

utu NEWS

The journal of the Ulster Teachers' Union

CHANGING LIVES THROUGH EDUCATION

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A clatter of Ulster Scots words to learn this February

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THE WONDER OF CHRISTMAS

SEE PAGE 30 TO CHECK OUT SOME OF THE AMAZING CHRISTMAS CARD ENTRIES





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Nutrition nailed

Are you trying veganuary?

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Real Health	10% off	Ballymena & Coleraine
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wagamama	15% off	Belfast

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Looking4Parking	15% off	Online
Odessi Salon	20% off	La Mon Hotel
YorkTest	40% off	Online



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Gambling with Lives was set up by the families and friends of young people who had taken their own lives as a direct result of gambling. These were all very normal, bright, popular and happy young folk who had great futures ahead of them ... gambling was their only problem.

AND MUCH MORE!



PRESIDENTIAL COMMENT

Alison Steen



As I approach the final months of my term of office, it is still true that we are all continuing to take, 'One day at a time.' The UTU is very much working on your behalf with all the employing authorities, raising awareness and getting to the heart of what it is really like in schools. No matter how tightly knit and hardworking your school team is, the extra strain that Covid has brought has been relentless.

As I write my final foreword wearing my Presidential hat.... I am aware that many of you have had to wear many hats, in all areas of school life.

Principals continue to juggle multiple roles and responsibilities and we are in a constant state of, "High alert". We are spending endless hours on NISTR struggling to access staff to provide face to face teaching - lost hours we

will never get back. We are trying to the best of our ability, to meet the demands of new initiatives and wade through the complexities of funding streams. No one knows what an hour will bring.

Teachers know full well they are teaching in rooms where there are asymptomatic cases and have children and young people in attendance, with positive cases in their homes.

Classroom Assistants are working in such close contact with children.

Secretaries are manning phones, doing their best to field questions- many of a medical nature as opposed to admin!

Caretakers and **cleaners** have such an

increased workload helping to keep the virus at bay and many of their supplies such as paper towels definitely went via the North Pole during Christmas!

We will all look back at this time and wonder how we ever got through it. I know I am grateful for the spirit of endurance and team effort out there - but there is only so much we can take. The upcoming half term needs to be one where we are guaranteed rest from all communication or we will never be able to continue climbing this mountain.

We must however not grow weary and lose heart but continue to **HOPE**.

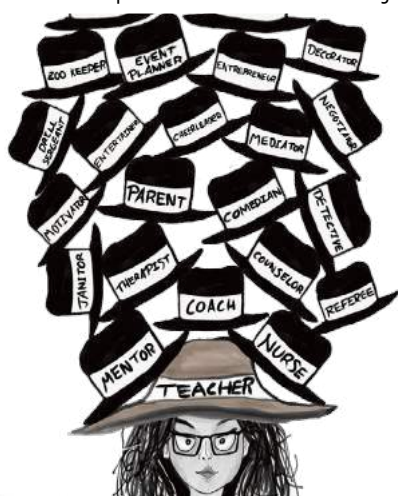
Thank you all for.....

Having the courage and stamina to keep going even when Covid numbers were rising all around you. As Barack Obama defined it, "*Hope - Hope in the face of difficulty. Hope in the face of uncertainty.A belief in things not seen. A belief that there are better days ahead.*"

Organising your days never knowing how many children would be in attendance. Having to adapt your lessons and curriculum to meet assessment and other needs, and helping fill the gaps that now are beginning to show from the inevitable impact of lockdowns and necessary periods of absence due to Covid.

Perseverance/Planning / Patiently progressing through the weeks, serving our pupils and indeed families - being a source of constancy and support to them.

Educating the children and young people in your care through these days where we are told we are



PRESIDENTIAL COMMENT

Alison Steen



getting back to normal, but in reality we know this to be different! Inventing different ways of doing things due to Covid can be exhausting and being a teacher or school leader in 2021/ 2022 has been a lonely place at times.

In spite of everything, we should cling to that one word **HOPE**. Hope in all things.

As your President, who is also a parent, wife and teaching principal, I would like to thank you all for being what you are to so many people in our schools and communities and for everything you have done and continue to do. Not forgetting your selflessness and dedication to duty this past year. UTU is,

and always will be there to talk to and represent your needs on many levels.

“The upcoming half term needs to be one where we are guaranteed rest from all communication or we will never be able to continue climbing this mountain.”

We all hope for a brighter future...

THANK YOU

Better days are on their way.

ALISON STEEN
UTU PRESIDENT

into **utu** **national education union**

The three unions - Irish National Teachers' Union (**INTO**), National Education Union (**NEU**) and Ulster Teachers' Union (**UTU**) continue to work in partnership to deliver training to members, school representatives, and health and safety representatives.

Online Webinars

If you missed any of the recent training courses, you can watch them back by clicking on the links below:

- [Flexible Working Part One](#)
- [Flexible Working Part Two](#)
- [Teacher Attendance and Sick leave](#)
- [Representing Members At School](#)





DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY

Stephen McCord

As we begin 2022, we must remember that this is now the third year we have lived through the Covid pandemic. As teachers and school leaders you know first-hand that, despite many restrictions and mitigations being lifted outside the school setting, the actual reality in the classroom continues to be a challenge for us all.

There continue to be massive issues regarding staff absence and obtaining substitute cover using an ineffective NISTR system. Workload issues continue to impact us all, with the added pressures of dealing with isolating or ill colleagues or pupils and as always, our members show flexibility and patience in maintaining continued education for our children.

The need for good ventilation of classrooms is vital and the Department has issued CO2 monitors to schools as a way to monitor this. However, keeping windows open brings its own challenges with often intolerable low temperatures for both the children and staff and we have been lucky that temperatures have been reasonably mild. A significant impact will of course be increased costs to schools in oils, gas and electricity costs, bringing added worries to the already constrained budgets of schools.

The Omicron variant just before Christmas showed that the virus continues to mutate, and we must continue to be on our guard and ensure that we do as much as possible to keep our pupils, colleagues, and families as safe as possible. Many of you will have been personally impacted by Covid and as we move towards spring, we can only hope that the school situation will improve and the pressures ease.

