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## Diarmuid O'Neill remembered

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A large crowd assembled at Timoleague Cemetery last Sunday to remember IRA Volunteer Diarmuid O' Neill whose 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary was that day (23<sup>rd</sup>). The ceremony was organised by the Clonakilty Sinn Féin Cumann and chaired by Cllr. Paul Hayes, who extended a céad míle fáilte to everyone, in particular those who had travelled long distances for the event. He particularly welcomed Diarmuid O' Neill's father Eoghan and brother Shane to the annual event. Wreaths were laid on behalf of Clonakilty, Bandon, Bantry, Macroom and Cork City SF Cumainn.

The oration was delivered by Cllr. Cionnaith Ó Súilleabháin who recalled that Vol. Diarmuid O' Neill was the last Irish Republican to die violently in this phase of the struggle for freedom and independence. In murdering him 11 years ago, as he stood with his hands raised and dressed only in his underwear at 4.00am in the morning the British military and political establishment was sending a message that they would shoot first and ask questions later. He praised Vol. O' Neill's commitment to the struggle, and pledged Sinn Féin's ongoing support to families whose loved ones had been murdered by British forces and their allies in their quest for the truth about these incidences.

Reflecting on the political events of the last 12 months he said that it was incredible that Ian Paisley has agreed to sit down and share power with Republicans after 80 years of saying "No". The disappearance from the landscape of the British Military apparatus and the troops was also huge progress. Ó Súilleabháin said that this was a measure of the patience and perseverance of Republicans who have always lead the peace process, and often took hard decisions in the national interest.

He also welcomed the recent announcement that Fianna Fáil were considering becoming an All Ireland party. Again Ó Súilleabháin said this was the result of the march towards the united Ireland that Sinn Féin and Republicans have been planning for decades. However he called on the government party not just to pay lip service to the notion of a united Ireland. He called on An Taoiseach to stand by the Good Friday Agreement section which allows for Northern elected representatives to attend and have speaking rights in Leinster House debates.

Ó Súilleabháin also congratulated party colleague John Desmond who was elected Mayor of Bandon in June. Referring to the recent General Election, he admitted that it was not as successful as Republicans would have liked, but it

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still play your part.

was now time to get over the disappointment and re-double efforts to make the gains next time out. He appealed for more people to get involved in the Sinn Féin party, either as supporters or activists and to play their part. The ceremony concluded with everyone facing the tricolour and singing "Amhrán na bhFiann".

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