

DÁIL ÉIREANN

AN COMHCHOISTE UM CHULTÚR, OIDHREACTH AGUS GAELTACHT

JOINT COMMITTEE ON CULTURE, HERITAGE AND THE GAELTACHT

Dé Céadaoin, 4 Iúil 2018

Wednesday, 4 July 2018

Tháinig an Comhchoiste le chéile ag 1.30 p.m.

The Joint Committee met at 1.30 p.m.

Comhaltaí a bhí i láthair / Members present:

Teachtaí Dála / Deputies	Seanadóirí / Senators
Seán Canney,	Maura Hopkins,
Danny Healy-Rae,	Marie-Louise O'Donnell,
Éamon Ó Cuív,	Fintan Warfield.
Niamh Smyth.	

I láthair / In attendance: Deputies John Brassil and Michael Healy-Rae.

Teachta / Deputy Michael Collins sa Chathaoir / in the Chair.

Supporting and Facilitating the Arts: Discussion

Vice Chairman: Apologies have been received from the Chairman, Deputy Tóibín. I advise members of the committee to turn off their mobile phones as they interfere with the sound system and will interfere with the broadcasting of the meeting. Being discussed by the committee today is the issue of supporting and facilitating the arts. I welcome the witnesses who have come to discuss this matter. I can see that some of them have travelled a long distance. From the Galway International Arts Festival we have John Crumlish, chief executive, and Paul Fahy. From Tyrone Guthrie Centre we have Adrian Moynes, chair, and Robert McDonald. From the Kilkenny Arts Festival we have Eugene Downes, director, and Olga Barry. From Listowel Writers' Week we have Máire Logue and Catherine Moylan.

Before I ask the witnesses to address the meeting, I draw their attention to the fact that by virtue of section 17(2)(l) of the Defamation Act 2009, witnesses are protected by absolute privilege in respect of their evidence to the committee. However, if they are directed by the committee to cease giving evidence on a particular matter and continue to do so, they are entitled thereafter only to a qualified privilege in respect of their evidence. They are directed that only evidence connected with the subject matter of these proceedings is to be given and they are asked to respect the parliamentary practice to the effect that, where possible, they should not criticise or make charges against any person, persons or entity by name or in such a way as to make him, her or it identifiable. I advise the witnesses that the opening statements and any other documents they have submitted to the committee may be published on the committee's website after this meeting.

Members are reminded of the long-standing parliamentary practice to the effect that they should not comment on, criticise or make charges against a person outside the House or an official either by name or in such a way as to make him or her identifiable. The presentations from the witnesses have been circulated to the members. I remind witnesses that their presentations should not exceed five minutes in duration. To commence our discussion, I invite the representatives of the Galway International Arts Festival to make their presentation.

Mr. John Crumlish: We thank the committee for the invite. We are very happy to be here. Mr. Fahy, our artistic director, and I will run through this quickly between us. The key point we would make at the start is that we are no longer just a festival. We also produce and tour work. We have also started First Thought Talks, which is our discussion platform. We see these as the three legs of the stool that make up the culture organisation that is the Galway International Arts Festival. The key statistics in respect of the festival for 2017 were that 210,000 people attended, that the festival had an economic impact of €29.5 million, and that there were more than 200 performances in 33 venues over 14 days in one town. Those are the key statistics. We want to tell the committee a bit about what we are and we will then move on to our recommendations. That is the first thing we are.

Mr. Paul Fahy: The festival presents international work across all of the art forms in addition to Irish work. We also shifted towards becoming a producer-led festival in 2011. Since then we have produced 14 productions of original work which were made for Galway and toured around the world. That was between 2011 and 2017. Since then we have toured extensively with these works, alongside our co-producers, in the UK, the USA, Europe and Australia on multiple occasions. Those shows have received more than 34 nominations for theatre awards and have won 14 national and international awards. In 2017 alone, in addition to the festival, we also toured for 16 weeks in Ireland and internationally.

Our discussion platform, which Mr. Crumlish mentioned, First Thought Talks, was established in 2012. Since then we have hosted 94 events featuring hundreds of high-profile panelists with an ever-increasing audience. The aim of the festival discussion platform is to present the very best in discussion on forward-thinking ideas across a broad range of topics. First Thought Talks is also becoming an entity in its own right. We have presented internationally in New York. The first independent First Thought Talks platform will happen in October of this year at NUI Galway.

All of that garners a huge amount of media coverage for us. This year alone we have had more than five articles in *The New York Times*. The committee members can see some quotes in the submission. *The Guardian* last year rated us as “One of the Top 5 Summer Festivals in Europe”. *The Irish Times* called us: “The biggest, most exciting, most imaginative explosion of arts activity this country has.” The BBC referred to us as “One of Europe’s most important cultural events”. All of this also brings communities together, including both audiences and artists. The members can see from the breakdown of the statistics that 63% of our audiences are domestic, with a large number, 45%, coming from Galway. The 37% of audiences made up of overseas visitors has a very great economic impact, as Mr. Crumlish has said. The breakdown of the gender of our attendees is that 55% are female and 45% are male.

The 2018 festival is nearly upon us, beginning in ten days. It is the biggest ever festival for us and the biggest music programme we have ever undertaken. We have six festival world premieres and five Irish premieres. We are introducing the new idea of a festival garden in Eyre Square as a central hub for the festival. We have an expanded free programme. Some 25% of the festival’s programme is offered free of charge to audiences. We have also presented Enda Walsh +GIAF in New York this year. We have also increased our festival programme of First Thought Talks, which will run during the middle weekend of the festival. Our aim is to deliver the very best experience to as wide an audience as possible and to bring audiences and artists together.

Mr. John Crumlish: As part of this, what we are also doing is building. The festival in 2017 was our biggest ever. Now 2018 was our biggest festival ever and 2019 will be our biggest festival ever. We are scaling up into 2020, when Galway will hold the capital of culture designation. This will be hugely important for the west of Ireland and the wider cultural community in Ireland. It is a real opportunity, one we will not have again for 26 years, and this has very much influenced our thinking in the intervening time. It is probably the most prestigious cultural designation in the world. It rarely has been given to a region this small so we have to make the most of it. We will also have to partner with a lot of people in the west and outside of it to deliver the best possible experience to the maximum number of people and to do service to the brand west of Ireland and brand Ireland with a view to looking outwards to Europe in that regard.

Galway International Arts Festival creates world class arts experiences for thousands of people. It has always been the mission of the festival to create the best possible experience for as many people as possible. This has been our mission for 41 years. Approximately 25% of our programme is free of charge and we also subsidise many of the festival tickets. We see ourselves as a major platform for Irish artists and a platform on which international promoters can view the Irish work being showcased from around Ireland. Many promoters from the UK and the US come to the festival to see what we have on, with a view to taking it up. A key part of the festival is creating our productions and touring them with Irish artists nationally and internationally over as long a period as possible. There are things we created three years ago still

touring, which is very exciting in terms of the work provided and from a brand Galway perspective. It is also very good from a brand Irish cultural perspective. We see ourselves as a major flagship for brand Galway. The national and international media quotes mentioned would indicate that this is more and more the case. The touring very much supports that view. If one is in New York one is more likely to get *The New York Times* than would be the case if one is in Galway. Last year, we had three pieces of work in New York in the space of one year, which were mentioned five times in *The New York Times*. As a result of this, when we premiered a new work on “Grief is a Thing with Feathers” in Galway in April this year, it got more column inches in *The New York Times* than it did in *The Irish Times*. It is about getting out there and building a brand for Irish culture.

We made three recommendations, the first of which is around our fund ambition. We would be of the controversial view that currently the arts are being funded for their existence and the notion of ambition is somebody else’s job in the sense that the State must turn and start funding ambitious projects if we are to compete on the world stage. It is very acceptable that throughout the recession it was difficult for the State to continue to support the arts, and it did so very well in terms of keeping that broad landscape going, but we are over that and, if we are going to be world class in terms of our culture, the State must now move to the next stage and fund ambitious projects. We also believe that festivals should be supported to produce new work. This is an expensive business and a risky business. Not every production will be a success. These are great platforms to produce new work because they have good audiences and they create a lot of access. People come to see the work. There is an existing network of festivals that allow us to get this work out there.

We also believe it should be key that festivals showcase as much Irish work as possible. The State funds the development of a lot of Irish work and we believe that this work once funded and invested in should get out to as many people as possible for as long as people. We think festivals can play a vital role in providing a showcase for helping that work get out there.

Vice Chairman: I thank Mr. Crumligh for his presentation. I now invite Mr. Adrian Moynes to make the presentation on behalf of Tyrone Guthrie Centre.

Mr. Adrian Moynes: Go raibh maith agat a Chathaoirligh. I dtús báire caithfimid ár mbuío-chas a chur in iúl don choiste as an deis thábhachtach seo labhairt leis inniu agus tá súil agam go mbeidh an t-eolas a roinnfear anseo inniu ina chuidiú aige. I will speak very briefly about the nature of the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, following which my colleague, Mr. Robert McDonald, will speak about its day-to-day operations.

The Tyrone Guthrie centre is unique in that it is a gift to the whole of Ireland, North and South, under the terms of a will. In effect, those of us who are privileged to be on the board and be working there are trustees of a gift to the nation. The board consists of nine members, four from Northern Ireland and five from this State. Artists come from all over Ireland. The centre has three streams of income, namely, the two arts councils in Ireland and revenue from the artists who stay at the centre. Those artists come from Ireland, North and South, but also from throughout the European Union and further afield. This week, we have some Italians and Americans in residence at centre. The centre is an artists’ retreat and a place where creative work is done. Put simply what we do for the artists who choose to stay with us is we put a roof over their heads and we put the dinner on the table in the evening. This is a tremendous asset to anybody trying to finish a novel, write a short story, compose a work of music or finish a painting. They do not have to think about the daily bread for the duration of their stay.