The OECD recently reported that most

teachers are committed and love their profession but that issues outside their core task of teaching (such as extra admin) are a major source of stress. These issues need to be addressed and the nine reviews that were negotiated in the April 2020 pay agreement are the first step towards this. The work continues on these reviews with the first three (Use of Temporary and Substitute Teachers, Workload Agreement and Workload Impact on School Leaders) expected in the next few months.

“The past few weeks and months have been a real challenge and it is important that you are able to unwind, recharge and take a few moments for yourself!”

UTU continues to engage with EA and management side regarding the issues around Covid in schools. We are also gathering information from members regarding the Independent Review of Education. We are also preparing for Conference on 1 April and a chance to discuss and debate the challenges at the chalkface. As always please contact us at Headquarters if you have any queries, questions, or concerns.

Finally, as you approach the half-term break, I hope you have the opportunity to have quality time with your family, catch-up with friends and loved ones, but most importantly relax from the demands of the classroom. The past few weeks and months have been a real challenge and it is important that you are able to unwind, recharge and take a few moments for yourself! With that in mind, I hope the weather is kind and we have brighter days ahead as we approach spring.

Stephen McCord

**STEPHEN MCCORD
DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY**



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A WHEEN A WURDS LEARNIN' ULSTER SCOTS

As part of its support for school-based education the Ulster-Scots Agency is committed to providing high quality teaching and learning resources that help promote and support learning about aspects of Ulster-Scots culture and heritage.



The Northern Ireland curriculum provides opportunities for schools to embed teaching and learning about Ulster-Scots in curriculum-based teaching and learning. Whether it's about history, culture, music and dance or language, there are opportunities for children to learn

about Ulster-Scots in curriculum-based activities.

The Ulster-Scots Agency provides a range of programmes and support for schools interested in providing learning opportunities about Ulster-Scots. The annual grant programme for music and dance tuition provides the opportunity for children

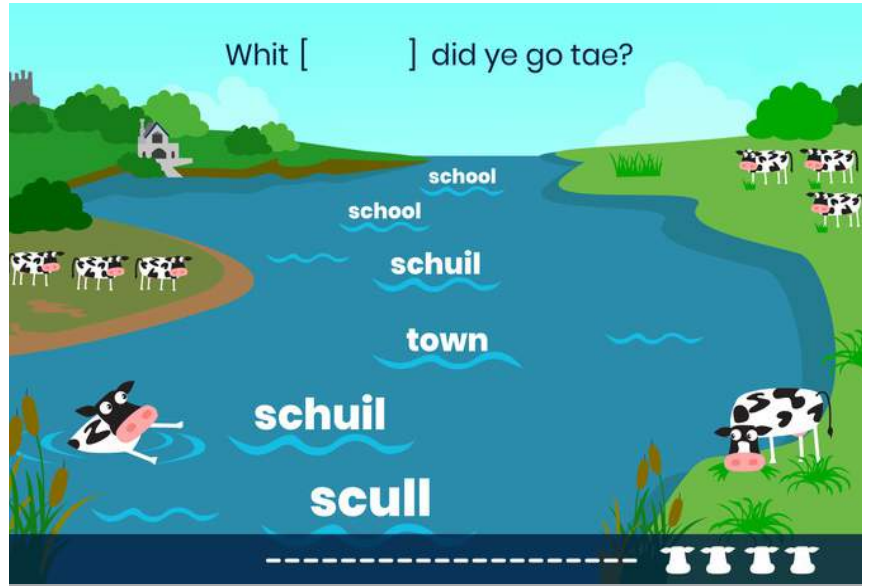
to learn and develop new skills. Delivered by expert tutors, children can learn the highland bagpipes, drumming, fiddle and singing. They can also have tuition in Highland and Scottish Country Dance. There are other programmes too. Schools can register for the **'Flagship Programme'** in which the Ulster-Scots

Agency provides learning experiences in language, music and drama during the 18 month programme. The Agency offers After Schools Clubs and school workshops.

In order to support curriculum-based teaching and learning, a number of engaging multimedia teaching and learning resources have been developed.

These include **'Land of Promise'** which is a programme of learning using the emigration of Ulster-Scots families to America as context.

This programme includes interactive lessons and even a music and drama production that can be performed by children.



Ulster-Scots language is widely spoken in parts of Ulster. This series of exciting new language games for children will help reinforce learning about the language and develop new vocabulary.

'Our Innovators' and **'Our Artists'** are online resources about Ulster-Scots artists and innovators and **'Woven in Ulster - Ulster-Scots and the Story of Linen'**

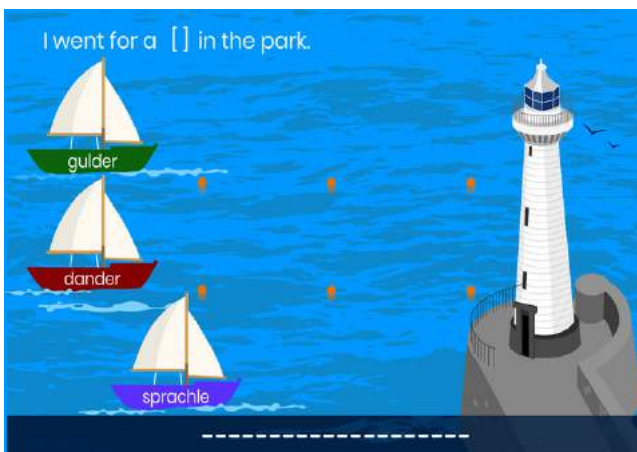
which tells the story of the linen industry in Ulster.

'Ulster-Scots Language Games' are online computer games aimed at primary schools and designed to support the Ulster-Scots language. The games are designed in a learning progression, beginning with simple words and developing into sentence construction. The games use familiar

backdrops from across Northern Ireland and include helping seagulls play golf at Portrush and **'Feeding the Fish'** in Fermanagh Lakeland as they develop language skills.

All of these resources have been designed to be engaging and offer a range of exciting teaching and learning opportunities for primary schools.

