



### ELECTION TIME

In the last couple of weeks I have been thinking about the general election. I am undecided as to how to vote and therefore I thought I should do a bit of homework. In this age of Facebook, YouTube, websites, blogs and twitter I thought that I would be able to discover all I needed to know about each candidate just by going on the web. In this opinion piece I thought it might be interesting to let people know how I got on.

Naturally enough nearly all of the candidates have a dedicated website but the range of content available on each website varies and I have to say that none of them would get top marks for imagination or creativity. If the politicians of Wexford are anything to go by we have a long way to go to bring ourselves into the age of the “knowledge” economy! They certainly are not bright shining lights of the best this country can offer.

I want to start with the most disappointing thing I discovered and that was my failure to find a dedicated website for the new Labour candidate in Wexford, Pat Cody. If Labour are serious about winning a second seat well the least they could do is give us the opportunity to learn something about their new candidate. I am left in a situation where I have not been able to learn anything about the man and I presume that in true Irish political style the Labour party will divide the County up into areas for each of their candidates and I would hazard a guess that I live in a Brendan Howlin area and Pat Cody will not be seen anywhere near where I live.

I hope that I am proven wrong and I discover in the coming weeks that Pat has launched a fantastic website. If that does not happen I think that the only logical conclusion to reach is that Labour is either not properly prepared or is not serious about becoming the largest party.

The next most disappointing thing I discovered was the lack of content on John Browne’s website. This is the website of the poll topping Fianna Fail junior minister and it really is poor. It just seems to be indicative of the complacency that appears to have existed throughout that party. Just throw up a few press releases and that will do the people of Wexford. There is no attempt to embrace anything that would allow us to hear the man speak for himself.

If you think that I am trying to score political points by saying this I would just ask people to have a look at the site for themselves and I think that it would be hard to argue against me.

Nearly all of the other sites are disappointing because they all seem to blend into one another. Having looked at the three Fine Gael sites, one Sinn Fein and one other Fianna Fail site I must say that none of them stood out. All of them appear to be just a series of press releases or Dail / Seanad speeches with small profile pieces.

I would also like to point out that the news items on each website have a strong local bias. Michael D'Arcy has news about Gorey, Sean Connick has news about New Ross and Paul Keogh has news about Enniscorthy. I am delighted to see that our local politicians continue the tradition of giving the impression that they do not care what is going on at the other end of the County. They certainly do not appear to want to be different and break away from the old ways.

As I write the Green Party has not announced whether they will be running a candidate in Wexford so I cannot comment on them apart from pointing out the obvious that they just give the impression of being a bit of a local joke.

Finally I come to comment on the best of a bad lot and that is the site for Brendan Howlin. The only thing that makes this site better than the rest is the fact that they go to the trouble of putting up a couple of clips from YouTube that at least allow me to hear Brendan speak. There are a number of clips from Labour Party Conferences and a couple from Dail speeches. He does come across well in these clips and this does allow me the opportunity to hear some of his beliefs. In one particular clip he speaks with conviction on the original decision not to pay for the cervical cancer vaccine. I have to admit that I agreed with him and that caused me serious discomfort given my support for Colm O'Gorman in the last election.

I do not understand why none of the other local politicians have made use of YouTube. Surely they know that a younger generation of voters might like the opportunity to hear their politicians speak.

In conclusion I just want to say that I still have not made up my mind (apart from knowing that John Browne has no chance of getting any preference) so I will just have to wait and see if Liam Twomey calls to my door and manages to convince me that he is the man.

## **PERFORMANCE 2010**

2010 turned out to be another good year and I am happy to report that the losses from 2008 have now been fully recovered. The policy of sticking with my favourite names worked and all I have to do now is keep it going for another 17 years in order to prove that these last couple of years are down to skill and not just good luck! I will let you know how I get on.

The three year track record is as follows:

	<u>Fund %</u>	<u>Index %</u>
2008	-41.2	-39.7
2009	47.4	26.5
2010	22.7	17.6