



WORKER DIRECTOR ELECTIONS 2021



Email: denisetssa@gmail.com

23rd September 2021

Most colleagues will know me as Denise Guinan, I work for Dublin Bus as Chief Clerk at Ringsend. I previously worked across a range of Depots, including Phibsboro, Donnybrook, Harristown and Head Office.

I was asked to join the CIÉ Board in the autumn of 2018, following the retirement of a then sitting Worker Director. I have, over the last three years, spent a considerable period of time familiarising myself with how the system operates, at Board level and how the various Stakeholders engage to enable the CIÉ Subsidiaries to operate Public Transport Services. I have also been a Director on the Iarnród Éireann Board throughout the three-year period.

I won't pretend to say that my period on the Board/s have been plain sailing, in fact I can confess that the first 18 months were daunting, it does take time to build a rapport and a network with fellow Board members and the Management/Executive colleagues that report into Board. Having said that, I do feel that the experience I have gained through the period in which I served will serve to be invaluable, should you be kind enough to elect me to serve again.

Covid-19

A number of issues did dominate my time on the Board/s. The most obvious being that of the challenges faced by the Companies and Staff through the Covid-19 Pandemic. I used my position on the Board to advocate for remote/home working; as a Clerical Officer myself, I know the challenges that were being faced by parents that were suddenly thrown a situation where we had to be able to juggle Work with the fact that our children were not at School. I think it fair to say that the CIÉ Companies, in the main, got the balance right.

I also want to recognise that frontline colleagues, bus drivers, train drivers, platform staff and customer care staff, along with supervisors, had no option but to continue to attend work during the entire Covid-19 pandemic, at great personal risk and no option to work from home. Ordinary workers are the real heroes of the pandemic.

Pension

The other dominant issue was, and indeed remains the **1951 Superannuation Pension Scheme**. My role as a Senior TSSA Representative did place me in a difficult position in that I was obliged, as it should be, to follow and abide by my Unions strategy as part of the Trade Union Group (TUG) block. I should point out that whilst the Industrial Relations process involving our Pension Scheme has been completed, I am aware that the 1951 Committee may have a different or opposing view on issues associated with the Scheme. If as previously indicated, they are intent on seeking High Court direction, then I genuinely wish them all the success in the World, **after all, the protection of our Pension Benefits has to be the ultimate Goal, not how it is achieved.**

Privatisation

Each Company has its own challenges, some, as is the case with Bus Éireann and Dublin Bus, have the almost constant threat of Tendering, or Privatisation by another name, hanging over us. **All of our Unions need to use their combined strength and resources to combat those in Society that are determined to incrementally eat into our State-owned Bus Companies.** I will, along with my NBRU and SIPTU colleagues, be urging a dual approach of 'taking on' those that appear determined to wipe us out, whilst at the same time using my position at Board to encourage a more robust response from the hierarchy towards protecting our Companies and our jobs.

Privatisation threatens all within the CIÉ group of companies. The CIÉ holding company has underpinned public transport in Ireland for years. We must ensure that continues. I believe it is important as public transport evolves that CIÉ holding company continues to underpin Irish public transport.

I believe that it is of vital importance that all Unions work together, for the benefit of all employees, and represent them in a manner that will reflect the issues which concern workers and their families.

I do believe that those that provide core work across the Companies need to be supported and protected. There should be no such thing as one group of workers being isolated or singled out as being of less value, all of us, **from Drivers to Clerical staff, Maintenance staff, Supervisory, Executive, non-Executive etc, all have a vital role to play towards the future of our Companies.**

Iarnród Éireann, whilst not perhaps as exposed as our Bus Companies, does have its own challenges, from trying to restore the passenger numbers back to pre-Covid, to embracing and delivering on the development of new infrastructure as set out in the various **Government initiatives** like electrification and extension of the DART, new heavy rail for Cork, a refocus on ports and rail freight as part of the battle against climate change.

Pay increases

There is also the not insignificant matter of ensuring that Pay is addressed in a manner that recognises both the effort put in by all CIÉ Companies workers, through Covid-19 and the challenge faced by those same workers trying to keep pace with the ever-increasing cost of living.

Property

Staff may be aware of recent media coverage involving large banks of CIÉ land, mainly Bus Garages, being used to address the Housing crisis, whilst any move towards resolving the chronic shortage of homes is to be welcomed, the impact on Staff that currently work at the affected Garages/Depots will have to loom large in any discussions which involve the transfer of CIÉ Property. I will be making it one of my top priorities at Board and will insist that no lands should transfer until the Staff issues are resolved.

The pandemic hit the tourism industry particularly hard. It is crucial that the CIÉ board recognise this and ensure that CIÉ tours gets all the necessary support and resources to bounce back as we start to reopen. Tourism will be a crucial aspect of the wider Irish economy recovering from the pandemic and it is crucial that CIÉ tours remains a strong player in the industry.

Whilst my intention was, towards the latter part of my time on the Board, was to visit practically every area across the CIÉ Network, to ascertain and hear first-hand, about the issues that directly impact on Staff, the combination of Covid-19 restrictions and the Remote/Home working made that intention impossible to achieve.

It is fair to say that Coronavirus and its impact has majorly affected how I would have liked to use my time and influence to improve things for my fellow CIÉ workers

I do, however, remain committed to travel throughout the Network, when the Public Health restrictions are fully lifted. I am asking you to elect me as your Worker Director. I want to use the knowledge and experience I have gained to protect and enhance our Terms and Conditions; **I am and will continue to be a voice on the Board/s, not just for Women, but all Staff.**

I would respectfully ask that you will **give consideration to my VOTEBRU colleague, Dermot Healy as your number two option, should you be kind enough as to give me your number One Vote.**

Please feel free to contact me at:
denisetssa@gmail.com

VOTE Guinan