I will hand over to my colleague, Mr. Robert McDonald, at this point.

Mr. Robert McDonald: Unlike the Kilkenny Arts Festival, Galway International Arts Festival and Listowel Writers' Week, Tyrone Guthrie Centre does not have a public facing dimension. The centre is a retreat in the sense that artists come to it to create work. A lot of this work is showcased at festivals. Every week we receive books in the post and letters from people thanking us for the time they spent at Annaghmakerrig to complete or edit a book of poetry or a new novel. We also receive numerous invitations to exhibitions throughout the country from artists who have spent time at the centre. In terms of what we do, people say that a week in Annaghmakerrig is worth three weeks at home in terms of getting the work done and drilling down into the work in hand. It gives them the time and space to finish the work that can then be presented at the various festivals, galleries and exhibition centres around Ireland.

Since we opened in 1981, the centre has supported approximately 7,000 artists. We are open 24-7, 50 weeks of the year to support artists to get on with the work, get the book finished, get the play finished and get the exhibition ready and so on, so that in turn can be presented at venues throughout the island of Ireland. We have a very strong link with Belfast. As mentioned by the Chairman, Mr. Moynes, the board comprises four directors from the North and five from the South. It was a joint cross-Border initiative when Sir Tyrone Guthrie handed the house over to the State and we have maintained that strong link to date. We are very proud of that connection.

Currently, we are booked out. I am preparing a planning application to build two more cottages. We have a capital programme funded by the Department, which is just about to expire. We also receive support from the Ulster Guard and Villages Fund, which normally supports projects in the North but because Monaghan is part of Ulster it is happy enough to support us and to give us a grant of £150,000, which helped with the matched funding to make improvements to our dance studio and to build a new rehearsal space that we are providing for the theatre sector, which is increasingly taking time with us to develop new work. What do we want for the future? It is important that artists are supported. At the end of the day, they are the people who make the work and exhibitions. Without them, all we will have are theatres full of empty seats and the only items hanging in our galleries will be caretakers' coats. The Government needs to recognise that the individual practitioner, supported by the festivals gathered here today, are the ones that make the work. Without them, we have nothing.

Vice Chairman: I thank Mr. Moynes and Mr. McDonald. I now invite Mr. Eugene Downes to make his opening statement on behalf of the Kilkenny Arts Festival.

Mr. Eugene Downes: Go raibh maith agat a Chathaoirligh. I thank the committee for the invitation to appear before it. We are delighted to be here today with our colleagues from around the country. I would like first to inform the committee of some news which I heard only a couple of hours ago, namely, that my colleague, Ms Olga Barry, who is currently the festival producer, will be my successor as festival director as of September. We are looking forward to sharing our particular experience in Kilkenny in the course of the session. To begin, we will consider the idea of a festival and its essence.

When the idea of a festival was first born on the slopes of the Acropolis in Athens 2,500 years ago, its artistic and civic dimensions were joined. It was a festival of the Dionysia, in honour of the god Dionysos, premiering new theatrical works, some of the greatest tragedies and comedies ever written. It was an occasion for thousands of Athenian citizens to gather, not just to experience and vote on these new plays but also to debate the great political, military and social issues of their time, an artistic and civic experience. In the 2,500 years since the challenge

and opportunity for festivals all over the world and in this country are how to make these special times moments of intense artistic creation and civic experience locally and as citizens of the world, from near and far, who sometimes gather in very remote places on this island. The intensely emotional, deep, tough stuff in the great tragedies that those citizens experienced 2,500 years ago at the festival of the Dionysia was among the most extreme of human experiences. Festivals are places where we can experience something extreme that we do not experience in normal life. At the same time they saw the great comedies of Aristophanes which lampooned and satirised the politicians of the day. The light, celebratory and intense, deep, tough stuff coexisted in that festival space. That is another challenge for festivals today.

The final point to make about the DNA of festivals concerns the sheer improbability that a group of citizens, an artist or group of artists in a place, whether it be a rural area, a town or a city, can envision something that is not there and be determined to make it happen. The first modern festival in Europe took place in the 1870s in a small town in Bavaria where a single artist, Richard Wagner, who was not even from Bayreuth decided it was the place where he would reinvent theatre and music and create the greatest opera house in the world and bring people to it from all over the world. He made it happen in a place where there was nothing. In 1951 in a small seaside town on the south-east coast of Ireland, Wexford, a local doctor decided that he would create one of the world's great opera festivals and, with intense communal effort, that is what it became. In 1974 in Ireland's mediaeval city a group of classical musicians, artists and poets decided to make a festival. From the beginning they wanted to have an international festival, a place people from all over the world and artists could share and so it became, with Seamus Heaney as the first poetry curator.

With that in mind, we are looking forward to discussing the ecology of festivals in Ireland in 2018 and its resilience but also its frailties, the delicacies and challenges. I will ask my colleague Ms Olga Barry to make a brief initial comment on it.

Ms Olga Barry: I thank the Chairman for the invitation to participate in this meeting.

Without wanting to sound too negative, one of the topics we ought to discuss is the fragility of the sector. Even today it takes a huge amount of faith to believe the snowball will get us to the opening night and that everything will happen. A myriad of things can go wrong on that journey. In Kilkenny, for example, the formal infrastructure for performance is very poor or the venues are scarce. We are constantly intervening and trying to mobilise alternative spaces, which has a great positive impact when international artists come and find themselves performing, perhaps in a 13th century cathedral, with all that brings. With all of the specialness, there is great risk, as well as fragility.

The infrastructure of the professionalisation of the arts, the teams behind the machinery that get artists' best work onto stages and concert hall platforms, requires volunteers of extraordinary commitment and faith in the people leading the festivals and organisations. Without the communities' support, they would quickly collapse. That needs to be cherished and celebrated in a very deep and meaningful way as part of the ambition, international work and "platforming" of new work in festivals.

Ms Máire Logue: We thank the Chairman for the invitation and Ms Catherine Moylan and I are delighted to be here.

Listowel Writers' Week is the longest running literary festival in Ireland. It started straight after the Acropolis and is an internationally acclaimed festival. Our aim is to bring writers and

audiences together in the unique surroundings of Listowel. The festival was born out of its literary heritage and is 48 years in the making.

Ms Catherine Moylan: We have over 100 events in the short four or five days of the festival. Writing is in our DNA in Listowel. As we cannot help it, we embrace it. It is innate to everybody. Being from Listowel, part of the responsibility and what we achieve is that we support, embrace, encourage and mind the authors and audiences who visit us every year. In the 1970s and 1980s when writers such as John B. Keane rang someone like Joseph O'Connor in London and said he had an audience for him, it gave him recognition from somebody he respected and admired at the beginning of his career. The same is happening to this day.

Ms Máire Logue: Yes, it is. Christine Dwyer Hickey came to Listowel over 20 years ago. She just happened on the festival, wondering what went on at it. She started writing, won the short story competition and six years ago won the biggest prize in Ireland for the Irish novel of the year, supported by us and the Kerry Group. That shows that there is a legacy from the grassroots, that Listowel looks after its authors from their emergence to their establishment. They love to return because they see what it means for emerging writers to come to Listowel.

We were the first people to introduce a creative writing workshop, which was brought to Listowel by Dr. Bryan MacMahon after he had come across it in America. We have extended the festival to create a national children's festival and a young adult festival too. We are looking after the grassroots and bringing writers forward with us. Our budget every year is approximately €280,000, depending on the size of the festival. We were lucky this year to have it voted best Irish festival in the Irish hospitality awards. We were not surprised but delighted. The 50th festival will take place in two years' time.

There is a board of directors with a chairperson, as well as one full-time member of staff and two part-time members of staff and a community employment scheme person. These are the people who produce the festival. The most important group beneath them is the voluntary committee which is made up of between 40 and 45 people from Listowel and beyond who devote one year to the festival. We hold bi-monthly meetings, separating into the different areas - literary, public relations and marketing. Everything is done in-house. There are no consultants. We have to do it all ourselves because our budget is so tight. Out of it comes the experience that is Listowel Writers' Week.

Ms Catherine Moylan: In Listowel not only do we believe, we also know that everybody has a creative muscle. Some of us may get a chance to flex it more than others, but in Listowel we have a creative press. We have a physical environment that supports every element and muscle of creativity one might have. Everybody from the local bingo hall to the shops and the hotel is involved in it; we are all in it together. The physical size of the town lends itself to the festival. It is very warm and friendly. From a psychological perspective, to refer to what I said, there is buy-in from everybody in it. There is a level of support, whereby, whether one is having a cup of coffee or giving a reading, one will receive encouragement from every person one meets. There is great camaraderie within the committee which is supported by those living in the town and north Kerry.

As to experience of the festival, there are literary competitions for which which people can prepare now and which they can enter up to March next year. We have other novel ideas such as having a cup of tea with Colm Tóibín or elevenses with Emma Donoghue, which is something quirky and different which, in a way, allows people who might not see themselves as typical literary festival visitors to go along to it. They can sit down, have a cup of tea and listen to

something diverse and different. There are also lectures. There is an historical and literary walk around the town that takes people on a journey of the mind and to see all of the landmarks associated with our great writers such as Bryan MacMahon, John B. Keane and Sean McCarthy. There is wealth. As it is in our DNA, we just embrace it.