If you would like information about any of the programmes offered by the Ulster-Scots Agency, please check out <https://discoverulsterscots.com/> and contact **Gary Blair** gblair@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk or **Jane Barr** jbarr@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk.



Castleroe Primary School, just outside of Coleraine, is delighted to be accredited as a NIFSA Official Forest School. Forest Schools are an exciting and inspirational experience for children, encouraging them to learn through activities in an outdoor setting. The Forest School concept is based on a Scandinavian idea that considers children's contact with nature to be extremely important from an early age. A study trip from Somerset to Denmark in 1995 decided that the approach was appropriate for use in Britain. Since then

A CULTURE OF CURIOSITY AT CASTLEROE PRIMARY

Forest School has spread to many areas as educationalists have witnessed the very positive impact that it can have on children. By incorporating innovative approaches to learning children are encouraged to develop their curiosity and motivation to learn.

Castleroe PS are in the fortunate position of having their own woodland area within the grounds, as well as being conveniently located within walking distance of Somerset Forest. During the Covid-19 pandemic children were out of the classroom and the conventional learning environment for prolonged periods of time. When planning a safe return to education in the school building, the school leadership team wanted to ensure the pupils of Castleroe were fully engaged by incorporating innovative approaches to learning where children were encouraged to develop their curiosity and motivation to learn.

The school is grateful to the financial support of CRUN - Causeway Rural and Urban Network, who have funded the Level 3, training of teachers Mrs Alyson Wilson and Mr David McMillan, through the Making Life Better through COVID 19 Short Term Funding



Mayor Richard Holmes enjoy storytime with P1 and P2 at Castleroe PS

Programme 2020-2021. Mr McMillan is currently working towards Level 4 Forest School Leader accreditation funded by the Making Life Better Through Short Term Funding Programme 2021-2022. This training has ensured that the outdoor opportunities that the pupils of Castleroe are experiencing are linked meaningfully to the school curriculum, so that the key areas of learning and the cross curricular skills are taught effectively and creatively in the outdoors.

Mrs Samantha Williams, Principal of Castleroe PS said, *“As educators our role is to motivate and inspire children to recognise and meet their full potential. Using our outdoor environment and resources for teaching has had a very positive impact not only on the levels of*



Rev Mark Goudy, Chairperson of the Board of Governors of Castleroe PS, welcomed the Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens, Mayor Richard Holmes, to Castleroe PS to plant a tree in the school grounds in recognition of the school's achievement.



Daniel, P3 at Castleroe PS, has aspirations to become Mayor!

“As educators our role is to motivate and inspire children to recognise and meet their full potential.”

children's engagement in their learning, but also on their standards of achievement as a result of the innovative and creative teaching and pedagogy provided by the staff of Castleroe PS. We are immensely grateful for CRUN's financial support, and I would personally like to recognise the hard work and superb teaching

offered by our staff to ensure that our pupils' needs are continuously met.”

Rev Mark Goudy, Chairperson of the Board of Governors of Castleroe PS, welcomed the Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens, Mayor Richard Holmes, to Castleroe PS to plant a tree in the school grounds in recognition of the school's achievement, and a symbol of hope and regeneration following a period of uncertainty throughout the pandemic. The Mayor enjoyed a tour of the school's bright and modern facilities, meeting staff and pupils, before planting a cheery blossom tree in the school grounds, ably assisted by pupils Finn McNie and Reuben Cavan.

Home Insurance hints and tips from Cornmarket Insurance Services



Winter evenings are upon us and the nights are drawing in but it's also a great time to take stock and make sure you have the insurance cover in place to keep your most prized assets protected – including your home.

Choosing the right type and level of cover to protect your property can seem daunting, with so many variations and terms that might not be familiar. While getting cover for a reasonable premium is important, it is essential to get the cover you need. Some things to consider when shopping around:

Prepare for the weather

Consider the increased risk posed by frequent storms and harsh weather conditions at this time of year. Areas not traditionally exposed to flood risks could end up impacted in times of extreme weather; therefore, it is important to check that all potential risks are covered on your policy, including flood.

To reduce your likelihood of claiming check your gutters are clear of leaf debris and are in a state of good repair. Check doors and windows are secure and can withstand intense weather. Also, ensure there are no loose items around your home that could be damaged or cause damage in high winds.

Take stock of your contents

It is important to insure your contents for their replacement value. If you are taking out cover or reviewing the amounts insured, consider each room and its contents. An easy way to look at it; anything you would take with you if you left the home. It may be

easier to realise the volume of both new and old contents items, which you might not have included. Items stored in the attic and garage or new gifts may affect your required sum insured.

For valuable items which you frequently take out of the home, such as jewellery, you should consider separate specific 'all risks' cover. There are two ways of applying this benefit to your policy:

1. 'unspecified items' can be applied to your policy to cover unspecified items up to a certain value, e.g. a number of items of jewellery worth less than £2,500 each, could be insured under the 'unspecified items' benefit.
2. Alternatively, for a particularly valuable item, this can be covered under 'specified items' for their full value, e.g. an engagement ring worth £5,000.

There are different terms and conditions on this benefit, so it is important to discuss this fully with your adviser when choosing to add this to your policy.

Break away from home

You should take measures to ensure your home is kept safe. Having regularly maintained smoke and burglar alarms throughout your home will reduce risk and can reduce your premium. Do not broadcast your plans for a break away from your home too widely. Social media accounts being tracked by thieves can provide a notification of an empty house and vulnerable contents items.



Consider your excess

The excess is the amount you are required to pay, should you make a claim on your home insurance. Some insurers allow you to modify this amount, which will have an impact on your premium. The higher your excess the lower the premium but the more you will have to pay should a claim occur.

