

Website to connect citizens to TDs

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A website aiming to boost political transparency and communication was launched today in Dublin.

Dailwatch.ie allows constituents to publically put questions to TDs, which they can reply to using their Oireachtas email address. The answers will also be made public and will not be removed.

Website users will be able to browse questions and answers by issue, allowing them to see whether a topic they are concerned about has already been addressed.

The platform was created to be mutually beneficial for both constituent and TD said founder of Dailwatch, Sarah O'Neill.

“Dailwatch is very much designed to be a collaborative project. People feel disillusioned and disenfranchised with the systems of government and a lot of this discontentment stems from a lack of clarity and openness,” she said.

“This platform which is being launched today is about empowerment and active citizenship, not dirty tricks or political gaffes. We went to ensure that politicians are accountable and have a direct communicative link with the electorate to ensure the individuals that command our highest offices act with integrity, honesty and full transparency.”

The website which is based on a similar German website called Parliamentwatch.com, which has a 90 per cent participation rate among all politicians in Germany. Ms O'Neill has had experience with Parliamentwatch.com in the past and despite still studying for her undergraduate degree from Trinity College, she wanted to help set up an Irish version.

“I was not going to miss an opportunity to bring this to Ireland. It is a necessary and timely development in Ireland's new political narrative,” she said.

The website may be able to bring positive work done in the Oireachtas to light, said chairman of the Justice, Defence and Equality Committee David Stanton.

“This website will be very useful. There is a negative narrative about politicians and TDs and I personally find it very difficult,” he said.

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