Ms Máire Logue: We have just come from our 2018 festival. Our approach to programming is that we rip it apart, tear up the rule book and start afresh. We have a new page and look forward. We always review what did and did not work. We have to do that. The first thing we do is review ourselves to see what was positive and what we can do in the future. It is a new blank sheet. Obviously, in the office we are constantly researching what is new and up and coming, what is in the news and who are winning awards. The festival is born out of this and our invitations are issued. We are in contact with theatre groups that are doing new, young and innovative theatre to bring them to the festival because we have a theatrical production every lunchtime and evening. We also have art exhibitions, poetry and music, all of which are put together as soon as a festival is over. From July on, we are programming until the festival begins again the following year. We will ask our writers who came this year what their experience was and whom they could recommend who might come and enjoy the festival. We ask our audiences what they like. All of this is very important to build our festival for the following year.

Ms Catherine Moylan: On what the authors say about Listowel Writers' Week, the overwhelming response in the feedback always seems to be that they appreciate the level of support and encouragement they receive in the town. It is what Listowel people do best. As I said, it is part of the culture, but we also do it with a little fun. People like the informality, charm and friendliness of it. Some of the responses we received from authors in the past included: "It is such a memorable week," "It is a revelation that words cannot describe," "There is a level of intimacy," and "There are readers and writers everywhere."

Ms Máire Logue: On our audience, we attract over 15,000 people to Listowel every year for the festival, which is hugely important. Some 15% of them are international visitors. We are constantly trying to target new audiences, which are important, as they participate through their feedback, suggestions, market research and word of mouth. Our audiences love the festival. They just seem to be at home at it. It is the type of festival where even if one is alone, one is never on one's own. Somebody said to us one arrived as a stranger and left with a group of friends.

Ms Catherine Moylan: I can give an example of the diverse people who come to Listowel Writers' Week. Last year I was sitting beside a visitor whose name was James and who was from County Mayo. I asked how the festival was going for him and he said: "I left school when I was 13 years old, so my education is coming to Listowel Writers' Week. I have come here every year for the last 30 years." At the age of 70 years, last year he published his first book of poetry. I like to think Listowel Writers' Week was part of the reason, in giving inspiration and providing somebody like him with an opportunity to experience a world of creativity, literature, imagination and fun.

Ms Máire Logue: We always have certain aims for the future. We always continue to develop and sustain the literary festival's uniqueness. We are passionate about ensuring we have a well-run festival. Our authors and audiences are first and foremost in our minds. We always try to develop and expand our target markets and attract new audiences. We seek to be fully inclusive in our programming and give our audiences variety and choice. We are building the grassroots through our children's festival. Ms Moylan and I were both children of Listowel Writers' Week and are now overjoyed to be working for it. It is so positive. Working in the

arts is a really positive and wonderful experience which we are trying to build through our children's festival and now the young adult bookfest which we introduced about two years ago for transition and fifth year students. There is an educational element to it from the leaving certificate English examination papers. Three years ago we had approximately 250 transition year students, while last year, on 15 November 2017, we attracted over 850. They want to come and be involved in the festival.

Ms Catherine Moylan: In addition, Listowel is a heritage town. We are very lucky to have a pretty town that is very well maintained and respected. There are many heritage sites. There is the castle in the middle of the square and an arts and heritage building at the centre of the town. We like to create synergies between the buildings in the town, the organisations and us. Everybody wins, including the Office of Public Works and the Department, because we are all in it together.

Ms Máire Logue: Our long-term challenges are the same other festivals face. They include funding and growth. Listowel is a small heritage town in north Kerry with a population of 3,500. As the availability of accommodation is hugely important, we are expanding our reach to Ballybunion, Tarbert and Tralee where audiences can stay there and come to the town. Staff is a huge issue, while obviously sponsorship is foremost in everybody's mind. As we do not have access to corporate companies, we are very lucky to have Kerry Group which has supported us for the last 35 years. It is key for us and works in partnership with us. There is competition. As there are literary and book festivals popping up all over the place, we must remain authentic. We have to be sustained and ensure ours will continue to be the primary literary festival in Ireland. Obviously, the accessibility of our location is hugely important. That is a positive, but it can also be a challenge. We take it as a positive because we are located in a beautiful heritage town.

Ms Catherine Moylan: Like Galway, we are approaching the 50th Listowel Writers' Week two years hence. Given its potential, it is really exciting to think about what could be available and the experiential nature of culture and heritage. The world is our oyster.

Ms Máire Logue: Listowel Writers' Week is our gift to writers and audiences and we just love it. As Ms Moylan said, it is in our DNA and we cannot help talking about it.

Vice Chairman: In fairness, Ms Moylan and Ms Logue are great speakers. As I will call a few of the members to contribute, they might take notes if there is something specific to their group.

Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell: I thank the delegates for attending. Some of them are in the throes of their work, with events taking place in a few weeks; therefore, we appreciate their attendance.

This is the culture and heritage committee, but I do not know why we do not call it the arts and culture committee or why we wiped the word "arts" from both the name of the committee and the Department. It is extremely important that those on the committee know about the brilliance of the work happening throughout the country. We sometimes live in a cocoon here and do not know what is happening. We are also not vocal enough about it. We are vocal about footpaths and 1,000 other things, rightly so, but we are not vocal enough about the arts and the massive part they play, from both a Dionysian and civic point of view. We are grateful the delegates are here because we know the effort that was made to come here. I also thank them for being such a flagship for the island because sometimes - I say this being part of the political

system - politics does not come up to that standard of expression of who and what we are.

I have a few general questions about which the delegates might think before answering after my colleagues have contributed.

Are there synergies between the delegates? Do they co-operate with the Tyrone Guthrie Centre and find that some of the artists go on to attend the Galway and Kilkenny arts festivals? Do they think that they, as leaders in the arts and especially in running a festival, communicate well enough with us? Do they think they could lead a little better? Are they being clever enough in that regard? By “clever” I mean artistic and creative enough or are they simply letting this happen because they are very busy? Do they believe they could find a better route to us as Oireachtas Members?

Coming to the Galway International Arts Festival, can the witnesses tell me how many people they employ permanently, non-permanently and on a voluntary basis? Can they discuss the cost of the festival and the gift of the Government or the Arts Council or whether there is such a gift?

This might be an awful thing to say but sometimes I believe the static theatre is a little dead and that one will find more of the living theatre at festivals where the original work or touring work is shown. We can get a lot of repetition. Could the witnesses discuss that?

The witnesses are wonderful and I think of them as a type of new Edinburgh. If they had a need, what would it be? Could they name an ambitious project they might have in the back of their heads? They spoke about projects being expensive and risky. Have they an ambitious project in mind?

Where does Creative Ireland come into the witnesses’ world because it is certainly coming into ours? We have a huge number of books, pillars and all kinds of things on it. Could the witnesses speak to that and whether they are involved in the capital programme? Have they asked about that? How do they see it? Have they been contacted by Creative Ireland? Have the witnesses contacted Creative Ireland and, if so, has it come back to them? Does it see itself as part of the witnesses’ world?

I ask the witnesses from Listowel Writers’ Week to tell me specifically about their funding. The witnesses might speak to the general questions as they see fit. Will I ask the panel to answer those questions or does the Chairman want to call other members?

Chairman: I have a few members to call. I call Deputy John Brassil.

Deputy John Brassil: Word got around that there were a few people from Listowel in the building so I had to make sure that I used the opportunity-----

Senator Marie-Louise O’Donnell: Where is Deputy Healy-Rae?

Deputy John Brassil: In the part of Kerry I am from, Listowel and Listowel Writers’ Week is very important and it is very close to my heart.

People involved in the arts, artists, are probably this country’s greatest asset. The nature of the people and the love for what they do almost surpasses any barriers that are put in their way. As a result, we have developed in spite of ourselves and the barriers. We have brilliant individuals, festivals and almost entire cultures because of the nature of the people and their determination. The love of what they do drives them and surpasses all barriers.

Being familiar with Listowel Writers' Week I believe it is probably the most unique and enjoyable event in Kerry culture if not in terms of the entire country. I recall being Mayor of Kerry in 2014 and awarding prizes to schoolchildren who had partaken in poetry and essay competitions. Those children would not have the opportunity to show their creative ability without Listowel Writers' Week. The way the committee has reached out to the education system and to young people in particular has been exemplary. As a result, the festival is something that is to be enjoyed. I do not believe I have ever come across a person who had gone to Listowel Writers' Week and not come away having had a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

I want to record my appreciation and the appreciation of the people of north Kerry for the wonderful and unique event that is Listowel Writers' Week. Ms Máire Logue and Ms Catherine Moylan highlighted the challenges they face. At the top of their list is the one that challenges everyone, namely, funding. From an Oireachtas budgetary point of view, in terms of the money we give to the arts relative to the bang we get for our buck, every euro we put in we get back in spades. However, the level of funding must be greatly increased. The success of all of these festivals in Galway, Tyrone and Kilkenny is because of the people who drive them, not because of the funding we make available to them. As a Parliament, we should do much more from a funding point of view.

I have one question which might be appropriate for all the witnesses. With regard to volunteerism and staffing, are there are challenges in respect of the issue of Garda vetting? That particular process is necessary but it is an arduous one to go through. Has it reached the levels of festivals yet or can the witnesses recruit and work with volunteers without having to go through that process?

