



What's the story?

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Soilse News

Stopping smoking

We're looking for your thoughts, opinions, stories, poems. Talk to Sandra in Green Street, Joyce or your key worker. Jokes, cartoons and photos also needed!

Poetry corner

Christmas is over,
Santa's been and gone

Thank God last year's
over and a new one
has begun.

I have to get serious
and really knuckle
down

Give up all the mess-
ing and stop acting
the clown.

Our time here is so
short and really
passes fast

In the blink of an
eye another year has
passed.

Life is so precious
and really is a gift

You only get one
chance at this and
it's not to be missed.

Anonymous

Smoking is a major health problem in Ireland. It is addictive, it kills people, and it costs a lot of money. About 15% of the health service budget goes to deal with problems caused by smoking, money that could be better spent elsewhere.

Some people think that because tobacco is legal, it is okay to smoke. The evidence suggests otherwise.

Nearly all Soilse participants smoke. Many people believe that getting off opiates is the most important issue. However, smoking is also an addiction and we want to encourage you to stop.

At Soilse, we put a huge emphasis on helping you to change your lifestyle. This includes learning about physical exercise, stress management, structure and routine,

diet and recreational activities. These are skills you can bring to your family and children.

The benefits of stopping smoking are clear and significant: you save money, improve your health and become a positive role model for your family and children.

In Soilse, we encourage staff not to smoke. Our buildings are smoke-free (this is the law). This means no smoking in the buildings, no cigarette butts outside the buildings and no smoking around doors or windows.

We are developing a 'stop smoking' programme and will tell you about this in April. Meanwhile, tell us your views, needs and concerns about giving up smoking. We're here to help.

Gerry McAleenan
Head of Services

The Lord Mayor visits Soilse

A man of the people, a man for the people or neither?

One of the Lord Mayor's jobs is to promote Dublin for what it is and not try to hide certain aspects of it which is what Lord Mayor Gerry Breen (FG) is trying to do by shifting addicts and homeless people out to the suburbs and away from the inner city.

I have to ask the simple question, who would benefit from this?

Not the citizens of Dublin who are addicts or homeless.

Not their families who will be dislocated in the suburbs.

Tourists might be the only ones to benefit as they choose to come to Dublin but the

Lord Mayor is not the Lord Mayor of tourists.

Maybe he should encourage drug addicts to get clean and improve their lives but on his visit to Soilse in December the belief was he wasn't particularly interested in what stable or drug-free addicts had to say about solutions to his concern.

Would he support the provision of more detox beds, proper accommodation, urine analysis and day-time programmes? Will he promote drug rehabilitation programmes and resources? Will he represent the needs of all Dubliners equally?

I was disappointed the Lord Mayor was more concerned about tourism than treatment.

WS

Just to say a big thanks to all the staff and clients for the help that I received in the last few months. I would especially like to thank Sonya for all her help and support. I feel that Soilse has done a lot for me and without the help and guidance that I received, I wouldn't be where I am today. So, a big thanks to everybody.

Gary D

What a star!

Soilse wins AONTAS STAR Award

Janey Mack, things have really changed in a year, I thought to myself as I pulled into the car park of the plush D4 Hotel, the setting for the Aontas Star Awards 2011.

This time last year it was a completely different story. This time I was there to represent Soilse, a programme I had been involved in when I needed its help and now I was here to show my support for its very worthy cause.

I had been chosen, along with two others who had been through the full programme, to attend the awards. When I was first asked by Stephen I had an overwhelming feeling of pride; I was truly delighted at having being asked.

We met up as arranged, in the Soilse building in Henrietta Place and it was here I was approached by Stephen who said to me, "There's a very small chance we might win this award today. If we do, would you be ok saying a few words in thanks?" I readily agreed and didn't give it a second thought. "Sure it's only a small chance we have," I thought, "sure I'll be grand anyways." Those of you who know me will be aware that I don't really like talking and have always struggled around voicing myself.

As I said previously, we arrived in D4 hotel and as we were early we decided to go in for a look around. The hotel was amazing and there were signposts directing us to where the awards were taking place. We went inside and had a cup of coffee as we waited for Stephen and Morgan who duly arrived and we took our places at our table.

We were seated with a lovely group of women who were there to represent ATLAS Women's Group in Belfast and we joked with them that we were only there for the meal.

The awards started with a welcome

talk from Marian Duffy, the President of AONTAS and were followed by talks from Sean Haughey TD and Michael D. Higgins TD before the presentations began.

I thought it a good idea to take a toilet break just at the start of the awards and was walking back when Stephen rushed out to tell me that our nominations were next.



At this stage I was still laughing and joking and was saying I would start my speech with the immortal lines "unaccustomed as I am to public speaking" I thought it had been made by some famous public speaker but couldn't remember who. When I googled it later on that evening it turned out to be Groucho Marx.

I had also been joking that they sat us down the back so everyone could get a good look at us as we walked up to accept our award. I was still under the impression that we wouldn't win so couldn't believe it when we were called up. I hadn't seen the previous winner as I'd been busy in the toilet and I can remember as I walked up thinking to myself, "shit, what the hell do I say!!!"

We walked up onto the stage and shook hands with Sean Haughey and Michael D. and posed for photos, then it was time for my big moment.

As I approached the podium I looked out to the crowd and my heart jumped

into my mouth. There was between two and three hundred people in the crowd and I had nothing prepared. I was just gonna have to wing it.

I was never so glad to be a participant of Soilse and an active member of 12-step programmes as I was when I stood there. By being used to group situations and used to talking in them it gave me the confidence to get through it.

I started off by thanking everyone, from the President of AONTAS, to the two TDs to the people in attendance. I went on to thank Soilse for the help they had given me over the past year and particularly thanked Stephen and Morgan for all their help on the programme. (Don't get upset, Darren. If you had been there, I'd have mentioned you as well but you were foremost in my thoughts. Sonia, Dave, Gerry, the same applies but we all know how upset Darren gets so I'll give him a special mention.)

I went through more feelings up on that stage than I ever knew I had. I thought I had three when I first started Soilse but I was able to relay my fears to the crowd that, yes. I was nervous, I'd nothing prepared. But do you know what? I got through it. Yes, I was anxious, yes, I was a bit fucked up but as I've heard it said a thousand times, "that's ok", and it was. I left the stage to applause and as I walked back to my seat people gave me the thumbs up and said to me, "well done".

We took our seats and the ladies from ATLAS congratulated us on our win. We settled down to watch the rest of the awards and enjoy our dinner.

All in all, it was a great day out, one I will remember for a long time to come and from the bottom of my heart I would like to thank Soilse for making it all possible.

Keith