



# WSI News

Volume 27, Issue 1 Spring 2022

## Eoghan Leads the Way for WSI in 2022



**Eoghan McCabe with his Parents Brian and Linda McCabe**

Hello everyone and a belated Happy New Year. We are delighted to be writing this message at a moment when the country is thankfully emerging from lockdown and we are all looking forward to getting out and enjoying ourselves in 2022.

For obvious reasons 2021 will not go down as a very active year for WSI. However we did manage to provide our annual Picnic Day in August and it was fantastic to see such a large turn out on what turned out to be a lovely day. For those of you who did not manage to attend we have a brief report on a fantastic day on Page 4.

We also have some great reports about two young people affected by Williams Syndrome who led the way for

WSI in the last year. Eoghan McCabe, from Ardee, decided to put on a Tractor Run in aid of Williams Syndrome and a local charity which turned into a fantastic success. Eoghan's story is on Page 2.

Another young member of WSI Katie Begley from Naas did fantastic work in working with one of her teachers and Naas GAA to raise funds for Williams Syndrome Ireland. Katie's story is on Page 3.

With young people like this taking the lead in our Association the future of WSI is in good hands.

Finally we are delighted to announce our first event of the 2022 which will be our Annual Weekend Break in early March which is being held in Portlaoise this year. We will also be

running our Annual General Meeting during that weekend and we are very much looking forward to running the AGM in person this year (bye, bye Zoom!). Details are provided on Page 6. We hope to see you there!

A big thank you to everyone who supported WSI during the last two years. Thanks to all of you we now have the funds in place to support you in the coming years and we look forward to meeting you all during the year ahead.

### **WSI Committee 2021**

### **Williams Syndrome Ireland**

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## Eoghan's Home Run Eoghan McCabe

“There were young and old involved in this very big day. From texting, WhatsApp, phone calls, Facebook, Tic Tok it was an overall serious networking task among friends”



Eoghan McCabe (left) with Conor and Martin Wall and Jamie Johnson at 'Eoghan's Home Run' in aid of Williams Syndrome Ireland and Ardee Hospice and Homecare. Photo: Ken Finegan/www.newspics.ie

### Eoghan and Friends at the Tractor Run

*A charity Tractor Run organized by Eoghan McCabe, a 17 year old transition year student from Ardee, was a huge success. Here is Eoghan's story of the Tractor Run.*

The participants started getting ready days before – power washing, buffing, hovering, installing lights and air horns. It was all about show casing their master pieces.

There were young and old involved in this very big day. From texting, WhatsApp, phone calls, Facebook, Tic Tok it was an overall serious networking task among friends.

The 1st Tractors pulled in at 10am on the day and this continued until the final entrant reached the site at 1pm. It was a super organised day with modern tractors directed down lines and filling up quickly. Trucks lined up

separately and finally the classic cars and vintage vehicles were lined up.

Approximately 260 vehicles participated in the event which made a fantastic success of the day and we are all very grateful to everyone who took part.

The field was organised in a one way system allowing for easy flow throughout the whole day.

A very wide circle of my friends helped out throughout the whole day; at the entrance gate, selling tickets, directing traffic, road traffic management and organizing the raffle etc. We want to really thank everyone so much for all the help in organising the event and for all the incredible generous sponsors that donated money, prizes for the raffle and prizes for the participants on the day.

Before all vehicles moved out, I said a few words reminding

everyone about the reason for the tractor run which was to support Williams Syndrome Ireland and Ardee Hospice. I also thanked everyone for their support and participation including the Order of Malta and the Gardai from Ardee, Drogheda and Dundalk Divisions.

Spectators were dotted all along the route from the start to the finish of the run.

On the return of the convoy, all vehicles returned to the field again knowing their positions. This allowed everyone to enjoy the many conversations about all the hard work that had gone into all the incredible vehicles.

It was a great outdoor event enjoyed by all who travelled from far and near including – Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Cavan, Longford, Dublin and Newry.

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## Go Katie — Naas GAA Raises €1,500 for WSI

Helena Begley

Katie Begley has always been Naas GAA's number one fan. Her love for the club started when she began helping her Dad out when he was manager of the Senior hurling team in 2015, 2016 and 2017. She would often join him and the team at training sessions, putting out cones, collecting sliotars and having fun with everyone. This year, Naas GAA has had their most successful year to date. Their senior football team won the county championship for the first time in 31 years which was wonderful for everyone involved.