Deputy Niamh Smyth: I apologise for being late. I missed the Galway Arts Festival presentation but Deputy Ó Cuív will have me well tuned in and, hopefully, I will get to hear more from the witnesses also.

It is fantastic to have the witnesses here this morning. I would be singing off the same hymn sheet as my colleague, Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell. It is wonderful to have people from the arts speak to us this morning with such enthusiasm about what they do. As a former arts student of the National College of Art and Design, NCAD, and having studied with the Institute of Art, Design and Technology, IADT, in curatorial studies I know what it is like at the coalface in terms of trying to curate, conduct and pull together festivals, as the witnesses do. I take my hat off to them because they do amazing work with sometimes very little appreciation for it. However, as alluded to already, the witnesses are one of this country's best human resources, both nationally and internationally. That is hugely important.

I am from County Cavan and a former member of Cavan County Council. The first bursary I was ever given was to the Tyrone Guthrie Centre. I remember thinking that I was going down the road to County Monaghan but wondering what I would do there. At the time I had been commissioned to do a public art piece for the first fleadh held in Cavan. I recall going through the gates into the Tyrone Guthrie Centre and seeing the beautiful estate and grounds. I wrote down three words about that, namely, the atmosphere, the isolation and the conversations I had with other artists. I was not in any way prepared for that experience, which was probably one of the most precious I ever had when I was working as an artist. I returned a few years later as a curator to do a different type of work. I was not producing the artwork but thinking about artists, themes and briefs for exhibitions I wanted to curate. As a fellow Cavan-Monaghan person, I am proud and delighted to see the witnesses here today. They do amazing work in the centre. The wonderful aspect of it is that it touches all the arts disciplines in terms of its dance

studio and artists' studio. It is wonderful to hear that it is expanding the centre with its cottages and one can go down the road to Monaghan town for coffee and a bit of civilisation if that is needed.

I found the meal and the conversation in the evening very helpful. I have spoken to many people who have spent time in the centre and they found it exhilarating to get that opportunity. Being a curator or an artist can be a very lonely place because most of the time is spent on one's own so to have the opportunity to produce one's work during the day and have those conversations in the evening was hugely important. The witnesses are doing fabulous work and long may it continue.

I have to say I have never attended the Galway Arts Festival for the simple reason that I was always correcting the leaving certificate art papers at that time. However, I was in Galway at the weekend, saw the signs for the festival and decided to make it my business to get to some of the events.

Mr. Downes answered Senator O'Donnell's question about letting us as Oireachtas Members know what is happening because the witnesses wrote out and we all got their very articulate and colourful brochure yesterday about what is happening with the Kilkenny Arts Festival. I thank Mr. Downes and Ms Barry for the invitation to the launch in Dublin and Kilkenny. I certainly intend to attend some of the events down there. I apologise for not having made it down to Listowel Writers' Week yet but perhaps I will get the opportunity to do that this summer.

Any town, city or rural area is so lucky to have the witnesses who are creating festivals and providing visitors with an opportunity to come to an area. My questions are similar to those of Senator O'Donnell. Mr. Downes gave us an idea of the small number of staff. I put the same question to Mr. Crumlish and Mr. Fahy. Will they tell us about the Galway International Arts Festival's staffing and numbers? What engagement have the witnesses had with Creative Ireland so far? Creative Ireland has been in existence for two or three years. Have they received funding from Creative Ireland for their festivals and, if so, under what guise, scheme or umbrella?

In their professional capacity as directors and curators, will the witnesses tell me about Creative Ireland and its relationship with the Arts Council? Are we doing things right? Could we do things better? Is there duplication? I would like to hear the witnesses' opinion on that.

Will the witnesses keep us informed about what they are doing? That is very important. I do not think we are in a bubble. It is just that we have so much going on and it is very helpful to get the brochures like the one we received from Mr. Downes and invitations to launches. I ask that the witnesses keep us posted because we want to know what is happening throughout the country. I asked three very specific questions. Will each organisation answer them because we could learn a lot from that?

Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell: My question is not even about keeping us informed. It is more about conviction and bringing us in because one can be informed every day. I am talking about going further than that. It is a bigger influence like we have here today. It should be far more definite and everyday. We are not getting it. We are getting it from all other angles but we are not getting the brilliance of the artistic end of this country and what it does for us as people both individually and collectively. We should be thinking of cleverer ways to get in on that.

Mr. John Crumlish: I will start with Senator O'Donnell's questions about the statistics around money and employment. We employ six people full-time and more than 90 people part-time. The part-time contracts would go from nine months of the year down to two months of the year. This year, it will cost just under €4 million. A total of 27% of what it takes to put the festival on is provided by the State. A total of 17% comes from the Arts Council, 7% comes from Fáilte Ireland and 2% comes from local government. The remainder is made up of a mixture of box office - over 40% - and the remainder is sponsorship and small donations.

Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell: Does the festival make a profit?

Mr. John Crumlish: Some years we do while in other years we do not. Being a not-for-profit body, it goes back in again. Much like the ad says, shares might go up or down. There are so many moving parts within it, including the weather. We are probably the only people in the country apart from farmers who do not particularly like bright sunshine. It is not good for selling tickets.

Mr. Paul Fahy: In terms of synergies between us, there are probably far more natural bedfellows. Festivals tend to communicate more and would be very supportive of each other. In terms of our festival changing and becoming a producing-led model, to do that, we effectively started with the same funds and pot of money we had as just a presenting festival. To be able to produce, create and support our artists who were making ambitious work, we needed to have core producers so we have a small core group of theatre companies and individual artists with whom we work on an ongoing basis and with whom we have created a lot of our work.

Senator O'Donnell discussed static theatre being dead and whether festivals are places to look to in terms of exciting work. Festivals are always great places to look to in terms of exciting work. One of our greatest collaborators is Enda Walsh, who is probably Ireland's leading playwright. We work a lot with Landmark Productions in terms of making all these shows happen. They all originate in Galway and tour extensively around the world. In terms of their wizardry, they have been hugely admired by many commentators.

In terms of other ambitious works, when the Galway International Arts Festival was founded 41 years ago - the first festival took place in 1978 - the two key venues back then were an old farmer's shop that had been converted into a gallery space and a very small tent. Here we are 41 years later in 2018 and our biggest venue is a big plastic tent that holds 3,500 people in a field with no electricity while the second one is an imagined space that becomes a big gallery. While Galway has improved hugely in terms of other cultural infrastructure, we still face huge challenges in how we create leading international work in those kinds of spaces that can go on to tour the world and how we present work that comes from state-of-the-art buildings around the world.

We are working towards an amazing project in 2020 with the visual artist John Gerrard in building these three pavilions, one of which will be positioned across Galway's River Corrib and powered by the water and another one that will be on the bogs of Connemara. They are two very challenging projects. One of them will be in Deputy Ó Cuív's jurisdiction. They are very ambitious. We have an endless number of projects in the can that we are constantly developing and working on.

In terms of our model, we are funded year to year and plan three, four or five years ahead. We need to do that to keep pace with the international scene but also in terms of the way artists work and the way their careers progress. We need to be able to plan, develop and nurture over

that period, so trying to plan financially for all of that is challenging when we are funded from year to year. What else did I want to mention?

Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell: Creative Ireland.

Mr. Paul Fahy: Perhaps Mr. Crumlish will talk about Creative Ireland. One of our defining characteristics has always been helping people to reimagine the world and the way they live in it. That is one of our biggest ways of communicating in terms of the work we produce and present and the way we engage with our audience. We bring audiences and artists together to experience the world through a different kind of lens. The one thing we always like in Galway, and I know that we might be blessed because of the shape of the city, is the fact that someone could be blindfolded and pop down to Shop Street, High Street or Quay Street at any time during the two weeks in July never having heard of what we do, take the blindfold off and know that a big cultural expression is happening on the streets of Galway that is penetrating through to all areas of the community. That is a key expression of how we like to connect with our people.

Mr. John Crumlish: To be brutally honest, there is the rest of the world and then there is a love affair between Galway city and the Galway International Arts Festival that has been ongoing for 41 years and will continue. It is also with the people of Galway. It has been our stage and, thankfully, the people of Galway have given us permission to play on that stage for an awfully long time and, we hope, for a lot longer.

We received a small amount of money from Creative Ireland last year that went to fund the discussion platform entitled First Thought, which we mentioned earlier. That has been our interaction with Creative Ireland to date. I understand that it is coming back on stream and we hope to engage with it, mainly under its international pillar.

Mr. Adrian Moynes: I thank Deputies and Senators for the warmth of their endorsement. In respect of our connections with Creative Ireland, perhaps we are Creative Ireland *avant la lettre*. We have been at this for a long time. The job of the Tyrone Guthrie Centre is quite specific. It is to be a place where people do the core creative work. The question of how that plays out in terms of opportunities on the national stage is one for other people. We will always be open to the conversations and discussions with policymakers or any agency that is trying to improve the quality of arts life in Ireland. Before Mr. McDonald talks about staff numbers, I wish to say that the people who work at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, those who maintain the grounds and make the beds, are absolutely key to the support of the creative artists. As the chairman, time and again the artists tell me the staff members at the centre are wonderful. These staff members are local men and women who live down the road in Annaghmakerrig, Newbliss or Cootehill and are in the centre every day making the beds and putting the food on the table. It is absolutely quintessential to the experience.