Check the list

Policy features and benefits will differ by insurer. Use this checklist when reviewing your quotes to see what exactly you are getting for your premium and to determine which aspects of cover are most important to you:

- Insurance Company / Broker
- Policy Excess
- Home Emergency Cover
- Un-occupancy period
- Alternative Accommodation
- Alarm Discount
- Smoke Alarm Discount
- Accidental Damage cover
- Contents in garages and outbuildings
- Door Locks
- Emergency Services Access Cover
- Freezer Contents
- Loss of oil
- Personal Money
- Public Liability
- Trace and Access Cover
- Unspecified All Risks Cover
- Christmas Gifts
- Wedding Gifts

With so many demands on time, energy and finances it could be easy to put your home insurance to the back of your mind, but this could be a costly mistake in the long run. Having adequate insurance provides you with peace of mind and a feeling of security that lasts the whole year.

As a members of the Ulster Teachers' Union, you can fix the price of your home insurance for three years which means you have the added comfort of knowing that your premium will not increase (subject to terms and conditions). You can also rest assured that you are buying your cover from a trusted partner who has been in the market for almost thirty years. Cornmarket are rated as excellent on Trustpilot. For more information call our team of Home Insurance experts on **028 9044 5030**.

David Molloy

Marketing Manager
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Ballysally Primary School, Coleraine join Jilly and Anna in planting a tree on school grounds as part of Danske Bank's Outdoor Learning Garden Project

A total of 358 schools were awarded a globally recognised Green Flag Award in 2021 in a move that demonstrates excellent performance in environmental management.

The figure, which represents 32% of schools in Northern Ireland, is a testament to the ongoing popularity of Eco-Schools, an internationally adopted programme that guides schools on their sustainability journey and offers support to them as they go through the process of applying for a prestigious Green Flags Award.

The initiative, administered by environmental charity Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (**KNIB**), has recently expanded its presence in education centres across the country, with a new Environmental Education Coordinator coming onboard the KNIB team last June and the presence of field officers growing to number four.

Charlene McKeown, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Environmental Education Manager comments: *"The Eco-Schools' programme in NI is continuing to go from strength to strength across the country. It is really exciting and encouraging to see so many schools wanting to make a difference to tackle climate change, all the while empowering their pupils to be leaders for the future."*

ECO SCHOOLS

boosts numbers of green learning spaces throughout Northern Ireland Schools

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful is an independent charity dedicated to creating a cleaner, greener and more sustainable Northern Ireland by delivering on improving environmental education in every school in Northern Ireland, increasing public engagement for communities in need and raising environmental standards for the places where people spend time: where they live, work and relax.



Marine Litter Survey: Year 11 students and staff from Ulidia Integrated College, Antrim take a trip to Carrickfergus beach with Eco-Schools to record the litter washed up as part of an NI-wide schools survey

“Having more staff on the ground across the country to support our teachers in schools has been a long-time goal of ours. Now we are there, and hopefully continuing to grow, we can support and guide our schools to be environmental champions.”

In addition to providing highly demanded workshops and online sessions to educators, Eco-Schools hosts a range of diverse environmental projects throughout the year, including Coastal Schools, Translink Travel Challenge, Healthy Seas, Wheelie Big Challenge, Litter Less Campaign and

Young Reporters for the Environment.

The programme has a proud history

“
The Eco-School’s programme in NI is continuing to go from strength to strength across the country.
”

in Northern Ireland’s education sector, with 100% of learning centres having already signed up as a member and the world’s first ever Green Flag Award for a school handed out

to Downpatrick Nursery on 15 June 1994.

Outside of helping schools scoop up awards through the Eco-Schools initiative, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful has recently launched a series of accredited Carbon Literacy Programmes for both post-primary teachers and youth leaders. The qualification, which is available for free upon successful completion of a short online course, gives educators the confidence, knowledge and learning materials to empower individuals and organisations to tackle the climate crisis. For more information about Eco-Schools, visit <https://www.eco-schoolsni.org>. To book your place on a Carbon Literacy Programme, [click here](#).

The Steve Sinnott Foundation works with teachers and educators to deliver projects that progress the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 - ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

2021 has been another challenging year for education across the globe. Wherever you find yourself in the world there are different challenges. Working in Cuba and Haiti brings different challenges in the provision of education than our work in The Gambia and Sierra Leone, but we are all connected and learning together.

We have been working alongside some amazing educators to ensure that learning continues for children wherever they are and whatever their circumstances.

Strengthening the relationships with our partners on the ground has enabled us to stretch our resources further than before and to work in a more flexible and effective way.

We have been amazed by the generosity and community spirit of our supporters. Thank you to everyone at UTU who has continued to fund and support our work, despite some of the challenges closer to home in the past 2 years. We could not have achieved this work without your support and generosity.

In 2021 we continued to provide access to learning through:

- Teacher training on gender-based violence and safeguarding in Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Haiti and Cuba.
- Rolling out the Positive Periods programme. Sharing the lessons learnt in Sierra Leone and The Gambia with Cuba and



- Haiti, where girls learn how to make reusable and sustainable period pads and can attend school every day.
- Setting up the Third Learning resource centre in The Gambia.
- Providing solar lights and radios in The Gambia, Sierra Leone and Haiti.
- Bicycles for students in rural

- areas to travel to school safely in The Gambia.
 - Kreyol literacy classes in Haiti.
 - Setting up a pilot digital classroom in The Gambia.
 - Sharing learning across the globe through the Life Long Learning Webinars.
- We are all connected in the purpose of providing Education for All.

• You can read more about our work here: <https://www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk/projects>

Looking forward for 2022, we have set ourselves ambitious targets to continue to support Education for All and we know that with your support we will achieve them.

How can you continue to support us in 2022?

• You can enter our global competition for Schools: Creating Change – The World I Want to Live In. The link to the competition page can be found here, and resource page here.

• Sign up to a webinar and learn something new or take an hour out just for yourself.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/the-steve-sinnott-foundation-31041261381>

• Do you have some learning you want to share with a wider audience? If so, please get in touch.

• For some inspiration, you can watch videos of previous webinars here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/sinnottfoundation/videos>



• Download the Fundraising Ideas pack <https://bit.ly/3z5O45i> and set yourself and your class a challenge for 2022.

