

THE ELECTION ON TWITTER

TWEET OF THE DAY

Mick Wallace @mickwallace

Let's have the truth... #GE16

PENALTY POINTS, SITESERV, SHANNON. NAMA... LET'S HAVE THE TRUTH

MOST ACTIVE POLITICIAN

Tweets sent in the last 24 hours

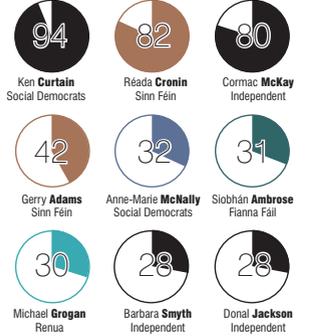


IMAGE OF THE DAY

ANTHONY LAWLOR TD

DELIVERED TO KILCOCK

Successful delivery to the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Good Friday Agreement.

The fall of the Berlin Wall.

Launched first dog into space.

Re-instatement of Wispa chocolate bars.

Found the wreck of the Titanic.

First man to get a fig into a Fig Roll.

Invented the Spicco Bag.

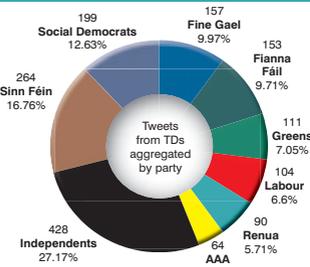
Fine Gael Kildare North TD Anthony Lawlor claiming credit for almost everything

WINNERS AND LOSERS

Stephen Donnelly Social Democrats 89% Cheers 11% Boos	Lucinda Creighton Renua 87% Cheers 13% Boos	Gerry Adams Sinn Féin 82% Cheers 18% Boos
Eamon Ryan Greens 72% Cheers 28% Boos	Joan Burton Labour 43% Cheers 57% Boos	Micheál Martin Fianna Fáil 42% Cheers 58% Boos
Enda Kenny Fine Gael 32% Cheers 68% Boos	Leo Varadkar Fine Gael 5% Cheers 95% Boos	

Figures based on positive and negative sentiment on Twitter

MOST ACTIVE PARTY



MOST MENTIONED POLITICIAN

1,129	Gerry Adams
685	Enda Kenny
631	Joan Burton
465	Réada Cronin
244	Leo Varadkar
236	Alan Kelly

Source: Data supplied by the Centre for the Analysis of Social Media at Demos. Data for the 24 hours up to 5.30pm yesterday.

's job creation claims rejected

Joe Leogue

A Fine Gael TD has been called a disgrace after claiming to have delivered 150 jobs at a craft beer brewery for his constituency only to have its founder reject that the politician had any involvement in the company expansion.

Kildare North TD Anthony Lawlor's election leaflet listed the jobs for the town of Killock, when the brewery in question had moved to Celbridge, 20km away.

Niall Phelan, founder of the Rye River Brewing Company, took to social media to dispute Mr Lawlor's claims

after a friend of the brewer alerted him to the TD's election literature, in which he listed "150 jobs created by Rye River Brewing Company" under the heading "Delivered to Killock".

"I was extremely annoyed when this came through my friend's door," said Mr Phelan.

"Firstly, I have spoken to this politician twice in my life. Secondly to claim that he is responsible for creating jobs in our business is a disgrace.

"And third, it shows how little he knows our business, as Rye River has moved from Killock to Celbridge where we have announced

150 new jobs on top of the 50 we already created."

The businessman said Mr Lawlor, who was first elected to the Dáil in 2011, had "lost his vote" over the claims outlined in the campaign literature.

"Our team at Rye River have worked bloody hard and taken huge personal risks with plenty of sleepless nights to create those jobs. Mr Lawlor, you have just lost any chance of any vote from me, because if you're claiming this, what else can I not believe on your leaflet."

Speaking to the *Irish Examiner*, Mr Phelan said he and others at the brewery were all the more annoyed at

the claim because of the involvement of another public representative.

"We did have help from another public representative who worked with us in the background, who is running in this election, and who has never sought publicity for it," said Mr Phelan.

"So for somebody who hasn't given any time to us to come out and claim something like that is a disgrace."