Mr. Robert McDonald: With regard to Creative Ireland, we have noted a lot more artists coming to the Tyrone Guthrie Centre with projects. Siobhan McDonald from Monaghan is currently working on a piece about the Black Pig's Dyke, for example, and this is funded through the Monaghan-Cavan Creative Ireland project. There is a lot more work coming to artists and then they arrive to us to work on the project. Creative Ireland has given the centre a lift by giving the artists a lift through giving them some finance to prepare their work. Creative Ireland is very positively received in rural areas, especially in Leitrim, Cavan and Monaghan, where I work with a lot of artists. The arts officers in particular seem to find the whole process very engaging and supportive for current practices. We have had a number of artists knocking on the centre's door looking for a week in which they can get a project ready and we try to facilitate

this as best we can.

Reference was made to whether or not we assist festivals. Bryan Delaney is currently with us and he is heading to the Galway Film Fleadh to showcase his new film. Little John Nee has just finished a new show, which will be at the Earagail Arts Festival and perhaps at the Galway festival also. There are many people making the work, which sometimes is showcased very early and sometimes it is two or three years down the line before the work is ready to be staged at a festival or venue.

I thank Deputy Niamh Smyth for her complimentary comments about the estate. For the record, the Office of Public Works looks after the grounds at Annaghmakerrig. They have maintained the house and the grounds very effectively for the last 15 years. We are very fortunate to have the OPW. The house belongs to the State and the OPW maintains it. This is why it looks so well. I must give credit to the OPW on that front.

We employ ten people locally. We are open for 50 weeks of the year and we have to cover every night and every weekend. Dinner is served every evening at 7 p.m. and we are very lucky to have two wonderful chefs living within ten minutes of the centre as otherwise, the artists would not come back to us.

Ms Olga Barry: I will address the staffing and some of the synergies, and then Mr. Downes will come in. The Kilkenny Arts Festival currently has three full-time staff members and one part-time staff member. We increase this by another five on a seasonal basis, which is more than one month but less than two months. Depending on the programming in any given year we also have another 20 to 25 staff that are with us for one month or less. Crucially, supporting all of this is - literally - an army of some 350 volunteers. For the first time two years ago a grandchild of an original volunteer from the first festival in 1974 started in our junior volunteer programme. This is an extraordinary commitment. It is easy to talk in soft-focus terms about volunteerism and about them being the backbone of the festival but in Kilkenny's case, the festival would crash and burn without them. They are incredibly knowledgeable, they are comfortable talking to artists and engaging in participatory projects and they speak to the heart and soul of the festival and what it means. When one drops people into a city the size of Kilkenny the idea of festivalisation - as referred to by Mr. Fahy - is ripe for nurturing in this State. Because of the size of the towns and cities regionally in which we operate one can festivalise the energy of the city for this length of time. It can be about the arts, creativity, the public space and civic engagement.

Synergy is not just within the festival itself. It is important for our public representatives to see that there are synergies between production companies, Dublin-based companies and Irish artists who work internationally. Most of the work of Cartoon Saloon, for example, is now seen abroad. Synergy is about practitioners, venues, composers, writers, poets and arts managers. A country the size of Ireland has to have those synergies. I believe that most people would agree there is incredible synergy within the arts sector itself. It is because we need one another and depend on one another. You can pick up the phone to Paul Fahy or to Cian O'Brien and they would dig you out if you needed. This approach is very front and centre in the arts community in Ireland and is to be celebrated.

Mr. Eugene Downes: It is true. Hardly a week would go by that we would not be on the phone back and forward with John Crumlish, Paul Fahy or other colleagues, constantly comparing practical challenges, audience trends and artistic opportunities. This is absolutely critical when one is making constant judgment calls, be they about marketing strategy, an artistic issue

or a practical funding issue. The informal lines of communication within the sector are really alive and vital.

Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell asked about communications with the political sphere. I will take this query in the context of advocacy and lobbying. This leads into the core public policy issue of funding needs and, for example, Creative Ireland and education. Many arts organisations are active in different ways of broader advocacy and lobbying. At the Kilkenny Arts Festival, for example, we have a lot of direct contact locally with our elected members and with the key officials in Kilkenny County Council and with local Deputies and Senators. There are lots of direct contacts within the county. In our national lobbying and advocacy and in our engagement with the Houses of the Oireachtas and the Government, we generally channel that effort through our participation in the National Campaign for the Arts. I am on the steering group for the National Campaign for the Arts and a significant amount of our time and energy is involved in crafting a position on behalf of the sector and then seeking to engage with key decision makers in the political sphere, be they elected Members, Ministers or key officials on that key conversation.

This leads into the issue of funding and a number of members have asked what those needs and issues. Over the past year we have been heavily engaged on the question of a political commitment from the Government and the Taoiseach to double arts funding.

Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell: Absolutely. This is the core of it.

Mr. Eugene Downes: This is absolutely key. The budget outcome last year was not on track to achieve the ambition to double arts funding over seven years. Over recent months the engagement has been to seek from the Government a roadmap with staging posts through which a commitment to double arts funding could be delivered in a clear and planned way that would give confidence to the sector and which would enable our planning to respond to it. When Project Ireland 2040 was launched, the cultural infrastructure plan, we noted that it represents a doubling of capital spending over a seven-year period. All of the arguments the Government made at that launch as to the importance of multi-annual planning to be able to unlock the value of that public investment on the capital side means that one has to set out a seven or ten-year plan and then the entire sector can respond, as well as public bodies. Our argument has been regarding the current spending. All of the human infrastructure and activity, and equally the multi-annual roadmap or perspective from the Government and Oireachtas side and from the sector, enables work to be done, the planning to be made and the value to be unlocked in the current spend and investment.

Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell: The Government is writing tomes, some of which are on my desk and shelves, about the need for community and how community needs to be acknowledged, developed, enlarged and aligned. The very people who are doing this are the festivals and the arts organisations, including the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Listowel Writers' Week, the Galway Film Fleadh and the Earagail Arts Festival and so on. These are the very people who are doing this, starting with the volunteers and going right to the artistic expression of who and what we are. This is why Mr. Downes's comments are extremely important. It is no use having wonderful window dressing. We know it is happening. There must be a punch to what the witnesses are saying. That is extremely important. I am sorry, Vice Chairman. I just wanted to-----

Mr. Eugene Downes: Not to extend the discussion but on that specific point, that has become more interesting over the past month because until a few weeks ago, the commitment

to double arts funding, as we understand it, was undifferentiated between capital and current. However, in the Global Ireland document of, I think, three weeks ago, on page 42, I believe, the Government made a written commitment specifically to double current spending on the arts over seven years. This is the first time, as we understand it, there has been a specific commitment to double current spending. We have had those conversations directly with the Minister for Finance. I know he is very resistant to multi-annual current funding commitments but we would make the case that that is key to be able to plan. Justin Trudeau, when he made the commitment to double arts spending in Canada, set out a five to seven-year staged roadmap and one can see the benefit of it.

Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell: Absolutely.

Mr. Eugene Downes: I can come back on Creative Ireland if there is time later.

Deputy Niamh Smyth: Before we move on, I remind all the witnesses that I asked a very specific question about the relationship between Creative Ireland and the Arts Council. I ask them to comment on that. I see duplication in some respects. I worry about that. Perhaps they will disagree with me and say they are on the right track. As people at the coalface of this, I would like to hear their opinion on it.

Mr. Eugene Downes: To answer Deputy Smyth's question - and I know it was also raised by Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell - as a matter of public record, last year, in a series of public meetings the then director of Creative Ireland asked specifically for submissions and proposals from arts organisations for particular events for strategic partnership with Creative Ireland. We sent in a written proposal, again relating to a talks programme and some other events for children in respect of the first, fourth and fifth pillars, and we received a €15,000 grant. This is all in the public domain. This year, Creative Ireland has issued a specific funding scheme that went public a number of weeks ago. We have engaged with that. It is a public process. There is no outcome from it yet.

As for the larger question the Deputy asked about Creative Ireland and its relationship to the Arts Council and other funding bodies, I will make two points. As a cross-governmental co-ordinating mechanism, that is a key need. Whether one calls it Creative Ireland or something else I note, having worked in this area in and out of government over the past 25 years, one of the key things we lacked in being able to drive through effective public policy in culture was a cross-governmental mechanism that could drive it through - for example, arts in education. The Department of arts or culture or whatever it has been called over the past 25 years never had the weight in government to be able to drive through a really effective arts in education programme with the Department of Education and Skills. The Department of the Taoiseach, co-ordinating Creative Ireland and chaired by the Secretary General to the Government, is in a position to drive this through. With the creative schools programme, we have seen an example of the benefit that an effective cross-governmental co-ordinating mechanism can have. This is a key part of Creative Ireland's existence. Tania Banotti, someone for whom I have the highest respect, has been appointed director. It is a very exciting appointment because it comes at a pivotal moment. There is a great opportunity for Creative Ireland to play that co-ordinating role in a way that does not duplicate the work of other public bodies. The risk of duplication, obviously, is to be avoided. How that pivot between now and how Tania Banotti's leadership moves forward will be key and the outcome in this regard remains to be seen.

Vice Chairman: I now call Ms Máire Logue of Listowel Writers' Week. Others will get a chance to come back in later.

