



NEASA HOURIGAN, TD DUBLIN CENTRAL

AUTUMN 2020



Dear Constituent,

I hope you are well at the moment. This has been a strange and difficult year for us all but it has been incredible to watch our community here in Dublin Central band together over the last few months. In the face of huge pressures and anxiety we have all seen acts of kindness between neighbours, thoughtfulness and dedication amongst extended families and a new sense of how important our community ties actually are.

In more normal times I would like to be meeting you all face to face but I hope you feel that we are still here and available to you. Even if that's a phone call or an email instead. All my contact details are at the end of the page. Please, please get in touch if you need help and keep safe.

I hope you have a safe Christmas break and a peaceful New Year, all my best,

Climate Bill

One of the most important actions to complete this year is the legislation on a new Climate Bill that will achieve a minimum of 7% per annum reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions over the next decade.

We are working across parties to ensure binding and sectoral targets that will commit Ireland, in law, to achieving carbon neutrality by the year 2050.



Phoenix Park Public Consultation

The decision making process around Minister Patrick O'Donovan's move to reopen the Phoenix park gates in July was unclear. Despite delays it is welcome that the CEOs of the National Transport Authority, Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council and the Office of Public Works will make up a Steering Group that has been asked to report back to the Minister this Autumn with a range of options (for public consultation) to address transport and mobility challenges in the Park.

I have been fighting to keep the Phoenix Park as a natural haven that is accessible to all since I was elected to Dublin City Council. I plan to continue that work as a TD.

Sign up for updates on this process at neasahourigan.com/pp

Please get in touch if I can be of assistance in any matter

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Budget 2021

With Brexit and COVID we have an uncertain year ahead of us. What we can be certain of is that we need to do more to protect the vulnerable and those most impacted by COVID-19 and that we need to take material steps on moving to a low carbon economy. The ESRI reported that Budget 2021 was a progressive budget that benefitted lower income families the most.

Health and Social Protection

- €38 million for new measures for mental health
- Increase in Child Benefit by €2 p/w for children under 12 to €38; and by €5 p/w for children over 12 to €45
- €10 increase in income thresholds for the Working Family Payment for one, two and three child families
- Increase in Carers Support Grant from €1,700 to €1,850
- Increase in Fuel Allowance by €3.50 p/w to €28

Housing and Education

- €3.3bn to be spent on housing - a 24% increase on 2020
- Increase of €500m in total housing capital budget to deliver 9,500 units in 2021
- 300 new teaching posts dropping the pupil teachers ratios at primary level to 25:1
- 990 new SNAs, 145 additional special education teachers
- Increase in Hot School Meals Programme by €5.5m

Transport and Other Measures

- Additional €1bn being made available towards public transport in 2021 - including BusConnects and Metrolink
- Increase of €360m for walking and cycling projects
- Reduction in VAT rates from 13.5% to 9% for hospitality sector
- Covid Restriction Subsidy Scheme of €40m p/w aimed at the arts, tourism and hospitality sectors
- 620 new Garda recruits and 500 Garda administrative staff

Waste action plan

The Waste Action Plan was published by Minister Ryan on Sep 4th. Waste and dumping is a huge issue for so many of us in Dublin Central and in the past the approach has been to deal with where to put our waste and how to collect it. This action plan looks to reduce the amount of waste that we produce, to ensure that whatever we generate is easy to reuse or recycle and to ensure we get the longest life we can out of the things that we use and make sure that they are easy to repair. Budget 2021 allocated funding for a Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy.



Disability and Elder Support



- €100m in new measures for disability, including resumption of day services, respite and provision for an increase in therapeutic staff
- 5 million additional home care hours, up from 19 million hours; as well as €5 million for community based dementia support services
- €60m to fund adaptation grants to support older people and people with a disability to remain at home.

If you need help accessing any of these new benefits or entitlements or even if you just have a question about them, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Dalymount Park redevelopment

I was happy to facilitate a meeting with Bohemian FC and Minister Catherine Martin on progressing the plans for the redevelopment of Dalymount Park. Bohemian FC is a huge part of the Phibsborough community and an organisation that deserves support. The Dalymount redevelopment is a great opportunity to provide a world class sporting and cultural facility in the community.



