



Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann

Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel

Brú na bhFiann, North King Street, Dublin 7. Tel: 01-485 0666 Fax: 01-485 0601

Email: info@oneconnect.ie Website: www.oneconnect.ie

Support, Comradeship, Advocacy, Remembrance

16 April 2020

Board of Directors
Area Councils
Branches
Hostels

Introduction

The global spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to affect each and every member of ONE and their families. The restrictions imposed by Government on 12 March 2020 led to the immediate suspension of non-essential activities within ONE. These restrictions were strengthened on 27 March 2020 urging people to stay at home unless absolutely necessary and “cocooning” to protect people who are over 70 years of age and those who are medically vulnerable to COVID-19, by minimising all interaction between them and other people. These restrictions were extended on 10 April 2020 until at least 05 May 2020.

Our letter of 26 March 2020 outlined the work that continues to be undertaken by ONE on behalf of veterans of the Defence Forces, the challenges the organisation can reasonably expect, and how we might chart our way through them. The purpose of this letter is to provide a further update on the current situation.

Current Situation

The Government restrictions means that Head Office staff must continue to operate from home. Ollie O’Connor (**Chief Executive Officer**) remains available on 087 2336643 and Paul Cooley (**Executive Assistant**) may be contacted on 086 1734695. Communication will otherwise be through electronic means.

Some ONE members have found themselves confined to their homes due to their age and/or vulnerability. To keep in contact with these veterans, our three Area Councils and thirty six Branches have set up their own social communications systems. Through volunteering (home visits, collecting prescriptions, food delivery), telephone calling, WhatsApp Groups, Facebook, Zoom conferencing and many other methods, they ensure our comrades are not alone in their isolation. As an example Niall McGarry, Boyle Branch Secretary is currently self-isolating with his 104 year old Uncle Michael Coyne. The Branch are keeping in contact with Niall during his seclusion. Members are reminded to maintain HSE protocols in all of their benevolent activities and not to risk their, or their families health.

Patron: Michael D Higgins, President of Ireland.

Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann Cuideachta faoi theorainn Ráthaíochta. Registered in Ireland No.328824, RCN: 20044268, CHY13868.

Directors: Chairman Colm Campbell, Oliver Barbour, Deirdre Carbery, Stephen Coy, Patrick Durnin, Patrick Flavin, Donal Floyd, Tommy Gallagher, Eddie McCarthy, Jim McEaney, Gerry O’Doherty, Patrick Rooney, Eamon Walsh, Pat Whelan.

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The Management and Staff in our hostels continue to do trojan work to ensure the safety of our residents, whilst maintaining the high standard of living conditions and ensuring that anything needed to keep the show on the road is obtained.

Amidst all the dreariness and the constant sad news and statistics, there have been some good news stories. Mullingar Branch Chairperson and Jadotville survivor, Tom Gunn has successfully fought off the virus and gave the nation a much needed lift during his interview on Sunday 05 April on Newstalk. The interview is available as a podcast on newstalk.com and Tom also featured on the front of the Irish Independent on 06 April. We were also delighted to hear that Ciarán O'Neill, the son of Cathal Brugha Branch member and Congo veteran Noel O'Neill recovered for the illness.

On the 29th March, eleven veterans based at home and abroad performed an online concert in support of our three hostels. This gesture by the performers and the organisers is greatly appreciated. The concert may still be enjoyed at <https://youtu.be/iNghdUYFzAc>

Although our normal fundraising flag-days or church-gate collections are not possible, donations can still be made by texting FLAG to 50300 to donate €4 (ONE will receive a minimum of €3.60. Service Provider; Likecharity. Helpline: 076 6805278), or people can donate at oneconnect.ie (sleepingflags.ie)

Sadly, we have also lost comrades and valued members of ONE. These include

- Tom 'Jesse' James St. Conleths Branch and former Director and National President
- Jim Delahunty, St. Conleths Branch President
- Gerry Ryan, St. Conleths Branch
- Pat Hensey, Tullamore Branch Chairperson
- Joseph 'Jos' Shiels, Drogheda and Slane Branch
- John Lawlor, Cathal Brugha Branch, and
- Michael 'Mickey' Power, John Lucey Branch (who was buried on 2nd April)

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha dílse

Conclusion

The necessary restrictions that are now in place for some five weeks and will continue at least until 05 May 2020 have highlighted once again the importance of ONE. We encourage our Branches to continue their excellent work in maintaining contact with all of your members, in particular those who cannot leave home at all.

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ONE Head Office will continue to update Hostels, Branches, Area Councils and Board Members on HSE and Government directives during the crisis. All are reminded not to risk their or their families health, to act only within HSE protocols and to follow official guidelines and directions. We again acknowledge the magnificent work of our staff and volunteers and believe that the services of ONE are now more relevant than ever.

Colm Campbell
Chairperson Board of Directors
Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann

Oliver O'Connor
Chief Executive Officer
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