Ms Máire Logue: I will answer a few of the basic questions Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell and Deputy Smyth asked about staff numbers, public funding and so on. Listowel Writers' Week has one full-time member of staff who works year-round. We have two part-time members of staff and a community employment worker. That is how our office works. We have no consultants; we do everything in-house, including all our marketing and PR. Regarding public funding, our annual budget is between €250,000 and €280,000, with €280,000 being the highest target. We received Arts Council funding this year of €75,000, which comprised a very minor increase. Obviously, we are grateful for everything we receive. Fáilte Ireland gave us €30,000, which is part of a three-year plan we have with the body. Kerry County Council gave us €10,500, and Foras na Gaeilge and the Irish Prison Service gave us €4,000. We must therefore find and secure €170,000 ourselves. We do this through sponsorship, patronage and our ticket sales. That is our current position. It is very straightforward. We are the same not-for-profit. Two years ago, we did not make a profit; we ran at a loss. Therefore, we must build the festival up again. Last year was an excellent year, and this year has been very good, so we are okay this year.

Our only involvement with Creative Ireland has been through Kerry County Council in attending information meetings and so on. We did not receive any funding from Creative Ireland. We have worked with the Seanchaí history museum in Listowel in putting together its Fighting Words programme. That has been our only connection with Creative Ireland. Our main connection is with the Arts Council. For us, as a small core team, applications and administration of this is-----

Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell: Death-defying.

Ms Máire Logue: We will spend the rest of July completing our post-event report for Fáilte Ireland for €30,000. It is kind of soul-destroying, but we must do it because we must get the income. That is where we are regarding Creative Ireland.

Regarding what Deputy Brassil said about volunteers and Garda vetting, everyone involved in our children's festival and our young adults' festival must be Garda vetted. Not only must they be Garda vetted, but authors in Dublin, who will have been Garda vetted in Dublin, must be Garda vetted again if they come to Kerry. This is where there is absolutely no co-ordination, and it makes programming for festivals and so on really difficult. Administration can be really difficult and laborious and take up a lot of time. I really appreciate the Deputy's positive statements about being in contact with the Government and with Members far more. We are probably not in contact more often perhaps because of time constraints, the way in which we do it and whether we cover-----

Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell: Are we getting away from the arts?

Ms Máire Logue: We suffer from Catholic guilt then as to whether we should or should not. Members know what I mean. We do appreciate that.

We absolutely have synergies with other festivals. Book festivals in Ireland are very small. We work with Cill Rialaig to offer a residency for seven emerging writers every year for a week. As members know, festivals are dependent. The Ennis Book Club Festival had to be absolutely cancelled and was decimated this year because of one of the storms. We picked up the pieces, contacted them and said we were really sorry that had happened to them and asked them to come to Listowel and have some of their events there. We had to do that because there but for the grace of God goes our festival. On the way here I had a call from Mountains to Sea. We

work with that festival. It is all about authors. Kerry County Council has been in and out, and we have always been in contact with Cúirt. It is a very small family of festivals. There was a time, perhaps, when this was not the case and we saw one another as competition. We must do what we can.

Senator Fintan Warfield: I have just come in and am also trying to get back to the Seanad for a vote.

Vice Chairman: Yes, the Senator has a vote. Would he like to-----

Senator Fintan Warfield: Is that okay?

Vice Chairman: Absolutely.

Senator Fintan Warfield: I am sorry for being less than present. The Education (Admission to Schools) Bill, dealing with the baptism barrier and other initiatives, is being debated in the Seanad, so I apologise for running in and out.

I lived in Galway for three years. Mr. Crumlish and Mr. Fahy are to be commended on the festival. I see on the discussion platform the issue of gender equality. Do all the festivals represented here have policies of gender equality to ensure we do not sleepwalk into something similar to what we have seen in the media recently on discussion platforms and so on?

I was also looking at the arts spend for Galway city versus Galway county per head of population. Mr. Fahy talked about 25% of programmes being free of charge and participation in them being a vital element of festivals. I think the spend per head in Galway city is €73 versus approximately €4 per head in Galway county. Perhaps Deputy Ó Cuív will clarify that. Is there a role for the festival in addressing this and people's participation across the county?

I support Mr. Crumlish's recommendation concerning supports for festivals to produce new work while also facilitating national pieces that perhaps have been produced by the Abbey Theatre. I saw "Loch na hEala", the Irish production of "Swan Lake". The only place I saw it was at Clonmel Junction Festival. To come back to what Ms Barry said, the event took place in a gym hall.

Ms Olga Barry: I was there.

Senator Fintan Warfield: The production was a remarkable experience. I might not have time to ask the witnesses about capital expenditure versus current expenditure. From what I hear, the organisation has asked for more capital expenditure. Conversely, we have often heard representatives of the arts sphere beg for current expenditure rather than capital expenditure.

Listowel Writers' Week is Ireland's longest running literary festival. It receives a very small amount of funding from the local county council in the context of its overall funding. The witnesses are under no obligation to answer the following question but how does it make them feel when a local authority, like Dublin City Council, requests that a literary festival withdraws or cancels an event due to its content, be it political or otherwise?

Ms Máire Logue: I understand what happened. At the time it was on, which was two years ago, an author was due to arrive from Israel or wherever, which created a huge issue for us. The festival's programme is fully inclusive. We have never been asked not to programme something for political reasons or by our board of directors. That situation has not arisen and I hope it never will. Our work ethos is fully inclusive and the festival programme is of the nature

where this situation has never occurred. We are extremely lucky.

Vice Chairman: Is Senator Warfield finished asking questions?

Senator Fintan Warfield: Yes.

Vice Chairman: We will take questions from other members who have indicated a desire to speak and then we will hear answers from the witnesses. Deputy Canney is next and he will be followed by Deputy Danny Healy-Rae.

Deputy Seán Canney: In GAA parlance, we have the Super 8 present, from Kerry, Tyrone, Kilkenny and Galway. As a Galwayman, I am delighted that Galway is well represented here. There are eight witnesses present and, to me, they are a Super 8. I commend them all on their presentations. I apologise for missing the start of the meeting but I had to attend to another matter.

Having listened to what has been said it is evident that funding is the biggest challenge, and I mean the uncertainty about funding that prevails at the start of the year. We, as public representatives, need to put in place a three or five-year funding plan that will assist people in terms of development and being confident that they will have enough money to support what they want to do.

Vice Chairman: I ask the Deputy to do something with his phone as it is causing interference.

Deputy Seán Canney: I apologise to the Vice Chairman. I would like the witnesses to comment on funding.

Earlier somebody mentioned the duplication of Garda vetting. The one thing, if nothing else, that we should take from the briefing made by the witnesses is that we take cognisance of the duplication of Garda vetting and resolve the matter. I know that when one has volunteers, but one can only afford to pay a few of them, that the duplication of Garda vetting is the most frustrating aspect. Sometimes one can correct the most simple of things that does not incur a cost but which makes life a bit better for everybody. The committee should resolve the vetting issue.

I would like to discuss the Galway International Arts Festival. As I hail from northern Galway, I wish to return to the point made by Senator Warfield about the amount of money spent in the city of Galway as opposed to the county and make the following observation. We need to spread the good feeling generated by the arts into the county. Unfortunately, Galway is a big county and the distance from Clifden to Ballinasloe is half the distance to Dublin yet one still has not left the county. Therefore, we need to take into account that there are great distances involved.

The county is home to a number of huge festivals such as Clifden Arts Festival. Unfortunately, the other festivals in the county suffer due to the great success enjoyed by the Galway Arts Festival. I mean that they do not get the same profile. Tuam had an arts festival for many years but, sadly, it died because it was effectively seen as being in competition with the Galway Arts Festival. The Tuam festival did not compete with the Galway Arts Festival but it was unsustainable due to being 30 km away from Galway. We must spread the success generated by the Galway Arts Festival into the region. We will have an opportunity to include the regions in the Galway Arts Festival in 2020. Sometimes areas in the region do not want to be included

because they view the Galway Arts Festival as a city event. It is important to get people to come forward and promote the arts in the region. Much work is being done to promote the arts in the region but we need to prioritise such activity in order to get a better spread around the county.

As a former Minister of State with responsibility for the Office of Public Works, I am delighted to hear that the Office of Public Works takes care of the Tyrone Guthrie Centre. That fact is something that goes amiss. People are unaware that many State agencies ensure that facilities exist. I compliment the people who work in the Office of Public Works on their work. I will tell Commissioner John McMahon and Mr. Frank Shalvey that this is happening and that the initiative has been spoken about in a positive nature.

The Galway Arts Festival needs more space and we should take this opportunity to focus on doing something now. We have plenty of places, so it is question of making a decision. The local authorities and all of the stakeholders should prepare a good master plan in order to get this work done, which is well overdue. We can achieve that if we work together. I compliment everybody here on their work.

I wish the Galway hurling team good luck when they play Kilkenny next Sunday and I wish the Galway senior men's Gaelic football team good luck when they play Kerry the following Sunday.

Ms Máire Logue: Unfortunately, the latter match will take place at the same time as the World Cup final.

Deputy Seán Canney: Yes.

Deputy Danny Healy-Rae: I am sorry that I have been unable to give some of the witnesses the attention they deserve because I was not present for the start of some of the presentations. I welcome the witnesses from the Tyrone Guthrie Centre in Monaghan, Galway, Kilkenny and especially the two girls from Kerry.

Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell: Lest we be in any doubt.

Deputy Danny Healy-Rae: I am very proud to be a Kerryman and to represent Kerry in the Dáil. We have the Listowel Writers' Week but there are other cultural events that happen only in Kerry. The Listowel festival organisers do their job so well and make people feel welcome. The event was founded by John. B. Keane, Dr. Bryan MacMahon and others. Both of their names are synonymous with Listowel and they have done great work for Listowel and Kerry, of which we are very proud.

