

# DÁIL ÉIREANN

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## AN COMHCHOISTE UM NA MEÁIN, TURASÓIREACHT, EALAÍONA, CULTÚR, SPÓRT AGUS GAELTACHT

## JOINT COMMITTEE ON MEDIA, TOURISM, ARTS, CULTURE, SPORT AND THE GAELTACHT

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*Dé Céadaoin, 30 Meán Fómhair 2020*

*Wednesday, 30 September 2020*

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Tháinig an Comhchoiste le chéile ag 3 p.m.

The Joint Committee met at 3 p.m.

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Comhaltaí a bhí i láthair / Members present:

Teachtaí Dála / Deputies	Seanadóirí / Senators
Alan Dillon,	Malcolm Byrne,
Brendan Griffin,	Micheál Carrigy,
Imelda Munster,	Shane Cassells,
Johnny Mythen,	Annie Hoey,
Christopher O'Sullivan.	Fintan Warfield.

Teachta / Deputy Niamh Smyth sa Chathaoir / in the Chair.

## **Business of Joint Committee**

**Chairman:** As we have a quorum, we will begin. This inaugural meeting will begin in public session. We will shortly go into private session to discuss procedural matters and our work programme. No apologies have been received.

It is a great honour for me to be appointed Chair of this committee. I look forward to working with all of the members in a genuine spirit of partnership and co-operation. I am confident that we will bring our combined skills and enthusiasm to bear and make this a highly productive committee that discharges its functions in an effective and enlightened way.

I welcome all of the members, particularly those who are newly elected Members to the Dáil and Seanad. I also welcome Deputy Christopher O’Sullivan who has joined us.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the members of the previous committee, namely, the Joint Committee on Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, who brought their experience and knowledge to their work. I hope this committee will be equally effective. I anticipate that we will refer to and build on the valuable work carried out by the previous committee, which identified the key issues that fell under its remit and that needed to be addressed.

As we all know too well, Ireland and the wider world have fundamentally changed since the previous committee was dissolved. We have all been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and our lives have been altered in ways we simply could not have envisaged only a short while ago. In addition, the UK is due to leave the European Union on 31 December this year in what may be a no-deal scenario.

With this background, I strongly believe in the commitment contained in the programme for Government to provide a strong mandate to bring forward important legislative and policy initiatives across a wide range of areas in the broad remit of the newly configured Department dealing with media, tourism, arts, culture, sport and the Gaeltacht. Our unique language, culture and sport are central to how we identify as a nation, and the forging of stronger links between all these elements will build a rich and rewarding cultural experience for our citizens and visitors alike. In turn, this is at the heart of what attracts foreign and domestic tourism and tourists to Ireland on holidays.

The Covid-19 crisis has had a very severe impact on all areas of society and this is acutely felt particularly in our arts, culture, sport and tourism sectors. I look forward to working with the committee examining matters in this regard and trying to bring these sectors towards a sustainable recovery. Covid-19 has also shown us the importance of a vibrant and informed media and particularly the importance of public sector broadcasting in both our national languages. This sector, which is a fundamental pillar of a modern and pluralistic democracy, faces very specific challenges, with unprecedented cuts to the advertising market.

I hope our collective endeavours in this committee will feed into and support the efforts of both our Minister and Minister of State who I am confident will secure Ireland’s reputation as a country that truly values and supports its media, tourism, arts, culture and Gaeltacht communities. I will endeavour to be as fair and impartial as I can at all times with members of the committee. I strongly believe a unified approach where all members contribute and feel their efforts are worthwhile will yield the best results. I welcome the Senators who have joined us as well.

The second item on the agenda is the election of a Vice Chair. I propose that members email

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the clerk with nominations for the position and the clerk will then submit those nominations to me. I will contact individual members in that regard. We will elect our Vice Chair at the next public meeting. Is that agreed? Agreed.

*The joint committee went into private session at 3.08 p.m. and adjourned at 4.20 p.m. until 2 p.m. on Wednesday, 7 October 2020.*