Walking and cycling

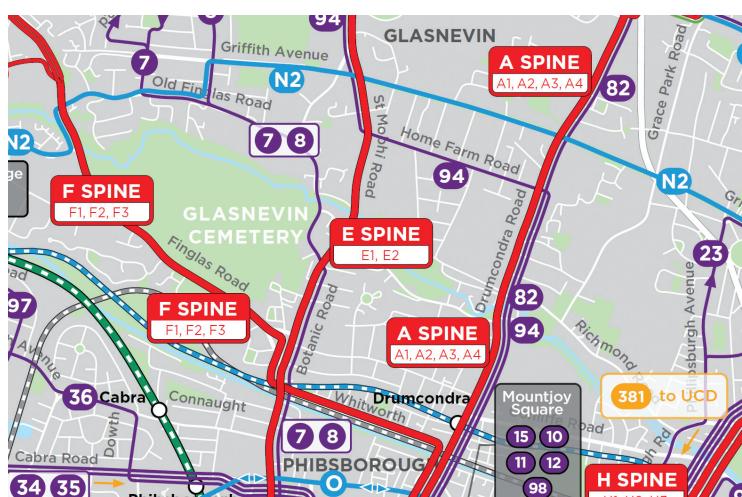
As you may know the guidelines on socially distancing during lockdown made us all realise how little space we give on our streets to walking and cycling safely. With children now back school there has never been a better time to improve our local infrastructure and ensure that everyone has a choice in how they want to get around. With the new funding secured by the Green Party in the Programme for Government you will be seeing footpath, cycle lane and crossings improvements popping up around the Dublin 1, 7 and 9 area.



The Government intends to spend at least €1m every day on cycling and walking infrastructure over the next year. There are also a number of 'school zones' popping up around the constituency which make the roads outside schools safer (and a bit more fun to look at!) Get in touch if you think there is a specific area that you think needs looking at.

I am also committed to legislating for electric scooters in Ireland. I believe that with the right supports and rules electric scooters could see lower car usage (and lower air pollution) in our communities which is always a good thing. They must be kept off footpaths and follow the rules of the roads.

Sign up for updates on my work on e-scooters at neasahourigan.com/sc



BusConnects

BusConnects published the bus network plan (essentially the routes that will run in the new network) at the end of September. This amended route network is the result of significant public consultation.

The National Transport Authority will run the third round of public consultation on Preferred Route Options for the 16 Core BusConnects Bus Corridors from 4th November until **16th December 2020**.

I am particularly interested in ensuring pedestrians and accessibility for people with disabilities is prioritised in this process. Potentially impacted property owners will be contacted directly by BusConnects and offered one to one calls with the design team members.

Getting the next stage of the BusConnects project right for communities is an important step. I hope everybody gets the opportunity to have their questions answered and/or make their view known. More details can be found on busconnects.ie.

Mind your Mental Health during COVID

The HSE have some good advice on how to mind your mental health during what can be a stressful time:

- Keep up your healthy routines - exercise, sleep, diet, avoiding excess drinking or smoking
- Stay connected to others - phone calls, video calls, etc.
- Stay informed on COVID but moderate what information you choose to take in, and when

A list of support services can be found here
neasahourigan.com/hse-supports



Housing and Planning

Housing is one of the biggest challenges we face as a country and nowhere is that relevant than Dublin Central. We have high levels of homelessness, high levels of rent and real need for the provision of more housing. There are a number of developments in the Dublin Central area at the moment and I will continue to work to ensure that the housing built is affordable, sustainable and will enhance our communities. You may be aware that I voted against the government during the summer on the issue of evictions. This was not done lightly and I will continue to work to ensure that evictions do not occur during the pandemic.

Not a Voter Yet?

You may be under 18 but your opinion matters a great deal to me. In the last number of years it is young people who have shown courage and leadership on issues such as climate change and rejecting bigotry and racism. While I worry about what the future may hold sometimes due to the climate crisis I have no doubt it will be in safe hands with the current generation of engaged and passionate young people. If you would like to raise anything with me (everything from climate strikes, planting for bees or how you are finding your journey to school) please don't hesitate to get in touch. I'm hoping you have an adult in your household who can oblige or be copied in.