I heard the witnesses mention Garda vetting. I know about the situation because I own a school bus. If my driver takes a day off I cannot borrow a bus driver from another local contractor, for example, without him or her being Garda vetted even though he is-----

Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell: As I have said 1,000 times here, mobile phones should be banned from meetings.

Vice Chairman: The phone is underneath Deputy Healy-Rae's desk.

Deputy Danny Healy-Rae: The current scheme of Garda vetting is so ridiculous that this country is tied up in knots. One may have someone who works in a nursing home in Kenmare but he or she cannot work in a nursing home in Kilgarvan without being Garda vetted again. That proves that it is not just volunteers for arts festivals who are affected. I have raised the

issue of Garda vetting with the Taoiseach in the Dáil Chamber because the current situation is ridiculous. We will continue to see if we can undo the blockage. It seems that such vetting takes up a lot of the time of the people who administer the system of Garda vetting just as much as it hurts local people and volunteers. The issue must be resolved.

Festivals receive paltry sums of money and must operate on a shoestring. For the great work that they do, they deserve a whole lot more. The witnesses are very welcome here. I am sorry I was not in earlier and I probably cannot stay for much longer because there are so many things going on and it is hard, but we really welcome and appreciate the work that they are doing. I am not conversing with the other people here as much but I do know-----

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: The Deputy is welcome up to Galway for the festival.

Deputy Danny Healy-Rae: We like to go to Galway but we dread them in the football, that is the problem. It is good to have the witnesses here and I wish them every success in the future.

Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell: When I hear Deputy Danny Healy-Rae speaking, I am reminded of the great plays of John B. Keane. I think I am listening to the Hiker, I really do. It is beautiful to hear him. People were giving out about his voice the other night on a stupid television programme but it is liquid gold because one is brought right back into the great plays of John B. Keane because he speaks with such melody from his people and place. I just wanted to say that because he was maligned about it recently.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: I, too, must apologise that I was not here but this place has a lot of things going on at the one time at the moment. It is the last two weeks of the term. One of the challenges of the arts in the modern world is that they are seen in a compartment. We live in a very compartmentalised world and the arts are seen as being there for certain people. One thing that we have to recognise is that for social and mental well-being, arts and culture have been part of human existence since the beginning of time and all societies had arts and culture. It is very interesting when societies that might not be as developed as ours in our perception are looked at to find how central cultural issues are to people. Therefore, the arts, which tend to be a bit of an add-on in government, are central to human existence.

The other thing that used to amuse me a little bit was that I would be sent abroad by the Government on various missions on St. Patrick's Day and so on, and as part of those I was always asked to do events for Enterprise Ireland and the Industrial Development Authority, IDA. It was interesting to see how, on all of those fronts, the arts and culture were the way we identified ourselves. They were our unique identifier for very much more mundane economic reasons. Similarly, when I travelled abroad as the Minister accompanying the President, I saw again how we used our arts and culture to identify ourselves as a separate people and who we are. We should recognise the arts, and it is important for us in the Oireachtas not to see arts and culture as an add-on but as something central to human well-being, not only economic well-being but well-being in and of itself. They also have a huge economic impact for this country.

This has been a long session so I will cut to the chase. I used to be a co-op manager and I would get a lot of praise in that job, but it was money I was looking for. I would come back to the office and we always had the bank manager roaring at us. We were trying to jiggle the cheques around and I would say to my assistant that it was an awful pity that praise was not bankable. The bank manager would not recognise that currency, however, and he kept looking for the actual notes. If we can be a little bit mundane, would I be right in thinking that the witnesses' shopping list would be for more funding, multi-annual funding to be able to plan three

to five years ahead, and that some of the red tape would be dealt with? Red tape is part of the modern world, we all know that. It is not going to disappear but some simple things could be done. We could do a lot more by making simple programmes on computers to get rid of some of the record-keeping that goes on. I understand that we will all be paying our PAYE and PRSI on the computer every week so there will be no more P35s, which will be a great relief for any of the witnesses who have a wage to pay and have to do all of those mundane jobs. I know that as artists they find those tiring, but at the end of the day, the manager part of them has to do all of those things.

One thing about the Garda vetting I can never get my head around is that if somebody works for three arts organisations and drives two school busses, they need five Garda clearances in the one year. One would think that with modern bureaucracy, a number would be assigned to somebody's clearance, and if there was any doubt or if something happened between the day the clearance was given on 1 January 2018 and the day that the witnesses wanted to hire the person, the witnesses would be able to give the Garda the number, they would have the same number in the computer, and down the line that person would have clearance and would remain cleared, end of story. With tax clearance and everything else, people get it, they have it and it is given in.

Garda clearance is one thing that really causes delays. There are logjams throughout the year and people get held up with something with which there is no problem in 99% of the cases and it would be fairly well known there was no problem because the person would have had clearance with the previous employer. It is an issue we should face up to in this House and not accept the arguments that we have been given for years that there is some reason, because that reason has never been made rationally to me as to why it cannot be done and why there cannot be a simpler system. When it is looked at logically, if Garda clearance is applied for by somebody and within the same year Garda clearance is needed again for the same person, if something is known, surely it should affect the first Garda clearance anyway and it should be rescinded.

Over the years I have sometimes thought I had a great idea and somebody explained to me why it could not be that way, but no one has ever given me an explanation as to why we cannot deal with that one issue that holds up so many activities that depend on human input, particularly those where people work with vulnerable people and children. We need to deal with that. It would be interesting to find out from the witnesses, because I know they are down as working with artists and so on, what other bureaucratic nightmares they face that take an inordinate amount of time when what it is being sought for has a positive benefit. I know this is very mundane stuff but the idea of focusing on that is to get them away from unnecessary mundane stuff and allow them to get back to the real business of running the shows and festivals and all of the other things they want to run. I would say that all of us feel that burden of reportage every year.

The other thing we have to do is deal with reports. There has to be accountability but we have to decide whether we are sending in a lot of reports that nobody ever reads and just filling files and covering backs, with these files getting thicker and thicker, running to 500 or 1,000 pages and we are just filling up the word count. I have always had the view that if something was never going to be read, such as strategic plans for the Department that we used to write, there was not much point in having them.

There is a funny side to that. People used to give out about the Official Languages Act 2003 and the need to translate, even though the translation was the cheap part. All of the personnel hours involved in thinking about writing a document, going around the houses 15 times and getting everybody's sign off costs a lot of money, whereas a translation just takes one person

with a machine, and if it has been done before and it is fairly similar the machine will translate 90% of it. One thing we noticed and one of the real upsides I found was that when they had to translate them, people, especially in Departments, started cutting unnecessary verbiage out of the documents and the documents became much more user-friendly and effective because they had to look at what they had written. I would be interested in finding out what we could do to simplify the witnesses' lives to get them away from unnecessary bureaucracy and back to what they should be doing, namely, running festivals, developing the arts and so on.

As Senator Warfield is back I will explain why Galway city gets a lot more than Galway county, which I think was his question.

Senator Fintan Warfield: A lot more is an understatement.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: The reason is that the arts festival is based in the city. The city council only has responsibility for the city and Galway city is small. It stretches from Knocknacarra, from the wood in Barna over to Doughiska, whereas Galway County Council has to stretch from Ballinasloe to Bofin and Dunmore to Gort. The city is now part of its functional area, whether that is good, bad or indifferent. Even though Galway city, relative to other cities, is not particularly wealthy, specifically with regard to the city council, it is a hell of a lot richer than Galway County Council for a reason that is now being addressed at central government level. Galway County Council is probably one of the worst-funded local authorities in the country even though it is a massive geographic area. I would not like anybody to think that the people in Galway County Council, whether elected members or staff, are philistines, but one will find that they do not have resources and they have a huge area in which to try to keep the arts going. There is the Inishbofin Arts Festival, the Aran Islands and so on, and there is the huge county. It is a very historic county, with such places as Portumna Castle. That is the challenge. In the end, if the money is not going in, it cannot come out, and that is a challenge for local authorities. It seems that we are still critically short of venues. Galway is very short of good venues. I have heard criticism of the Pálás Cinema in Galway.

Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell: There is a huge venue there.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: It is fantastic. I say on the record of the Dáil that time will vindicate the investment but we need more venues. It is great at the moment that, although one might not be able to sell tickets, one can at least have outdoor events if there is weather like this. It can be very successful. We live in a wet climate, however, and we need indoor venues. There will never be enough venues for big festivals. Most venues find that they do not have problems getting people to use them if they are well maintained and well run. There are schemes such as the community services programme. I can never understand in this country why everybody who is willing and able and on unemployment assistance is not allowed to do all the things that need to be done in venues, such as working on the door as ushers and so on. Why pay people not to work when people much prefer, for their own human dignity, to be paid to work? We could use many of the schemes to supplement some of the practical work, not the artistic work, that needs to be done. A huge talent base is available.

Vice Chairman: I thank Senator Warfield and Deputies Canney, Danny Healy-Rae and Ó Cuív for their questions. I am going back to the witnesses for their final round of comments. I realise that many of them have a long journey back.

Mr. John Crumlish: The first question was from Deputy Smyth about whether there is duplication between Creative Ireland and the Arts Council. I do not think so. If one looks at the

Arts Council's ten-year strategy and puts it side by side with the five pillar strategy of Creative Ireland, there is not much crossover. With regard to Creative Ireland, we support the aspiration to put culture at the centre of Irish life. We have to move from culture being an optional activity to being a right for everybody. A Government has to say that. It is key.