Celebrations continued as they managed to play their way to a senior Leinster final playing in the hallowed grounds of Croke Park against Kilmacud Crokes. Sadly, that's where their journey ended and Katie was heartbroken that they lost. However, the senior

hurling team have also been having a wonderful year. They too won the senior championship and have since gone on to reach the All Ireland intermediate final which will also be held in Croke Park on Feb 5th. Katie has her flag at the ready!

Inspired by the recent achievements of the Naas hurlers, a talented artist who is a past teacher of Katie, decided to paint some pictures to mark their great success. She then had her paintings printed on greeting cards and suggested that the Naas GAA club sell them to raise funds for charity. Having had Katie in her class she suggested the charity be Williams Syndrome Ireland and Naas GAA were more than happy to agree. Cards were sold by the club leading up to Christmas and a total of €1,500 was raised.



Katie and her family would like to express their sincere thanks to her teacher, who wishes to remain anonymous and to Naas GAA for this very kind and considerate gesture.

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**“Cards were sold by the club leading up to Christmas and a total of €1,500 was raised. .”**

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**Katie and Dad, Eoin, Receiving the Cheque from David Delahunty, Naas GAA Hurling**

## WSI Summer Picnic2021

Linda Kane

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**“Clonfert Pet Farm very kindly provided us with our own dedicated picnic area which meant that we were able to gather together in a very relaxing informal setting”**

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After what seemed an endless lockdown we were all delighted to get some breathing space last summer to get out and about. WSI was delighted to be able to hold its annual Picnic at the Clonfert Pet Farm in Kildare in September 2021. It was absolutely great to see so many members and their families turn up to what was possibly the best ever Picnic Day.

For a start we were blessed with a beautiful sunny day which was ideal for the animal pet farm setting. In addition Clonfert Pet Farm very kindly provided us with our own dedicated picnic area which meant that we were able to gather together in a very relaxing informal setting to enjoy the sun, the animals, the food, the presents and the



**Enjoying the Rabbits in the Sunshine**

music and dance.

It was great to see so many new members attending and to have a wide range of people attending from the very young to the not so young.

The arrangement provided a safe outdoor setting where everyone was able to meet both old friends and new acquaintances and share stories of both living with Williams Syndrome and living with the lockdown in what has

been a very trying period for everyone. A big thank you to Christy McNally for putting on a great live music show and giving everyone the chance to dance, sing and be merry.

Given the success of the Picnic we hope to arrange another Picnic as soon as possible. In the meantime enjoy the pictures which say it all about a great day in the sun.



**Meeting Old Friends Again**

## Picnic in the Park—In Pictures Linda Kane

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## WSI Weekend Break and AGM March 2022

Linda Kane

This years WSI annual weekend break will be held in Portlaoise on the weekend beginning Friday the 11th of March. The venue for this weekend is the Midland Park Hotel which is right in the town centre and only a stones throw from the train station.

The annual weekend provides a great opportunity for individuals and families affected by WS to get together, socialize and share experiences. We would particularly welcome new members as this is a great way to get to know some of the WS community in Ireland. Hopefully we will see you all there!

This year we are planning to stage our Annual General Meeting on the

Saturday during the weekend and hopefully this will enable our weekenders but also other members to attend on the day.

Coming out of lockdown the Committee are hoping to arrange a number of

### The Midland Park Hotel Portlaoise

events this year and we would your input on plans going forward.

The Committee is also hoping to increase participation in the work of the Committee and we hope to welcome some new faces to the

Committee for 2022. This is your chance!



## Williams Syndrome Ireland

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*The Williams Syndrome Ireland ( WSI ) was founded in 1987. Its mission is to promote the general welfare of individuals with Williams Syndrome, to provide practical help and support to them and their families and to enable them to reach their full potential through their strengths and interests*

*WSI provides support and advice on Williams Syndrome to individuals and families affected by WS. We enable individuals, families and professionals to make contact with other people affected by WS and who have already experienced the many challenges posed by WS. Annually WSI organizes a range of events for our members and they can use these events to tap into the knowledge and experience for every stage of a person's development*

**Together we can make a massive difference!**