• You can buy a charity gift that keeps on giving: <https://www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk/gifts/>

To join us in supporting access to education for all children everywhere email ann.beatty@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk or call us on 01923 230 208

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Learning in Harmony with Donkeys

Are you looking for a unique opportunity to involve small groups of children to grow and develop? Are you looking at options as to how best to promote and develop children's well-being and mental health?

Equine Therapy Sessions are now available for schools as part of the Well-Being Grant that is being funded by the Educational Authority to help promote mindfulness and mental health.

So, what is *'Learning in Harmony with Donkeys and what are Equine Therapy Sessions?'*

Learning in Harmony with Donkeys is a programme which came about through my passion and love for donkeys, experiencing first hand the significant role and positive impact they play in supporting children with their learning. I have found that emerging my mutual love for donkeys and being a primary school teacher has had massive benefits for both the animals and the children.

'Learning in Harmony with Donkeys' is a programme geared towards educating and helping children to gain an understanding of donkey welfare and management, building and forming positive relationships, promoting well-being and mental health resulting in confidence-building, raising self-esteem, developing communication skills whilst making new

friends with 'real' donkeys as their learning tool. Each programme runs for 2 hours per week for 4 weeks. Children participate in a fun, practical and gentle approach through shared experiences and self-motivation with donkeys.

Equine Therapy Sessions are available to children aged 4 years and upwards. Each child will choose their own donkey and look after and care for them during the duration of the programme.



If you would like further information or you would like to book please contact Anne Brown 07719270954 (Saintfield County Down) or alternatively search for 'Learning in Harmony with Donkeys.'
Anne Brown P2 Teacher at Killinchy Primary School



TRAINING COURSES AVAILABLE TO ALL MEMBERS

Thursday

27

January

Webinar on Flexible Working, 4pm-5pm on Zoom

This one hour webinar is the second in a series of webinars available to all members to inform/update them on important matters relating to their rights and responsibilities and Teachers' Terms and conditions of Employment generally.

Wednesday

9

February

Webinar on Career Breaks, 4pm-5pm on Zoom

This one hour webinar is the third in a series of webinars available to all members to inform/update them on important matters relating to their rights and responsibilities and Teachers' Terms and conditions of Employment generally.

Wednesday

23

March

Webinar on Brief Absences, 4pm-5pm on Zoom

This one hour webinar is the fourth in a series of webinars available to all members to inform/update them on important matters relating to their rights and responsibilities and Teachers' Terms and conditions of Employment generally.

Wednesday

30

March

Value My Skills course - 3 hour course (*Time and venue TBC*)

The innovative and interactive Value My Skills course, delivered by an ICTU tutor, aims to help workers identify transferable skills. The course will take you through steps with clear instructions to identify and rate your skills, keep reflection notes, design an action plan and record your progress.

Wednesday

27

April

Webinar Protecting your identity 4pm-5pm on Zoom

This one hour webinar is the fifth in a series of webinars available to all members to inform/update them on important matters relating to their rights and responsibilities and Teachers' Terms and conditions of Employment generally.



TRAINING COURSES AVAILABLE TO ALL MEMBERS

Wednesday

25

May

Paternity and Shared Parental Leave, 4pm-5pm on Zoom

This one hour webinar is the seventh in a series of webinars available to all members to inform/update them on important matters relating to their rights and responsibilities and Teachers' Terms and conditions of Employment generally.

Wednesday

8

June

Dealing with Assaults and Restraints, 4pm – 5pm on Zoom

This one hour webinar is the eighth and last in a series of webinars available to all members to inform/update them on important matters relating to their rights and responsibilities and Teachers' Terms and conditions of Employment generally.

To register for any of the above courses please email **events@utu.edu**, with your **name, school (if applicable) and TR number**, indicating which course(s) you wish to attend. Numbers on some of the courses are limited and places will be allocated on a **'First come First Served basis'**.



Loanends Primary School pupils are in a different class!

The brainy bunch at Loanends Primary School were able to celebrate more than just Christmas over the holidays after the P7 class came first place in a UK wide 10ticks Mental Maths competition.

They even managed to hold on to first place on the GLOBAL leaderboard for the Month of November! After an exciting month of competition on 10ticks Mental Maths, sponsored by Liontrust, Loanends Primary School were declared the winners with P7 pupils answering an impressive 2,185 questions each, on average!

The brilliant local children have won £500 to top up their school budgets. Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey, Councillor Billy Webb dropped by this week to congratulate them in person. Indeed, he is pictured above chatting with Zak Minford and Scarlett Hamilton. Speaking to the Antrim Guardian, Councillor Webb said the young people were a credit to the Borough. *"I am delighted that Loanends Primary School in our*

Borough have achieved such an impressive score to win against all other entries across the UK," he said. *"It was a pleasure to see how much fun they found the various 10ticks activities and I congratulate the children and the school on this wonderful achievement."* Managing Director of 10ticks, Ian Fisher said Loanends were deserved winners. *"It's great to see the uptake in*

Mental Maths," he said. *"Many schools took part during November to battle it out on our top 10 leader board and reach the first, second and third prize winning places. "The top three schools answered over 250,000 questions correctly! "We hope the money can help relieve any financial pressures that schools may have faced over this difficult period."*

Understandably, Sam Hyde, Loanends Primary School P7 teacher, is a very proud man! He said the victory was a true team effort - and the result of some good, old-fashioned hard work by his students.

"We are delighted to have won the competition and I know how much the pupils enjoyed spending many hours, both in school and at home, practising their mental maths skills using 10ticks," he said. *"I am very proud of all of them and it shows their commitment to the school and to their fellow class mates."*





 **ULSTER TEACHERS' UNION**

WHY JOIN?

SUPPORTING **ALL** THE TEACHERS OF NORTHERN IRELAND

The Ulster Teachers' Union is the only union based in Northern Ireland for the teachers of Northern Ireland. Our Headquarters are in Belfast and are staffed by highly experienced officers and administration staff who work only in Northern Ireland. They are therefore completely familiar with all issues relating to education in the Province and are readily available to answer calls and provide support at meetings.



