

Thank you for inviting us to speak before this committee examining the topic “ Encouraging the publication and reading of Irish Language material.”

As a bookshop we will try to describe some of the issues which affect us and therefore the wider trade in stocking books in the Irish Language.

In Dublin there are very few shops that devote more than a shelf or two to Irish Language books, ourselves and An Siopa leabhair on Harcourt Street have a larger range than most.

### **Why is this?**

Most bookshops are small having a limited floor area, this floor area has to maximise sales per square foot and devoting a % of this space to Irish language books is a risk that these shops may not be willing to take as the returns may not materialise.

### **Supply**

Most books in the Irish language are distributed by Áisíneacht Dáileacháin Leabhar (ÁIS) who do an admirable job supplying the trade and beyond with Irish Language books. However ordering can only be done by email and telephone, the industry standard is to use teleorder, which enables electronic ordering to be done from sales or the databases used by bookshops. Not using this standard makes it time consuming for the bookshop as the data has to be transferred from the catalogue to email or even to be read out over the phone.

ÁIS does not have a searchable website through which orders can be made

### **Industry Standards**

The International standard for the identification of books is the International Standard Book Number (ISBN).

“An ISBN is essentially a product identifier used by publishers, booksellers, libraries, internet retailers and other supply chain participants for ordering, listing, sales records and stock control purposes. The ISBN identifies the registrant as well as the specific title, edition and format.” (source <https://www.isbn-international.org/content/what-isbn>)

Not all Irish Language book publishers conform to this standard which causes issues in reordering and selling of books through Electronic Point of Sale Systems (EPOS). Wholesale adoption of this standard would make it easier to order, reorder and identify titles.

### **Publishing**

There is vibrant and active publishing in the Irish language. It is concentrated in the main with children's publishing, then with learning Irish products and then with adult publishing.

There appears to me to be a gap in the publishing after the age of 10 with little being produced for teenagers and young adults. The teenage and young adult market is one of the strongest growing and in ways bravest part of English language publishing, tackling complex societal issues in ways that are not tackled through the mainstream educational system.

Adult publishing is not diverse enough, there is a lot of poetry but fewer new fiction voices.

Investment to help publishers market, design and commission new work is necessary as is support to the writers that choose to write in Irish.

Cover design in Irish language publishing has been poor but is improving, needs to appeal to a visually conscious younger audience.

Some of the most successful books over recent years have been accounts of the joy of learning Irish and of books telling of the influence Irish has had on English.

All of these books were written in English but never translated into Irish.

Established publishers in English Penguin Ireland, Hachette Ireland, HarperCollins, Gill Books need to be encouraged to produce books in Irish as part of their offer, encouraged to do translations.

Some Irish publishers have produced fine translations of English, French and numerous other languages novels. This in one way allows readers to experience the familiar in the unfamiliar.

Co-ordination is needed between curriculum developers and publishers to update the curriculum to keep it relevant some texts on curriculum 20 years later.

Submitt Irish language novels to international awards to raise profile.

## **Media**

Considering the amount of space given to books in English in all media, print TV Radio. The amount given to books in Irish is minimal.

It feels ghettoised with the main review coverage in Comhar and in Books Ireland towards the end of the year.

National newspapers do not review Irish Language books as often as they should, nor indeed does TV or Radio. TG4's last books program was in 2018, Radio na Gaeltachta some but not many, Ocean FM Duilleoga only one I could see outside the National stations.

Encourage use of TikTok/Instagram to promote the books.

## **Seachtain na Gaeilge**

Primarily spoken very few book events on website possibly could do more.

The Irish language publishing is active and vibrant but suffers from a lack of visibility in shops and libraries

There is no reason that this cannot be reversed through a more dynamic relationship between the shops, libraries and publishers.