores. But from midway through the first half, there was only going to be one winner here, and at full-time Westmeath Cumann na mBunscol chairman Derek Butler presented the trophy to St. Colman's joint captains Eoghan Beehan and Jack Connaughton.

**Scorers** – St. Colman's NS: M Kelly 3-1, J Con-

naughton 1-5 (0-1f), E Beehan 1-3 (0-2f), C Matthews Tyrrell 0-4, E Gannon 1-1, J Devine 0-2, C Breslin 0-1. St Michael's NS: D Masterson 0-3 (1f), B Whelan 0-2.

St. Colman's NS, Mullingar panel: Alex Cybula, Harry Tilson, Michael Brennan, Mark Gallagher, Cian Matthews Tyrrell, Eoghan Beehan (joint capt.), Conor Walsh, Jack Devine, Jack Connaughton (joint capt.), Eamonn Gannon, Cillian Breslin, Scott Sweeney, Jack Daly, Manus Kelly, David Connell, Theo Kelly, Shay Leavy, Andy Sinnott.

**Player of the match:** Jack Connaughton, St. Colman's NS.





# The wheel deal to mark bike week!

NATIONAL Bike Week 2022 took place from 14-22nd May with Cycle on Wednesday (COW) day on the 18th. St. Colman's NS got on board this initiative thanks to continued funding and support from Westmeath Sports Partnership which helped to get the wheels in motion.

A large number of pupils at St. Colman's made a huge effort to cycle to school on COW day - indeed many children cycled all week.

Also as part of the week-long initiative, St. Colman's held a 'Design Your Own Bike' Colouring Competition for children of Junior Infants through to Second Class. The junior end of the school was buzzing with creativity as budding artists and designers came up with imaginative illustrations of the bikes of their dreams. We had bikes that could fly, had supersonic abilities, massage chairs, Ipad's and much more. There were prizes for the best entries in each class.

National Bike Week initiatives were organised by St. Colman's Active Schools Committee which is made up of children from third to sixth classes and staff.

National Bike Week is a celebration of active travel, sustainable transport and simply the joys of cycling a bike! It is organised in partnership with the National Transport Authority.





# First Holy Communicants celebrate their special day in style

On Saturday 14th May, 56 then second class pupils from St. Colman's received their First Holy Communion, as their families, teachers and staff joined them in St. Paul's Church to celebrate with them. The boys and girls from Ms. Orla Ginnell and Ms. Sinead Duffy's classes, looking beautiful in their dresses and suits, enjoyed this spiritual experience in the church before dispersing to mark the milestone occasion with their families. Fr. Phil Gaffney, who celebrated Mass along with Fr. Andrew, expressed admiration for how well the children responded throughout the Mass and how well they knew their prayers.

The Mass was enhanced by the music of the St. Colman's Choir from fourth, fifth and sixth classes. Pupils Darragh McCabe from the then fifth class played guitar and Jacob Lacowski from the then sixth class played violin. From the teaching staff, Ms. Emer Morris conducted and played violin, Ms. Aine Casey played violin and Ms. Rachel Nugent piano.



The First Holy Communicants all joined together in an uplifting performance of The Eucharist Song at the end of the ceremony. Ms. Ginnell and Ms. Duffy had been preparing students for the sacrament with weekly trips to St. Paul's for Mass since Christmas and daily visits in the weeks beforehand, teaching them prayers and responses and how to be respectful

at Mass. SNA June Shanley had also been involved in preparation and was present on the day along with Principal Mr. Ger Beehan. On the following Monday, the boys and girls wore their Communion clothes to school, attended morning Mass in St. Paul's and celebrated afterwards with a party at school.



# Local Scientist visits 3rd class

Report by Seán Nugent and Caoimhe Kevlihan

On Wednesday 18 of May, Ms Skelly organised an interesting visit to the school by Dale Treadwell, who works with Midlands Science. He spent the day giving an interesting science talk to the then 3rd classes.

He started off by showing us some magnifying containers, each one holding different bugs – for example a millipede, a lady bug and a spring-bug. We also discussed the butterfly life cycle and watched a video about the importance of bees. Then we went outside to a tree beside the running track and Dale showed us how to find insects by shaking trees. We were lucky to find insects – mites and spiders.



Next he showed us a hazel and blackthorn sticks, which were used for storytelling and he also went through the book he wrote about 'Robby Robin is not in a Christmas Mood' which covers all the native Irish birds. The game we played outside was Marco Polo, which was so much fun, and also we built a dome out of big and small sticks that we had. Dale showed us how to build a dome and we had to work as a team. The Wallace's star was used to help build it. As a class, this was our favourite



part of the whole day. Finally, we watched a video inside the classroom while Dale was disassembling the Dome. The video was about prehistoric animals and plants, which was fascinating. My favourite animals in the video were all the different dinosaurs and there were many plants such as tree ferns, horse tails and Wallace's pine. Overall, the day was a total success! All classes really enjoyed their day.





# Our 10 Tips for Greener Living

1. Recycle batteries; supermarkets and all electronic shops, have battery collection bins.
  2. Always remember to throw your litter in the bin.
  3. Cardboard boxes, old copies and newspaper can all be recycled.
  4. Using straws is unnecessary and very damaging to our environment.
  5. Game consoles/ TVs and computers left on standby waste electricity – remember to turn them off.
  6. Switch off all appliances when not in use to conserve electricity.
  7. Make sure you don't litter – throw your litter in the bin.
  8. Do not dump dirty takeaway containers or unrinsed milk cartons in the recycling bin.
  9. Remember to turn off lights in rooms when they are not in use.
  10. If clothes aren't stained, wash them on lower temperatures.
- Remember to be **Green** and less mean to the environment.



The girls who wrote this article.



Children hard at work planting in the garden.



**Wishing you all a very happy Christmas, and looking forward to all that 2023 has to bring**