Legal Protection and Advice

From a local Union with our headquarters based in Belfast



Only pay when you work

No salary, no fee - but still hold full rights of membership



Membership Plus Discounts

Access to over 1,500 special offers and discounts

SIGN UP TODAY TO JOIN THE ONLY UNION BASED IN NORTHERN IRELAND FOR THE TEACHERS OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Gambling with Lives was set up in 2018 by Charles and Liz Ritchie, who lost their son Jack to gambling suicide in 2017. Jack, who had been struggling with gambling disorder for several years, was just 24 years old when he died. His death was not the result of spiralling, insurmountable debts, but rather the catastrophic effect that gambling disorder had on his mental health.

Prior to Jack's death, Charles and Liz had no idea about the devastating link between gambling disorder and suicide – there was very little information available, and next to no mainstream recognition. They started Gambling with Lives because they wanted to warn other families and parents about the potentially fatal consequences of gambling disorder.

Research suggests there are as many as **650 gambling-related suicides** in the UK each year, which account for up to **11% of nationwide suicides**. Those suffering with gambling disorder are up to 15 times more likely to take their own lives than members of the general population. Despite the clear link, it took a bereaved father in Charles to collate global research and bring these shocking statistics into the public domain.

Pete and Sadie Keogh, from Enniskillen in County Fermanagh, lost their son Lewis to gambling-related suicide in 2013. Since Lewis' death, Pete and Sadie have been campaigning for tighter gambling regulation in Northern Ireland. Pete, who has a background in education, said:

"We are not just campaigning for legislation to curb the industry; we're raising awareness so that families know the dangers of gambling. It's a story which every parent, teacher and family should take note of."

In 2021, Gambling with Lives launched their new education programme. Created by experts



GAMBLING WITH LIVES

We're raising awareness so that families know the dangers of gambling.

on gambling harm, academics, teachers, award-winning filmmakers, and people with lived experience of gambling harm, the programme is designed to highlight the risk of harm from different gambling products and industry practices, and to address the lack of information currently available – something that leads to lives being lost each year.

James Grimes, Head of Education at Gambling with Lives, said:

“Children are taught about the dangers of alcohol, drugs and smoking; they are told about road safety and sexual predators, but no-one tells them about the gambling industry and its most dangerous products, or the harm that they can inflict so easily. Given that Northern Ireland has such a high rate of so-called ‘problem gambling’, it is absolutely vital that this programme reaches as many people as possible.”

The programme has been designed to run as a four-part lesson for 11-to-16-year-olds but can be adapted to be delivered as one-off session, in an assembly or as part of a school drop-down day.

If your school is interested in us delivering the programme in the classroom, then please get in touch with Barry Fennell [barry@gamblingwithlives.org], our Programme Manager for Northern Ireland.





INSPIRATIONAL TEACHERS AND CLEAN WATER: THE KEY TO CHILDREN'S FUTURES

In the village of Chilangiza Christina runs a nursery class. There are no books, chairs, or even walls, but under the shade of a huge tree, between the hours of 8am and 10:30am, school is in session.

We all remember a great teacher; that person who shines a guiding light at a time when you have no idea what you are doing tomorrow, let alone what you are doing for the rest of your life.

Under a huge tree in the middle of Chilangiza village, Malawi, is one such teacher. Her class starts at 8am and, since the village got clean water last year, the number of students is increasing.

"Most of them regard me as their mother. I really love them so much. Every day when I wake up, I look forward to teaching them how to read and write. I want the best for them – which is having a bright future."

Christina and her aunt run the kindergarten for free. Despite having no books, the pair have created resources to help the children learn Chichewa (the local language), English, mathematics and religious studies.

"Throughout my childhood, I saw a lot of people who had a promising future,"

says Christina. *"But the conditions and opportunities were not available for them to flourish – one of which was a lack of water."*

Childhood should be a time of opportunity and exploration. Learning to read, write and count may be taken for granted in the UK, but around the world, millions of children are missing out on these formative years. Without clean water, decent toilets or good hygiene at school, they are constantly exposed to deadly diseases, leading to missed lessons and failure to make the progress they should. To avoid getting sick, many won't drink altogether - but that means being thirsty, tired and unable to concentrate.

For decades, the Chilangiza community had to walk very long distances to fetch water from the crocodile-infested Bua River. *"As a result, most young learners ended up absconding from their classes, as they could not go to school without a meal or taking a shower,"* Christina explains. *"This resulted in a massive school dropout."*

Christina also suffered her own bereavement as both her children died, one from Sepsis when just a month old.

"It was the hardest and most painful time of my life," she says. But opening the kindergarten had given her a second chance to be a mother.

"Despite losing both my children, I have come to cherish and support all the children in this community. They are indeed our



leaders of tomorrow. It is our core responsibility to teach and shape them in the right way."

Growing up, many children like to ask **'why?'** It's a phrase that can wear out any parent, but it's a question we often ask here at WaterAid, too. Why do almost one in three schools around the world not have clean water? Why do even fewer have decent toilets? Why are millions of children and teachers exposed to deadly diseases caused by drinking dirty water and going to the toilet in the open?

As part of WaterAid's Deliver Life project, which was made possible thanks to generous donations matched by UK aid from the British people, life in Chilangiza changed for good in August 2017. *"Oh, what a great day that was! I remember it vividly,"* Christina says.

"Now we have 38 children registered. They all come in good time and school lessons have never been more exciting. We can contribute this amazing development to us having clean water in our community."

In the last year alone, Deliver Life



Christina teaching numbers to her kindergarten class. WaterAid/Dennis Lupenga

in Malawi has brought clean water to more than 12,500 people, decent toilets to more than 20,000, and shared good hygiene messages with more than 38,000 people. Training for health staff and community representatives is helping spread the word about good hygiene even further.

With clean water close to home and at school, children have more time to study. They can stay healthy and hydrated, able to focus in class. With decent toilets, girls on their period have a clean, private place to go, keeping them in school. And with good hygiene, like handwashing with soap, children can help their families and friends avoid diseases too.

Change is needed, and we can make it happen. **Let's keep asking 'why?'** so that children everywhere, and teachers across the globe, can reach their full potential and feel the water effect.

