

On the evening of the 20th March 2024, a group of 3rd year students visited Leinster House. This was a day to remember, it was the day that Taoiseach Leo Varadkar announced to the nation that he would be stepping down from the role of Taoiseach and leader of Fine Gael.

James, a Leinster House Usher brought the group on a tour of the famous building which included a quick visit to the Dáil where a debate on local health and GPs was taking place. The group chatted with Deputy Alan Kelly on the way in and waved at Deputy Richard Bruton as they left the visitor's gallery. On leaving the gallery, they spent some time on the Taoiseach's landing where portraits of previous Taoisigh are on display. A lively discussion ensued where the boys were quizzed on their knowledge of past Taoisigh.

Local Senator, Barry Ward joined the group and was very generous with his time taking the group into the green room, officially "Room 2". This is the room where Joe Biden was received when he visited Ireland a number of years ago. Senator Ward also took the group into the Seanad Chamber where he explained how the parliamentary houses work including the Seánad and the Dáil referring to the various debates, committee and votes that take place. The impressive décor included the fabulous blue ceiling and the Waterford Crystal chandeliers installed for President JFK's visit, however JFK never got to see them.

The 13 teens (most of whom took part in the Model United Nations event run by St Andrew's the following week) also got the opportunity to meet and speak with local Minister of State (Dept of Finance at the time) Jennifer Carroll MacNeill. The trip finished with a quick visit to the Dáil bar for soft drinks and crisps!

All in all this was a very enjoyable and interesting trip on what was a very memorable day in Irish history.



