# Senior DUP figures face calls to condemn sectarian songs at Apprentice Boys parade



Senior members of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) attended an Apprentice Boys parade in Lisburn on Easter Monday, where anti-Catholic songs were performed, coinciding with the date of Pope Francis's death. Footage obtained by The Irish News shows Stormont education minister Paul Givan, Upper Bann MLA Jonathan Buckley, and assembly speaker Edwin Poots present during the performance of songs, including “No Pope of Rome” and “The Billy Boys,” as spectators sang along.

The issue is set to be raised in the Northern Ireland Assembly on Tuesday, with Sinn Féin requesting an urgent debate regarding the DUP members' attendance. West Belfast MLA Danny Baker condemned the songs as “blatant sectarianism,” asserting that political leaders are obliged to take a stand against such displays. He emphasised that discussing this matter in the assembly would allow those who attended the parade to clarify their stance on its controversial elements.

Baker called on the implicated DUP representatives to denounce the sectarian overtones of the event, remarking, “There has been a rise in sectarian incidents across the north, in Lisburn, Belfast and Derry. These incidents reflect a broader pattern of sectarian behaviour that also need to be challenged."

The attendance of the DUP officials at this parade comes shortly after the party condemned a previous incident involving the same tune, describing it as “distasteful.” In response to Sinn Féin’s criticisms, a DUP spokesperson characterised the accusations as "hypocrisy," asserting that the party has "consistently and unequivocally condemned sectarianism in all its forms." They defended their participation by stating that the party congratulated the many who engaged in the parade respectfully, while distancing themselves from the "distasteful actions" of a minority.

Upper Bann MLA Buckley remarked that Sinn Féin was attempting to “delegitimise the cultural identity of the unionist and loyalist community.” He firmly stated that the DUP party members do not regret their involvement in Loyal Order parades, reinforcing their commitment to their cultural heritage.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/apprentice-boys-have-shown-dup-how-to-say-sorry-over-parade-sf/38404511.html> - This article discusses Sinn Féin's criticism of the DUP's response to the Apprentice Boys parade, highlighting the party's failure to acknowledge the hurt caused by the event.
2. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/sinn-fein-demand-answers-as-band-march-in-apprentice-boys-parade-wearing-soldier-f-symbols-saoradh-erect-banner/38392176.html> - This piece reports on Sinn Féin's call for explanations after a band marched in the Apprentice Boys parade wearing symbols related to Soldier F, a figure associated with the Bloody Sunday killings.
3. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/easter-monday-parades-30-apprentice-boys-marches-among-over-50-taking-place-across-northern-ireland/41561755.html> - This article provides details on the numerous Apprentice Boys parades held across Northern Ireland on Easter Monday, including the one in Lisburn attended by DUP members.
4. <https://www.derryjournal.com/news/politics/colum-eastwood-apprentice-boys-parades-an-example-of-how-british-tradition-can-be-protected-in-united-ireland-4287526> - This article features SDLP leader Colum Eastwood's perspective on the Apprentice Boys parades and their role in preserving British tradition within a united Ireland.
5. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2022/04/19/news/apprentice-boys-march-in-areas-across-north-2646970/> - This report covers the various Apprentice Boys parades that took place across Northern Ireland, including the one in Lisburn, highlighting the DUP's participation.
6. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/psni-stands-by-its-handling-of-apprentice-boys-parade-despite-unionist-anger/38398138.html> - This article discusses the PSNI's handling of the Apprentice Boys parade, including the controversy over the display of Parachute Regiment emblems and the DUP's response.
7. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/sinn-fein-to-highlight-dup-mlas-controversial-parade-attendance-in-assembly-GYAPUNE6G5HU7I2QIHRIXAQIVI/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data