He said that the majority of employees at the brewery are constituents of Mr Lawlor's, and while many were still undecided as to how they would vote next

week, many "now know who they won't vote for".

Mr Phelan said that he was angry and annoyed but had calmed down somewhat since he first learned of the leaflet.

Mr Lawlor yesterday conceded that his leaflet incorrectly stated that the company is still based in Killock, but said the literature was not an attempt to claim credit for the brewery expansion.

He said the start-up was supported by Enterprise Ireland and that the leaflet had intended "to share the good news" about the new jobs at the brewery.

taking credit from someone as hard-working as Niall Phelan," said Mr Lawlor.

The Rye River Brewing Company's own Facebook page has posted a light-hearted response to the incident on Facebook.

It shared a doctored version of the offending campaign leaflet, in which it lists a number of achievements Mr Lawlor "delivered" to Killock.

These include bringing a successful end to the Cuban Missile Crisis, launching the world's first space station, finding the wreck of the Titanic, and credits the TD with being the "first man to get a fig into a fig roll".

Gillian encounters a flood of support on streets of Bandon

A flood relief candidate hopes to be Cork South West's very first female TD, says Catherine Shanahan

CALL it traditional, call it conservative, call it patriarchal, but don't try and call the result in Cork South West where a handful of women are doing their damndest to end its reign as the only constituency to have never returned a female TD.

This time around, there are five in the mix: Fianna Fáil's Margaret Murphy O'Mahony, Rachel McCarthy of Sinn Féin, and three independents, Theresa Heaney, Fiona Pettit, and Gillian Powell.

When the *Irish Examiner* joined Gillian Powell on the campaign trail she was in determined mood, buoyed up, so to speak, by the flooding that hit her home, business, and the town of Bandon under a couple of feet of water on two separate occasions before Christmas.

"I decided to run four weeks ago when I was standing in water for the second time in a month," says Gillian.

"It was about turning despair into something positive. We've had bucketfuls of promises since the last major flood and nothing practical has been done on the ground."

But will running as a flood relief candidate narrow her appeal? Gillian, an activist with the Bandon Flood Group, doesn't think so.

"The neighbourhood is a local electoral area of Skibbereen, and the town of Clonakilty,



Gillian Powell, flood relief candidate, canvassing for votes in Bandon, Co. Cork. She says despite bucketfuls of promises since 2009 nothing has been done to alleviate flooding in the town. Her own home and business was under water twice before Christmas. Pictures: Denis Scannell

"I feel that by running I am giving a local voice to a national issue. And it is really resonating with people."

But will running as a flood relief candidate narrow her appeal? Gillian, an activist with the Bandon Flood Group, doesn't think so.

"The neighbourhood is a local electoral area of Skibbereen, and the town of Clonakilty,

"They have no [insurance] protection for their homes or businesses, they find it very difficult to make a living. I think they are really sick of the political system and find that the party system doesn't serve them well."

In *Reens* newsgasts, Robert Fitzpatrick says he's worked with Gillian on flooding issues and that she will be getting his vote.

In Hickey's bookellers, Eric and Breda Hickey say they've been flooded eight times in 36 years and that Gillian "will get a lot of votes in the town."

"People are fed up with all the promises and no progress," says Breda.

"She's been flooded herself so she knows the ins and outs of it," says Eric.

He doesn't think any seats are a certainty — at the moment, Fine Gael holds two and Labour one — although if anyone is returned he thinks it will be Jim Daly of Fine Gael. "After that,

"All bets are off," he says.

In the nearby tastefully-decorated Warren Allen Collections and Coffee Shop, Sean Kennedy says they've been flooded twice and that he will be giving Gillian his number one vote. Sean's mother Jacinta concurs. "We're thrilled to see women running, it's about time. I honestly think there'll be nothing

done until women get into real leadership positions. We need strong independent women who won't get the kosh," she says.

When Ask one client in the cafe if she will be voting for Gillian, she replies that she has to "consult" with her husband, doing little to rid the town of its image as one where men have traditionally ruled.

Another couple of female coffee drinkers say they have voted for Gillian. By coincidence, Independent councillor Michael Collins, who runs the Mizen Peninsula, also drops into the coffee shop.