As final year students at Stranmillis University College, we were offered an opportunity to take part in an alternative placement at the Ulster Teachers' Union. The purpose of this placement was to broaden our knowledge of the field of education outside of the traditional setting of a mainstream school; the UTU has certainly done just that.

We were both intrigued to gain experience within the UTU, as student members. We knew that this would provide valuable insight into how the unions support current teachers, student teachers and retired teachers. We also were excited to learn about the valuable work that goes on 'behind the scenes' in order to provide the best possible service to their members.

During our time at the Ulster Teachers' Union, we have undertaken various tasks including assisting with the creation, delivery and recording of a webinar; learning about the vital database that is used to keep a record of all the UTU's members; listening in on various training opportunities for teachers and sitting in on meetings regarding the future of the UTU.

As we have mentioned, one of our tasks was to create a PowerPoint presentation to assist one of the Officials to deliver an online webinar on Flexible Working. The purpose of the webinar was to inform teachers of the various avenues that they can take to find a better work-life balance. Through this, we were able to gain an in-depth insight into the options that are given to teachers to help make lifestyle changes seamless.

We had the opportunity to listen in on a joint board meeting, with INTO, NAHT, NASUWT, NEU and UTU. They discussed current pressing matters and came to a unified agreement on these issues. This allowed us to gain valuable insight into how the unions work together to combat issues that commonly arise within a school setting.

Not only this, through discussion with different members of staff, we gained valuable insight into the importance of being in a union that supports teachers. Support



STRANMILLIS PLACEMENT STUDENTS AT UTU

Primary and Post Primary 4th year Students see behind the scenes at the Ulster Teachers' Union.

for teachers may include pension advice, representation where needed, and advice for resolutions to conflict in the workplace.

We both thoroughly enjoyed our time working at the UTU and we believe that we learned valuable skills from each individual staff member. We both had ample opportunity to develop our technical skills through co-leading the design of a presentation

as well as developing a deeper understanding of the database that holds all of the members' confidential information in a safe and secure way.

We wish to thank all of the members of staff who made us feel so welcome and look forward to hopefully working alongside you once again, in the future.

Grace McCready (Primary)
Rebecca Gorman (Post-Primary)

FULLY FUNDED IRISH FA NATIONAL COACHING CERTIFICATE (NCC)



A great opportunity has opened up for teachers in the Belfast area to earn the highly respected Irish FA National Coaching Certificate. Upon completion candidates will be eligible to apply for the UEFA level C Diploma, should they wish to continue their football journey.



Teachers must be either:

a) working in a school in the Belfast Council Area

OR

b) living in the Belfast Council area

Teacher and teacher-trainer course:

Course duration: 2.5 days

The £220 cost will be fully covered.

DATES:

Option 1: Feb 15, 16 & 17th
Option 2: March 14, 15 & 16th

EMAIL ASHTON SHIELDS

ashton@hotmail.co.uk
for more information.

THE WONDER OF CHRISTMAS

UTU asked the students of Northern Ireland what they think is so wonderful about Christmas and to design a card that we could use to send out to members and affiliates for 2021 and the response we got back was incredible.



The International Relations Sub-Committee had a Christmas Card competition to design the President's 2021 Christmas Card. Pupils were allowed to create or design their card using pencil, crayon, pen or paint. HQ had hundreds of wonderful entries. The theme was the 'Wonder of Christmas' and staff at HQ, the committee and President had a really difficult choice to decide on the winners of each category and the overall winner.

We had winners in four sections.

- NURSERY & FOUNDATION
- KEY STAGE 1
- KEY STAGE 2
- SPECIAL SCHOOL

With the overall winner being **Grace** from **Arvalee Special School**.

The President delivered class goodie bags to the first prize winners.

The Christmas Card was sent electronically to all UTU members.

You can watch a video we created to show off some of the amazing entries we received this year from students across Northern Ireland.

[Click here to watch](#)



Prize Winners

Nursery/Foundation

- 1st. Annabel, Jones Memorial
- 2nd. Olive, Drumrane Ps
- 3rd. Ben, Riverdales Ps

Highly Commended

Kathryn, Duneane

Key Stage 1

- 1st. Lexie, Irvinestown Ps
- 2nd. John-James, Hardy Memorial
- 3rd. William, Dromore Controlled

Highly Commended

Jack, Mullaghglass Ps

Key Stage 2

- 1st. Della, Garryduff Ps
- 2nd. Lum Lum/Yi Lin, Bushmills Ps
- 3rd. Jai, Islandmagee Ps

