



PRESS RELEASE

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Promoting your business through the Irish language is gaining popularity and can really differentiate your brand. That was one of the key messages at a meeting for *Cill Dara le Gaeilge* businesses as they gathered in Alice's restaurant last week to reflect on 2017 and look ahead to next year. *Cill Dara le Gaeilge* is a business support initiative set-up to support business in Co. Kildare that are open to using Irish with their customers or that wish to promote their business through the Irish language in one way or another. Originally set-up in 2015 with six registered companies, the scheme now has over thirty businesses on board, predominantly from the Naas, Sallins and Clane areas.

With 750 students now being educated through Irish in Naas alone, and hundreds of students attending the eight all-Irish schools across Co. Kildare, the impact of all-Irish education in the county is evident in the latest CSO data on the 2016 census. The census results show a 7% increase in Irish speakers in Co. Kildare that converse *as Gaeilge*, at least on a weekly basis. An online survey on attitudes to the Irish language conducted by Sallins based community group, *Sult na Sollán*, in recent months highlighted some interesting findings. 96% of respondents indicated that the Irish language was important or very important to them with 94% of those questioned expressing a desire to be more fluent.

Daithí de Faoite, Cathaoirleach of Cill Dara le Gaeilge, explained that there is a real interest from some businesses to use Irish to differentiate their brand and encourage customer engagement. Similar business support schemes have been very popular in Galway, Mayo and Ennis. "We are just at the beginning of our journey in Co. Kildare" he explained. "We have had a great start to the scheme with over thirty businesses from Naas and Sallins signing up and a number of businesses really embracing the challenge". Cill Dara le Gaeilge have restructured from a community project to a non-profit limited company this year with the goal of securing state funding and hiring a full-time body to engage with businesses more regularly. Daithí commented on the survey findings with respect to Irish in business highlighting that 81% of respondents replied that they would like to see Irish used on signage, promotions, websites etc. and 95% of respondents thought it would be a positive development if local businesses were to use some Irish in the workplace, even if only a *cúpla focal*.

Cill Dara le Gaeilge are planning to host their next event in Café Grange in Sallins on January 23<sup>rd</sup> from 6pm. All businesses are welcome to attend. Information on the scheme is also available at [www.cillardalegaeilge.ie](http://www.cillardalegaeilge.ie)

**Further information:**

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