He's hoping his 25-year track record of working in a voluntary capacity for the people of West Cork will stand to him, although he and Gillian face stiff competition from former Fianna Fáil mayor of Cork, councillor Alan Coleman, who left the party to run as an Independent candidate when it became clear he wasn't going to get the party's nomination.

His brother John believes Michael is "in with a chance" and says Fine Gael are terrified of losing their seats.

"But we won't know until they start to access their records in Clonakilty," he says.

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Determined Marie means business

Conor Kane

"Marie Means Business," is the slogan splashed on Marie Murphy's election literature, posters, and campaign cars and the candidate herself is taking it literally during this whirlwind few weeks.

Chosen by Fine Gael HQ as a third candidate in the new, amalgamated Tipperary constituency, to the bemusement of some in the camps of sitting TDs Tom Hayes and Noel O'Brien, the county councillor is determined to be no third wheel as she approaches polling day.

"I'm not, and never was, a token candidate," she says with the air of someone who she has a genuine chance of upsetting the odds come February 26.

If the response garnered on a dank, damp, grey morning during a thorough trek through some of her own heartland in south-west Tipperary can be relied upon, maybe it's not so fanciful? "I know what you're looking for and you're going to get it," is the encouraging greeting from Margaret O'Brien in Castlegregg past Clogheen, close to the Vee and the wider Knockmeal-downs. "Fair play to you, you're a great worker."

Ms O'Brien speaks of a scheme proposed along by Ms Murphy, which involved the removal of trees which were



Marie Murphy, Fine Gael candidate in Tipperary, left, chatting with Breda Moran of Ballyboy House during canvassing in the Gogheen area. Picture: Denis Minihane

The campaign trail

blocking the sightlines on the road outside her house. "You were taking your life in your hands coming in and out of the road."

Next up, "I must get that light fixed," vows the candidate, in relation to one of the public lights along the road.

Nearby, Tommy Dwyer is asked by Murphy and her team, including her sister Noelle Ahearne and other volunteers, for a vote. "Ah, I will, I will," Mr Dwyer answers. He wonders about the practicalities of campaigning throughout the entire, large county of Tipperary.

"Did you go to north Tipp?" He wonders, as if asking about a venture across the world. "Not yet, but I will," the first-time general election hopeful but two-term county councillor says. "I've been to Thurles."

Mattie McGrath country. But she is far from limiting her canvass to that largely rural stretch of the county, she explains. "Yesterday morning I was in Goatenbridge, in the afternoon I was in Powerstown outside Clonmel, then Abbey Meadows in Clonmel. Tomorrow we're in Cashel and the day after in Fethard." Sean Tierney wonders if candidates have "the same clout" since "John D retired," referring to a long-serving council overseer. "He knew every nook and cranny of the area," Ms Murphy agrees.

Seán asks: "Are you going to do it?" "With your help," is the reply.

In Ballyboy House, a guesthouse just off the main Ardfinnan-Clogheen road run by the charming Breda and Alan Moran, there's hot tea and coffee, biscuits, and an Aga-warmed kitchen in which to rehearse and refresh those tired bodies. "I save you on the television, you were very good," Breda says as the crew settle down for a chat and a rundown of the rest of the day's agenda.

Twenty minutes later, after that welcome pit-stop, it's out into the rain again for some more hours of door-to-door, voter-to-voter, pressing the flesh. "Time to get going again," Ms Murphy gently prods her team. She means business.

Social Democrats in community banking proposal

Elaine Loughlin
Political Reporter

Credit unions and post offices would have the power to provide loans, mortgages, and debit cards under current legislation, but the Social Democrats believe services provided by credit unions and post offices should be expanded.

Party co-leader Róisín Shortall said the community banking plans would give credit union and post office customers full current account and loan facilities, including debit cards and online banking.

She said: "We propose an ambitious project where the State and Central Bank of Ireland would work with both networks to build a strong community banking sector in Ireland."

"Post-recession, many people would rather bank with publicly-owned, or community owned, institutions. Across the country, households and small businesses are finding it difficult to secure loans, including for

mortgages and business investment."

The party pointed out that credit unions have credit deposits in the pillar banks which "under current legislation" cannot be used to finance their full current account and loan facilities, including debit cards and the self-employed.