Highly Commended

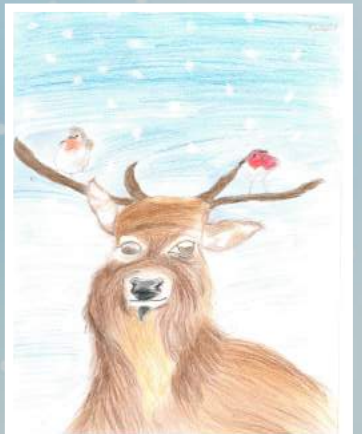
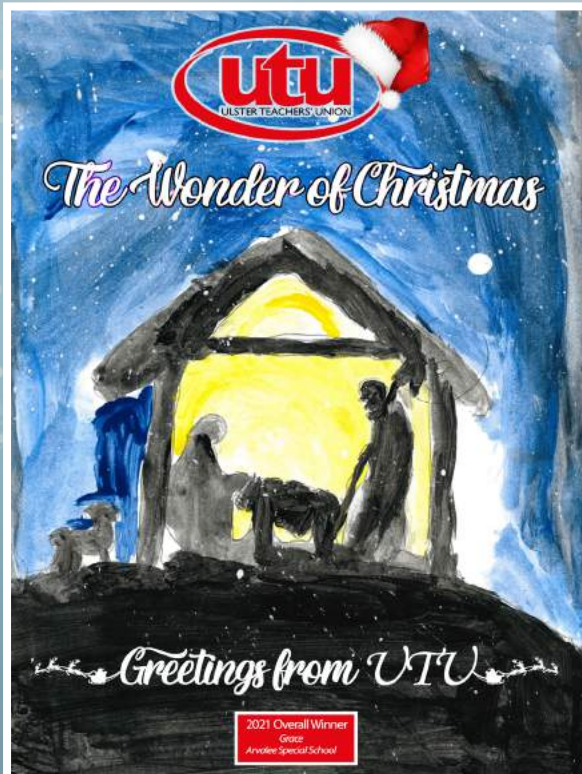
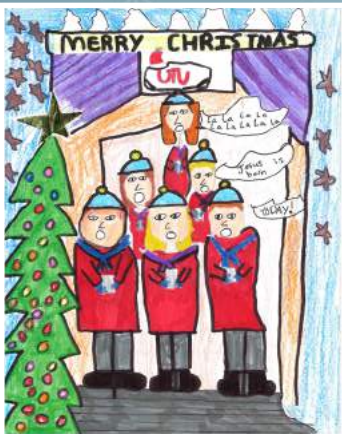
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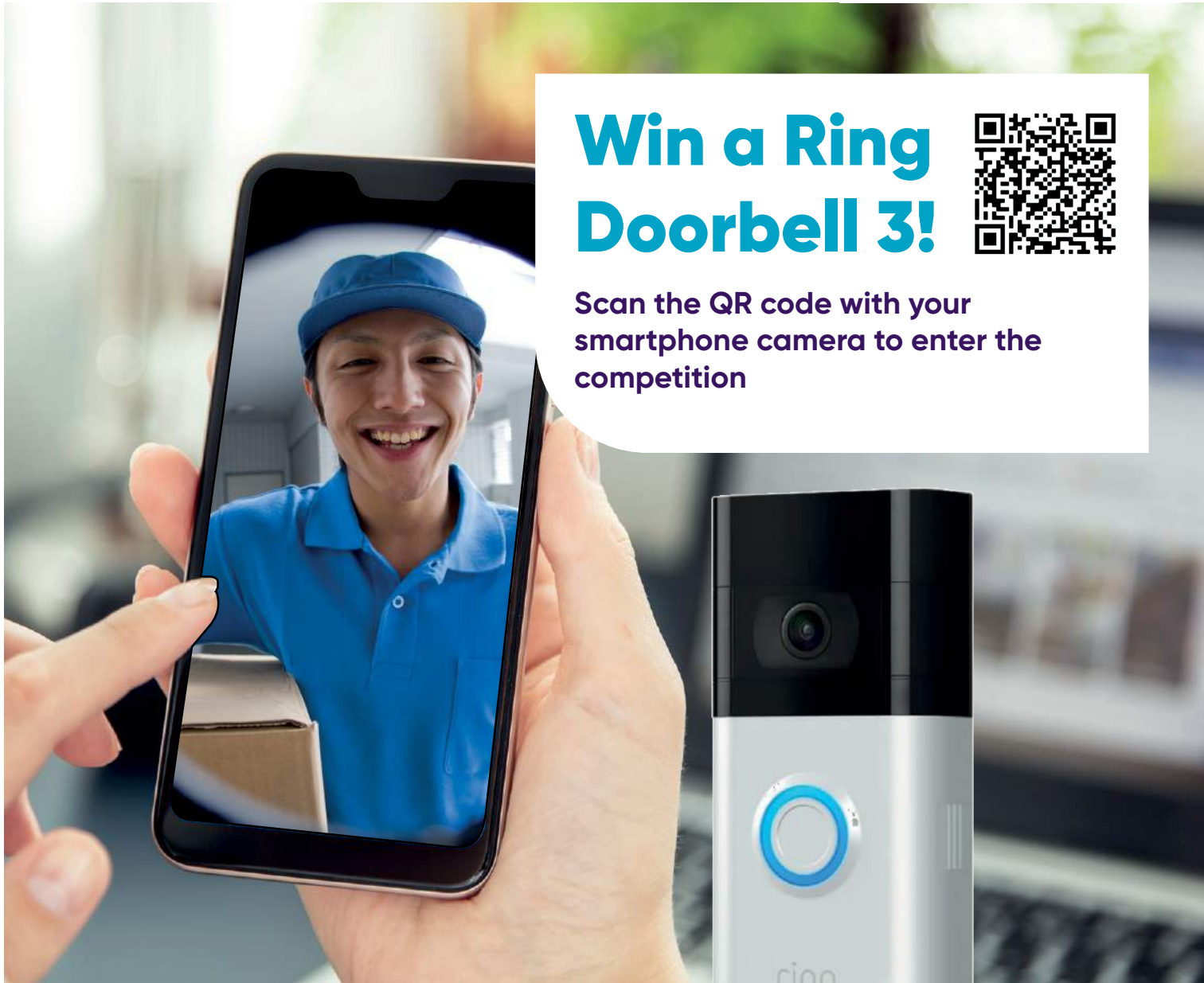
Special

- 1st. Lee, Arvalee School
- 2nd. Cathal, Arvalee School
- 3rd. Jacob, Beechlawm Special

Highly Commended

Freddie, Arvalee School





Win a Ring Doorbell 3!



Scan the QR code with your smartphone camera to enter the competition

To enter visit
cornmarketinsurance.co.uk/utu-ring
Competition closes 31 March 2022

Promotional photography required. No purchase necessary. No cash alternative to prize. Prize is a Ring Doorbell 3. Only one entry per person. Competition closes 31/03/2022 and is only open to members of the Ulster Teachers Union. Winner will be notified within three days of the draw by phone, if winner doesn't respond with 72 hours Cornmarket reserve the right to select another winner. Prize draw is open to persons aged 18 and over who are UK residents. Draw excludes duplicate entries, any employee of Cornmarket and anyone directly or professionally associated with the promotion. Entries not submitted in accordance with these rules, delayed or incomplete entries will be disqualified. By entering the competition, the winner consents to take part in any publicity accompanying or resulting from this promotion, and for his/her name and county to be used for publicity purposes by Cornmarket in printed and/or online formats. The promoter, Cornmarket Insurance Services Ltd., reserves the right to alter, amend and foreclose the promotion without prior notice.

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