

## Maynooth celebrates Pride



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By Nate Smelle

More than 150 people gathered in Logger's Field on Sunday afternoon for the closing celebration of Maynooth Pride weekend. The day's events began with a parade along Young Street and through downtown Maynooth, ending up at the Old Maynooth Community Centre. On the way the crowd reconvened outside Hastings Highlands municipal offices to observe a moment of silence, and draw attention to council's decision not to amend the flag policy. The amendment would have allowed the rainbow flag, and other community-oriented flags to be flown outside to Hastings Highland Centre for one week each year to raise awareness of issues relevant to local residents.

Explaining why the moment of silence was necessary, Joey Shulman, one of the event's organizers said "The group collectively thought that the most appropriate response to the decision about the flag was a moment of silence, and going forward from there to make a lot of noise and be diligent to change it. All of us have had some loss in our lives, and the rainbow flag was created to represent that."

Dungannon resident Moxie Moxon and her friends from Toronto travelled north to Maynooth to take part in this year's Pride celebration. Moxon said they decided to join the festivities because everyone deserves to feel included in their community. When council voted against flying a Pride flag, she said they undermined the diversity of the community by minimizing the inherent symbolism of the flag. Moxon said the Pride flag represents inclusion and diversity for all working class people. By celebrating Pride, she said people can show their solidarity with the LGBTQ2S community while helping to bring people and factions of the community together that have traditionally been marginalized.

"It's about solidarity, community, reflection and strength" and it's a small token of visibility for the [LGBTQ2S] community," explained Moxon.

"Neutrality has never done favours for anyone throughout history. Especially those who are marginalized by patriarchal and settler colonial ideologies. Every struggle through adversity and alienation will always make communities stronger. Working class queers deserve to be acknowledged and appreciated and accepted in our communities. That's why we came out. Solidarity through struggle."

Mayor Vic Bodnar and Councillors Nancy Matheson and Alex Walder came out to enjoy the Pride celebration and show their support for the LGBTQ2S community. Thrilled to see such a massive turn out, Bodnar said he plans to propose a project at the next council meeting that will help the community celebrate Pride all year long. While displaying a photo of a similar bench in another community, he said if approved by council, downtown Maynooth will soon be home to a new rainbow-coloured bench.

Following the promenade the celebration shifted to the Old Maynooth Community Centre for a party sponsored by the North

Hastings Family Health Team. Throughout the evening, the cheerful crowd mingled while enjoying free food, live music, dancing and storytime by celebrity guests Fay and Fluffy, who read from their favorite children's book Love the World.