

Féile Bríde 2025

Brigid's Light: Illuminating Paths of Justice and Solidarity



Saturday, February 8th
Solas Bhríde, Kildare



Programme

10:15 Registration

10:50 Opening Music by Emer Lynam and Procession of the Flame of Peace

10:55 Welcome

11:10 Brigid's Call to Action Today: Defying Militarism and Protecting The Triple Lock - Niamh Ní Briain

11:50 Music - Dee Armstrong, performing songs from her upcoming solo album, *Deichtine's Daughter*, accompanied by Lughaidh Armstrong and Gráinne Horan

12:10 Solar Lights and the Work of Development Pamoja - James Hennessy

12:50 Music - Dee Armstrong, accompanied by Lughaidh Armstrong and Gráinne Horan

13:00 Lunch

14:00 Tree Planting

14:15 Pocket Forests: Bringing Biodiversity to Your Doorstep - Catherine Cleary

14:50 Music - Kate Moore

15:00 Solidarity is Key - Raghad Abu Shammala

15:30 Closing Session - Seeds of Hope

16:20 Music - The Resistance Choir

“You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time.” – *Angela Davis*

We are delighted to welcome you to Féile Bríde 2025. Organised in partnership with the Brigidines and Cairde Bríde in the beautiful Solas Bhríde Centre, this gathering is dedicated to exploring and encouraging action on the pressing issues of our time. The event brings together diverse speakers, wonderful musicians, and active community members for a day filled with information and inspiration, punctuated by music and poetry, light lunch, tree planting, and conversation.

The theme, “Brigid’s Light: Illuminating Paths of Justice and Solidarity,” calls on us to reflect deeply on our world’s challenges and honour the spirit of Brigid as a woman who cared deeply for the earth, justice, equality, and peace. The story of Brigid offers a profound lens through which we can understand our present struggles, having offered her father’s most prized possession, a bejewelled sword, to a poor and sick man so he could exchange it for food. Thus, Brigid turned a sword into a ploughshare and transformed a tool of war into nourishment and care. Today, this act of resistance is not only a symbol of hope but a powerful call to confront militarism and the destructive forces that perpetuate genocide, injustice and environmental ruin.

Our incredible contributors will illuminate these challenges and help us understand how to forge pathways of peace and justice. Brigid’s legacy is a stark reminder that we are the ancestors of the future, called to challenge injustice now so future generations may be free. At this moment of collective urgency, we remember that Brigid’s act was not just defiance but one steeped deeply in love and solidarity, as our event is, too.

The Speakers

Niamh Ní Briain is the Coordinator of the Transnational Institute’s War and Pacification programme, which focuses on the permanent state of war and the pacification of resistance. She holds an LLM in International Human Rights Law from the Irish Centre for Human Rights at the National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG). Niamh has spent several years living in Colombia and Mexico, working with civil society organisations and the UN on peace-building, transitional justice, the protection of Human Rights Defenders, and conflict analysis. She also spent time in Brussels doing political advocacy before European institutions related to the conflict in Colombia.

James Hennessy is the Founder of Development Pamoja. He has worked in Kenya since 2007 and founded Development Pamoja in 2010, an organisation that works with rural communities. Development Pamoja focuses on health, education, disabilities, the elderly, and women in agriculture and micro finance. Development Pamoja has a long-standing programme with Afri, providing solar lamps to the most vulnerable in society, primarily the disabled and the

elderly. James is also in the first year of a PhD in UCC, measuring the effectiveness of climate-smart technologies in increasing productivity for smallholder farmers in Kenya.

Catherine Cleary is co-founder of Pocket Forests and has almost thirty years of experience as a journalist and author. She is ambitious about developing strategic partnerships in environmental action with real impacts that create a just transition to a more sustainable world. She has created several podcasts, written four books, and writes a weekly column for The Irish Times.

Raghad Abu Shammala is a Palestinian PhD candidate at UCD specializing in children's rights in Education. Growing up under occupation did not limit her dreams but broadened her horizons. At 14, she was awarded a recognition certificate for achieving the highest results in Human Rights examinations in her school by UNRWA. Join us to learn more about education under occupation, human rights violations and aspirations, and the impact of these factors on embracing your identity."

Music

Emer Lynam is a harpist, farmer, a Board member of Afri and a trainee solicitor.

Dee Armstrong is a self-taught multi-instrumentalist, composer, and a vibrant force in Irish music for over three decades. Best known as a member of the iconic band Kíla since 1991, she brings an electrifying energy to every performance, showcasing her mastery of the fiddle, viola, hammered dulcimer, banjo, bodhrán, and tuned percussion. Lughaidh Armstrong and Gráinne Horan will accompany her.

Lughaidh Armstrong is a musician, songwriter, composer, and singer. He is the lead singer and songwriter with the band Sky Atlas and is currently recording an album with them. He also tours with Lisa Canny and David Keenan.

Gráinne Horan is from a very musical family in Gurteen, Co Sligo. She plays fiddle and banjo. She is famous all over Sligo for leading a fantastic session and has played with Kíla and many others.

Kate Moore is an internationally acclaimed composer with a deep-seated love of nature. Her works are performed by Asko|Schönberg, Bang on a Can, Icebreaker, Slagwerk Den Haag, Ensemble Offspring, the Australian String Quartet, and The Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, among others. In 2022, Moore received the Gieskes-Strijbis Podiumprijs for her contribution to the performing arts. Kate has received a MacDowell Colony and Yaddo fellowship, a Tanglewood composition fellowship and Civitella Ranieri Fellowship.

The Resistance Choir enhances traditional protest with music that inspires and lifts the political spirit, using music and songs to protest inequality and injustice. Singing in solidarity with people experiencing homelessness, refugees and asylum seekers, minority groups, and other marginalised or disadvantaged people, the choir raises awareness of issues through actions and events like flash mobs, performances at protests, strikes, and fundraisers.

Stalls

We are delighted to announce that we will have stalls from civil society and community groups and NGOs, all of whom are carrying out critical work related to our themes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This event is organised in partnership with St. Patrick's Kiltegan and Cairde Bríde. Féile Bríde is part of a week-long series of events taking place in Kildare organised by the Brigidine Sisters and Cáirde Bríde. See: <https://solasbhríde.ie/feile-bríde-2025/>