Ms Shortall said there is a demand to expand the services the 380 credit unions and 1,300 post offices around the country provide. Similar proposals were put forward in a recent An Post report on the state of the post office network.

The report said post offices will have to diversify, and services should be co-located with other businesses to stay afloat. Mr Kerr will now stay on for another six months to work on implementing the proposals.

The report, which was published last month, also recommended the introduction of a payment account system through the post office which will allow customers to avail of banking services such as ATM cards and direct debits.

Online campaign of movers and shakers

Joe Leogue crunches the data from 'Irish Examiner' collaborator Demos to show who's hot and who's not in the world of pre-election tweets

here by Demos, which reflect the Cork constituencies from January 20 to February 9, give some insight as to how the election is playing out online. What remains to be seen is how online activity translates to the most crucial performance indicator of them all — votes.

Cork East
It will come to no surprise to those familiar with the Irish Twitter landscape that Ken Curtin and the Social Democrats are ranking highly on a number of metrics in Cork East.
The first-time candidate is hugely active on Twitter, sending over 129,000 tweets since joining the social network. Mr Curtin boasts an amount of followers that dwarves that of well-established TDs.
In the first week of the campaign Mr Curtin sent 1,484 tweets — more than all other active candidates in Cork East, North-Central, North-West, and South-West combined. In turn he was mentioned 2,691 times by the public on the social media site. The only other notable active Cork East Twitter user in week one was 'baw' TD and minister of state Sean Sherlock, who sent 80

tweets but was mentioned 851 times. As for the public reaction, Demos's algorithms show that Fine Gael's David Stanton had the highest percentage of "positive tweets" at 96%, Mr Curtin the lowest at 69%.

Cork North Central
Cork North Central is a constituency that has seen lots of activity from the public, but little engagement from the candidates themselves.
The Green Party's Oliver Moran was the most active here in the first week of the campaign, sending 238 tweets, 17% of which were replies to posts from the public.
Despite sending just 17 tweets in week one of the campaign, minister of state Kathleen Lynch was the most mentioned by members of the public, who tagged her in 1,012 tweets. The algorithm however, ranks her at the bottom of the 'boos and cheers' list, suggesting fewer than two in three of these tweets (62%) were positive.

Cork North West
Independents rule the Twitter roost in Cork North West, where Ballyhea Says

no campaigner Diarmuid O'Flynn and county mayor John Paul O'Shea posted the most tweets with 226 and 106.

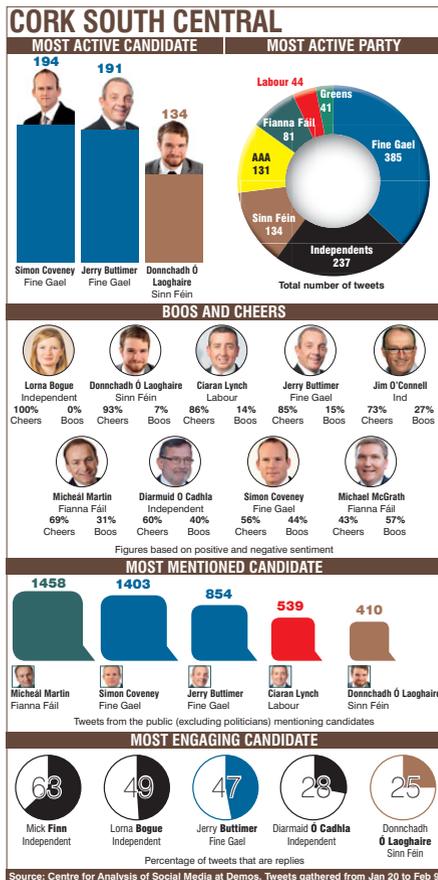
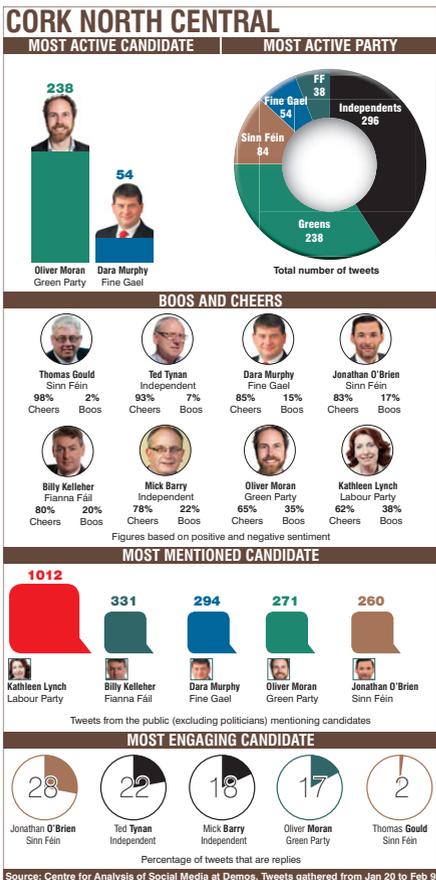
They are at opposite ends of the attitudinal score table, however. The algorithm indicates all tweets mentioning O'Shea in the first week were positive, compared to 70% for O'Flynn. It is noteworthy, however, that O'Shea's sample size is just 42 tweets, compared to the 413 posts from the public mentioning O'Flynn who is by far the most mentioned Cork North West candidate on Twitter, racking up 1,294 mentions.