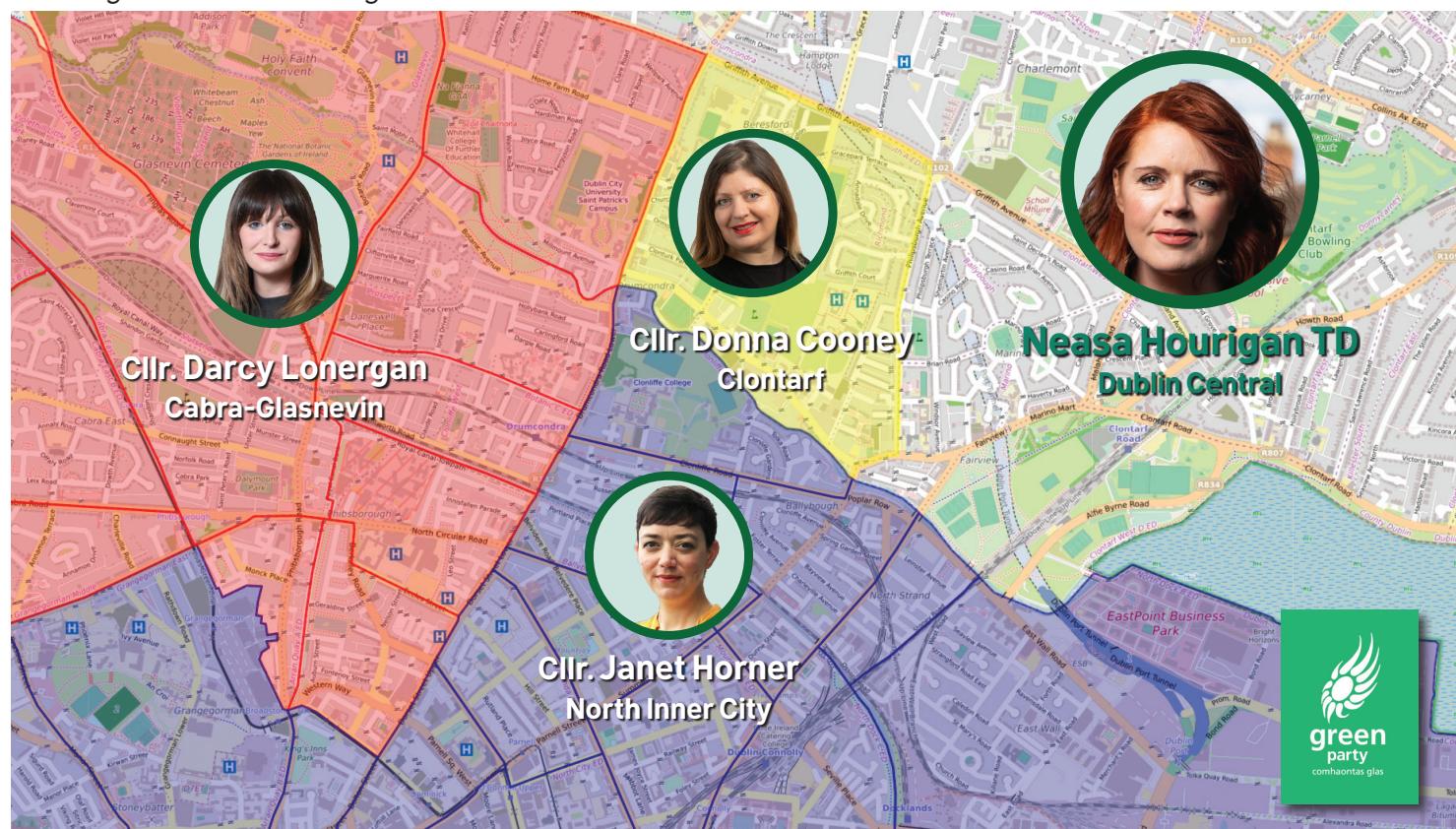
If you are not a voter yet because you haven't registered you can access support to do so here: neasahourigan.com/vote



Dáil Update

- As Chair of the Budgetary Oversight Committee I am working to ensure that the focus of budgets is people's wellbeing and ensuring value for money. Wellbeing budgets have worked well in countries like New Zealand and Iceland, resulting in a greater funding focus on issues such as mental health and childcare.
- I am also a member of the brand new Disability Matters committee tasked with ensuring that every part of government considers disability in its decision making. As the parent of a child with a disability I hope this work will really have an impact
- As spokesperson on Health for the Green Party I have been working on issues related to the Covid crisis but also on improving maternal care (particularly challenging during Covid) and supports for breastfeeding.

Working with Neasa Hourigan TD



Full constituency map available at neasahourigan.com/map

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