

Buncrana to Host Inishowen's First PRIDE Event

As the sun shone down in the summer of 2021, rainbow-coloured flags waved in the June heat, bunting was draped from the windows and shop fronts of many businesses in Buncrana. Those living and visiting the town couldn't help but be impressed to see the beautiful displays by the local business community, playing their part to show support for PRIDE month and the LGBTQ+ community. It was a powerful and impactful initiative. Meanwhile, online, locals were 'liking and sharing' their photos of the rainbow flags, and there was positive commentary and an overwhelming sense of 'pride' of place!

A seed was set and was a catalyst in the forming of a new voluntary community group, "Inishowen Pride", led by a group of local people from around Inishowen, all with various backgrounds and skillsets but with similar values of inclusion, equality, and community-spirit at its core. In its first year of inception, the common goal is to organise Inishowen's inaugural PRIDE event. Inishowen Pride is delighted to announce that Buncrana will host a community-led, PRIDE parade on **Sunday 5th June 2022, at 3pm.**

Jen McCarron, spokesperson for Inishowen Pride, says, *"This will be a fun and family-friendly event that will celebrate the diversity of our community. The event presents an opportunity to recognize the progress that has been made to treat all community members equally and ensure that everyone feels like they belong. Over the years, many people were not fully accepted or welcomed here because of their identity. Many left to find that sense of belonging elsewhere. Unfortunately, LGBTQ+ people in Ireland are still facing many challenges today. With the horrific attacks that took place in Sligo, Dublin and Dundalk over the past month, our hearts go out to the victims and their loved ones. This is an important time for the wider community to show support. Our young people should no longer have to question their value in the same way LGBTQ+ people did in the past. Celebrations like this are a sign of hope for everyone but are especially important for the LGBTQ+ young people in our community."*

"We are excited that this year's celebration coincides with the bank holiday weekend in June with many traveling home to join in the festivities. This event will give a strong, warm message to members our LGBTQ+ community that they are welcome and valued. We anticipate that local families and friends will be there to show their solidarity on the day of the parade alongside visitors and those who return home for the event. We are delighted to have received so much interest and offers of support from national organisations, local businesses, community groups and others who want to come on board and help us make this a meaningful event in Inishowen." adds Jen.

Cathaoirleach of Donegal County Council, Cllr. Jack Murray adds *"I fully support and welcome this initiative and am very proud that plans are in place for the first PRIDE parade to take place in Buncrana. I have no doubt that it will be a big success with such a great team driving this forward. Inishowen is a forward-thinking, welcoming and diverse place, and while it is timely, events like this are not before its time!"*.

Jen continues, *"The whole community is invited to get involved and join us for what will be an exciting, fun and uplifting day in Inishowen. We would love to hear from the creative sector, such as local artists and musicians who wish to help out. All schools, education settings, community centres and businesses in Inishowen are invited to fly a Pride flag in solidarity for the week in advance of the parade. This will be the first Pride parade in Donegal and together we will make it one to remember!"*

So, please mark your calendars, save the date **Sunday 5th June 2022** and meet us at **3pm** in Buncrana for the first-ever PRIDE parade in Inishowen. Follow us on Facebook 'Inishowen Pride' to keep up to date and for further information or email: inishowenpride@gmail.com