With regard to the question about Galway city and county, the Deputy has nailed it. It is a big challenge. We have a couple of challenges round that. Those bigger market towns in Galway county are struggling. People are leaving. It does not suit any of us for that to happen in our home county. The year 2020 is the biggest opportunity to address that. We can get outside the city. The atmosphere during 2020 will be very much "can do", and we will look to establish what we would call tent poles around different parts of the county that would allow us to address that.

With regard to volunteerism, we usually have more than 600 volunteers. Anything that decreases the bureaucracy would be well intentioned. Mr. Paul Fahy and I were both volunteers. That is how we came to be involved in the festival. On my first job, I was told to mind the gate for three hours. Nobody came through the gate but that was my first job.

With regard to the bureaucracy, if some application forms just asked us directly what they want to know as opposed to more than 30 questions asking what they think they want to know, we would gladly tell them, because most of us have the statistics to do that. If there were very direct questions, if we knew exactly what they wanted to know, we would have to find out about it and measure it, and we would be glad to do that. With regard to bureaucracy, if they asked what they really want to know, that would be a big plus.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: When I was in the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, customer service, forms and so on were a big issue. I came to the conclusion that many people who were making the forms would not know how to fill them if they were not in that section in the Department. A challenge I put was that if one was drawing up a form, one should give it to somebody in the Department who was a professional administrator and see if he or she could fill it in. If he or she could not, the public should not be expected to do so. We have a major problem with forms asking unnecessary essay questions and the best essay writer rather than the best project gets the most money. We need to look at this. It is very mundane but it would make a huge difference to most people.

Mr. John Crumlish: I feel sorry for the poor people who have to read these applications forms on the far side and look at maybe 300 massive application forms. I pity their autumn.

Mr. Paul Fahy: I welcome Deputy Ó Cuív's comments on arts being central to human existence. We could not agree with him more. Arts and culture are our greatest calling card internationally. It has been proven time and again any time a representation leaves our shores. I am sure Mr. Eugene Downes will be able to echo that with his former position as director of Culture Ireland.

A practical thing that would help us with planning a year or two or three ahead would be multi-annual funding. We spoke a little about that before the Deputy joined the meeting. We are crying out for a contemporary visual arts space in Galway. We have made many calls for that over many years. We reimagined spaces this year, in an old newspaper printing house, warehouses and dockside sheds. That is no place for the visual arts. We need a proper centre for visual arts. With regard to our commitment to County Galway, we are a Galway city-based organisation. We do programmes in the county. Last year, we successfully toured our national

theatre, the Abbey Theatre, to both the Aran Islands and County Galway as well as Galway city.

On Senator Warfield's question about gender equality policy, in 2017 we had more women involved in the festival than men. This year, we have a few more men involved than women, but over the course of three or four years, which is how we average it out, it is pretty much 50:50.

Mr. Adrian Moynes: I will address a funding dilemma and put it on the record. An organisation such as ours is wholly dedicated to the support of creative artists. We want to draw people from as many fields of artistic performance as possible, from circus performance to symphonic music and everything in between. We want to enable them to stay with us at the minimum possible cost. There is a real question about the extent to which organisations such as the Tyrone Guthrie Centre should be expected to become revenue generating. We could make much more money but the price would be much higher fees for artists, public bursaries would not go as far, and ultimately there would be further strain on public financing. There is a vicious circle which we really need to stay out of.

Vice Chairman: Did Mr. McDonald want to say anything?

Mr. Robert McDonald: No, that has been covered.

Vice Chairman: That is perfect. I call Mr. Downes.

Mr. Eugene Downes: Deputy Ó Cuív raised the question of venues. I have a couple of thoughts on that. Many of the venues throughout the country are not fully fit for purpose. That is because in some cases the original designs may not have worked out as intended and needed to be revisited and changed in some way or the buildings needed some love, attention and evolution ten to 30 years after they had been built. The learning after operating any cultural venue for several decades is huge, not just in terms of ways to unlock more potential but also because the nature of the art made there or the changing nature of audiences or the local community will require the venue to change. Ensuring venues nationally are renewed in the way they should be, sometimes even in quite a minimal way, in terms of changing health and safety or other essential maintenance requirements, is not always done. That local part of the Project Ireland 2040 capital infrastructure plan will be vital. On new venues, the challenge is for particular places or art forms or types of work to have a strong case. It depends on the spatial dimensions and the demographics. The individual business case for a new venue must be robust and carefully tested for viability. For many venues, it is not just about capital but also a very realistic appraisal of the continuing operational overhead needs. There has to be a sustainable business model to do this in terms of the mix of income.

On funding and the role Members of the Oireachtas will play in the weeks ahead pre-budget, only a few years ago the challenge the sector often faced was trying to convince the different political parties and Independent Members of the benefits of the arts, be it the core public benefits, the intrinsic benefits to the individual citizen and collectively, the collateral benefits, socio-economic and otherwise, or the reputational benefits at home and abroad. For a long time that case was not necessarily accepted or only partially accepted in different ways by different parties or those in government. What is most unusual this year is that apparently both parties in government and others seem to share a genuine conviction that this case is accepted and bought into, not just on collateral socio-economic grounds but also in terms of the core role the arts and culture play in our society. If that is the case, we are on the edge of our seats in the sector to see the collective view of the Government in putting forward a budget, as well as the view of

the Oireachtas in debating and voting on it and how that shared commitment in principle can be converted into a budgetary outcome next year. If there is no multi-annual commitment, even more will rest on the outcome in October for the year to come as it will be only a 12 month settlement. In the coming months the sector at constituency level, that is, a ground campaign, as well as an air campaign, will go individually to Members to see what we can do to help the Oireachtas to come to an outcome on the budget in October.

Ms Olga Barry: I will respond briefly to Senator Fintan Warfield's question about capital versus current expenditure. In Kilkenny, not unlike what Mr. Paul Fahy has just described, last year we presented a folk opera in a cattle mart, premiered a new aerial dance piece of physical theatre in a disused brewhouse and mounted an arts exhibition of the work of the fine artist Mick O'Dea in a disused meat factory. I am not proposing that we build all of this infrastructure, but I am trying to persuade the elected representatives that in current spending there might be some way to recognise what we must build in terms of regional infrastructure in order to mount work. If one can find the money and the partners and thinks one can deliver an audience for a great piece of work, on top of this one must build the stage, the seating, the lighting and so forth. We are presenting Shakespeare in a stunning open air theatre this year, the Castle Yard. We must build the seats, the stage and the lighting. I am not proposing that we build a new theatre, but there must be a more realistic approach to what is required in current spending to mount what we can with top quality professional production values.

Second - this might also respond to Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív's question, one of the things that constantly strikes me about funding and reporting is the competing mandates of our funders. The things on which one has to report to the Arts Council and which will now have to be reported to Creative Ireland will be very distinct from and possibly in conflict with what we have to report to Fáilte Ireland. We are being pulled in perhaps too broad a spectrum of direction. While our core is artistic integrity, we must also satisfy funders who want bed nights. Sometimes there are inherent conflicts and competing demands within that structure also.

For the record, I am from Cork; therefore, I am agnostic about what happens in Galway and Kilkenny. Once they get to Cork, I will make my opinion known.

Vice Chairman: I am delighted that there is a fellow Cork person here.

Ms Máire Logue: I will be brief. On funding, applications and so forth, much of the funding is for programming or marketing. That is where it is targeted. There is very little funding for administration costs. We are trying to pay staff, but we are paying them badly. No public funding is made available for administration costs and if something could be done about that matter, it would be great.

One of the things we discussed this year for Listowel Writers' Week in the context of Garda vetting was whether the public services card, for example, could be utilised in the future and contain information on whether someone had been vetted by the Garda. Certainly, something needs to be done centrally to make it easier for us when it comes to Garda vetting.

Another issue related to funding, post-event reports and so forth is that each of these organisations, like ours, is audited every year. We supply our accounts, which are taken away, examined and audited. We are transparent on every penny we spend. The festival is not for profit and everything is put back into it. We are plain people and, as Mr. John Crumlish said, the application forms should be in plain English. Ask us the question and we will answer it. There is no need to have page after page of questions; we will just give the answer. We would

welcome that because it would be great. It would be preferable to art forms and having to spend days trying to decipher the form with a dictionary.

With regard to the OPW, as Ms Catherine Moylan said, we have fantastic beautiful spaces in Listowel such as Listowel Castle. There is a beautiful band stand in front of it that we use every year for some of our outdoor events, similar to what Ms Olga Barry mentioned in the case of Kilkenny. However, this year the OPW preferred us not to use it, which is a shame. It is a public space and we hold fantastic events there that attract 100 to 150 people who sit outside in the open air enjoying the sunshine listening to some poetry and music. We would like to work better with the OPW next year in order that it will allow us to use these facilities for events.

Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell: What authority does it have to stop it?

Ms Máire Logue: An e-mail authority.

The committee stated it would like us all to be in contact with it every year and more engaged with it. I invite members to come to Listowel Writers' Week to see the work we do and the festival. They would be more than welcome. They would be able to see the type of festival Listowel, Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Galway and Kilkenny are putting together. They are brilliant. None of us is in Barbados on what is made from them.

Vice Chairman: I thank Ms Logue. That concludes our consideration of the matter. I thank the representatives of the Galway International Arts Festival, the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Kilkenny Arts Festival and Listowel Writers' Week for their assistance.

The joint committee went into private session at 3.40 p.m. and adjourned at 3.50 p.m. *sine die*.