Cork South Central
Tipped by many political observers to be the group of death of this election, the Cork South Central candidates are leaving no medium ignored, and are actively courting the Twitter vote.
No fewer than six candidates tweeted over 100 times in the first week of the campaign, with Fine Gael's duo of Minister Simon Covey and TD Jerry Buttiner sending 385 tweets out between them in the run up to the Dal's dissolution and in its immediate aftermath. Despite not actively embracing the medium to the same extent as his rivals,

Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin was the most mentioned candidate by the public on Twitter, clocking 1,458 mentions to Mr Covey's 1,403.

Both are receiving mostly positive feedback, though the figures show Mr Martin and Mr Covey had 31% and 44% negative sentiment.
Fianna Fáil finance spokesman Michael McGrath is the only candidate in the county to have received a mostly negative reception from tweeters in this timeframe, with Demos's algorithm stating 57% of the attitudinal tweets about Mr McGrath were negative.

Cork South West
Cork South West is a quiet constituency on Twitter. Autism activist Fiona O'Leary was the most active with 125 tweets in the first few weeks, followed by Labour TD Michael McCarthy. The majority (67%) of Ms O'Leary's tweets were replies to the public.
Mr McCarthy was the most mentioned by the public over the early days of the campaign, however he ranked below an of the boos and cheers table with one in three tweets about Mr McCarthy being negative in nature.



POLITICAL anoraks love nothing more than having facts and figures at their disposal. Statistics that can scrutinise and combine in the hope of looking into mathematical tea leaves and predicting the outcome of the election.
With the advent of the digital age, and all the communicative media that come with it, opportunities have arisen to analyse the way we talk about the election in a way that gives us some insight into how the public perceive our General Election candidates.
To this end, the *Irish Examiner* has teamed up with Demos, a leading UK thinktank, to take a deeper look at how our candidates have used Twitter to engage with the electorate — and as to how the public are responding.
Having worked with the BBC on its election coverage in the UK last year, Demos has developed an algorithm that analyses tweets sent by members of the public and scans them to read if they are "attitudinal" — in other words, it determines if the sentiment of each tweet is positive or negative towards the candidate.
This, along with a look at the number

of tweets sent by the candidates, how often they reply to the public and how many time non-party sources tag candidates in their tweets can help us look at how twitter users are reacting to each candidate.
As with all polls and figures, this Twitter analysis comes with a health warning. The samples taken here are not as representative of the public as those taken by a polling company, which seeks to accurately represent demographics in their polls.
Twitter is a constituency in and of itself. Active users are typically, though not exclusively, middle-class and left of centre in their politics. Furthermore, as a medium it sees a reawakening at times of an election, when users (and candidates) with dormant accounts return to Twitter to effectively canvass the rest of us.
Twitter timelines are particularly plagued by Twitter canvassers during televised debates and current affairs shows, when party faithful tweet ad nauseum about how great their candidate is — and how poor their opponent is performing.
That aside, the figures put together

