



National Campaign for the Arts :: New TDs - Meet and Greet Monday 16 May

Context

'Culture' a wise man once said, 'is what we grow in'. Everyday in Ireland, most of us are touched by or participate in a cultural activity, whether we know it or not.

Dublin is a UNESCO City of Literature. It's the Year of Craft. The nation has just celebrated its national day, the Dublin Dance Festival is now weeks away and all over Ireland other arts festivals are gearing up for their summer presentations. Across the Atlantic, we're presenting the very best of contemporary Irish arts in the year long Imagine Ireland programme.

The arts are indeed everywhere. They are part of what we do and who we are. They entertain us. Cheer us. They engage us; educate us. They sometimes shock and provoke us. They make us think and live distinctly, proud of who we are.

With the new government now in place we have a fantastic opportunity to reframe the argument and make a positive case for the arts. We need to stop talking about cuts and start talking about investment. We need to stop talking about the arts delivering value for money and simply stand up loud and proud and say the arts are valuable.

The Programme for Government opens with a statement of Common Purpose: *'the Government for National Recovery will strive to ensure that every one of our citizens has an effective right, free from discrimination, to contribute to the economic social and cultural life of the nation'*. It also talks about rebuilding Ireland's reputation on the international stage, restoring confidence and transforming our country.

There are many deep resonances for the arts within the stated ambitions of our new government. Much of what they aspire to achieve, is what we do. It's time to make that connection for those in power. Investment in the arts is an investment in Ireland and in the closer realisation of the society we all want.

MEETING INTENT & OUTCOME

The purpose of the meeting is threefold – we want to engage the new TDs, inform and excite them about the arts in their constituency and get them to commit to continued investment in the arts.

ENGAGE – initiate dialogue

This meeting is about starting a conversation and growing a relationship. It is also about dialogue. We want TDs to know that the arts and its people are a powerful resource and that engagement with us makes sense. Equally, we want to find out what area of the arts they might be interested in and/or what their priorities are for the local area. We need to convey our willingness to work with them to affect change. We need to ask – how can we help?

INFORM - paint a picture of the arts in your area

We need to convey the impact and penetration of the arts locally, how investment in the arts reaps rich rewards. Ideally you will find a way to tell the good news stories about the arts in your area without recourse to too many statistics, but some facts always strengthen a case. (We will supply some in due course). You might like to convey:

- how many people participate in the arts in the constituency
- how many people work in the arts in the locale
- the role of the arts as a tourism driver locally
- local successes e.g. this could be about someone of note living in your area, the renown of the local theatre company, or simply the stand out success of a local initiative with children
- arts and young people/education
- arts addressing social inclusion

COMMIT

Ask them to commit to an active engagement with the arts and to supporting us as we call for sustained funding for the arts.