2024 Dublin UNESCO City of Literature Network

Mairéad Owens (Chairperson) Dublin City Libraries, Dublin City Council

Mairead Owens was appointed Dublin City Librarian on 1 April 2019. She joined Dublin City Council from Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (DLRCC) where she had been County Librarian for ten years. Mairead brings with her a wealth of experience, notably the development of the internationally acclaimed dlr LexIcon, the central library and cultural centre in Dún Laoghaire. Her vision is to foster a ‘transformative and vibrant library service that touches every community in the city. She manages a network of 21 libraries across the city and the construction of a new city library for Dublin is underway. Mairead is passionate that Dublin City Libraries will create a model and inspiration for public libraries nationally and internationally

Sinéad Connolly, Assistant Arts Officer, Dublin City Arts Office, Dublin City Council

Sinéad is a member of the Steering Committee for International Literature Festival Dublin (where she has held a variety of roles) and also oversees the delivery of MusicTown festival. She was project lead on the development of Building Culture Toolkit- a guide to the process of delivering cultural infrastructure, from assessment of need through to governance and deliverability. In partnership with Dublin City Libraries, Sinéad developed Creative Hubs, a multidisciplinary arts and commissioning initiative sustaining high quality arts experiences for children, schools and families to access in their Library and locality. She co-led the establishment of Dublin City Local Music Education Partnership, which now steers Music Generation Dublin City, managed by CDETB, running music performance education programmes across the city.

Paul Finegan, Assistant Principal, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Paul Finegan leads on International Cultural Policy in the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. This includes managing the Department’s engagement on culture policy at the EU, UNESCO, and in bilateral relations. In previous roles he has worked on international programmes with the global writers association PEN International and in development roles with human rights organisations including Front Line Defenders and Belarus Free Theatre. Before joining DTCAGSM he worked on health emergency preparedness with the Department of Health.

Anne-Marie Kelly, Director of Dublin UNESCO City of Literature

Anne-Marie Kelly is the director of Dublin UNESCO City of Literature, a divisional librarian with Dublin City Libraries and a member of the libraries’ management team. She has served in many roles in the city libraries’ service and was responsible for library programming for 8 years before she was assigned her current role in 2022. She manages the Dublin UNESCO City of literature office, planning & implementing tasks aligned to the [UNESCO Creative Cities’ Network aims](https://www.unesco.org/en/creative-cities/creativity-and-cities?hub=80094).

Liz Kelly, Director of Poetry Ireland

Liz Kelly has extensive experience across the arts as a creative producer, facilitator and manager of arts programmes and events for local authorities, festival communities and local projects. At a national level, she has worked as a programme manager on both the venues and production companies portfolios for the Arts Council and as an adviser to the Arts Council on venues.

She has facilitated and managed strategic planning projects, awards schemes, artist and community capacity building and local programmes such as Culture Night and Bealtaine for local authorities. She is currently working with Tipperary Arts Office on its festivals programme, combining advice, programming and development opportunities for local festivals. She has also worked at national level for the Bealtaine Festival, Sing Ireland (the national choral resource organisation), Music Generation and the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland.

Sinead Mac Aodha, Director of Literature Ireland

A multi-lingual international arts executive with over twenty-five years' experience in literature policy formulation, strategy development and literature programme implementation. Strong interest in intercultural exchange, literary and cultural translation, identity branding and in international network development.  Sinéad leads a small, dynamic team to deliver Literature Ireland's objectives, bringing the best of literature from Ireland to readers around the world, in the finest translations.

Peter McKay, President of Publishing Ireland

Peter McKay has over 41 years of experience in the publishing industry.  Peter has held senior leadership roles in various organisations, including being the Managing Director of Thomas Nelson, one of the largest educational publishers in the UK, which was then part of the Thomson Organisation (later Thomson Reuters). After the sale of Nelson to Kluwer, he joined Derwent Information before establishing his own strategic consultancy in 2004.

Peter played an active role in the UK Publishers Association and chaired their Education Publishers Council. He also represented the organisation at the Federation of European Publishers. He served as the Chief Executive of the Publishing Training Centre and was a member of the Advisory Board of The Literary Consultancy (TLC).

In 2019, Peter became a founding member of Dingle Lit clg, a volunteer organisation that organises the Dingle Literary Festival. He initially served as its Company Secretary and is now its Treasurer. His vast experience, knowledge, and management capabilities will complement our organisation.

Mags McLoughlin, Director Irish Writers’ Centre

Mags McLoughlin has significant experience in communications, marketing, sponsorship and business development in Ireland and overseas. Her scope of work has also included significant change management, resource building, strategy development and funding enhancements.

In recent times, her consultancy practice has focused on the non-for-profit sector including time as Interim CEO at Charities Institute Ireland and project management roles for Darkness Into Light for Pieta House, Unicef, Young Social Innovators and social enterprise LIFT Ireland.

For many years Mags has written fiction and holds an MA in Creative Writing from Queens University Belfast. In 2024 she was one of the winners of the Irish Writers Centre Novel Fair. She lives in Dublin with her teenage son and two dogs.

Chris Morash, Séamus Heaney Professor of Irish Writing, Trinity College Dublin

Chris Morash is the Seamus Heaney Professor of Irish Writing in Trinity College Dublin, where he served as Vice-Provost of the university from 2016-19.   His most recent book, *Dublin: A Writer’s City* was published in 2023.   Among his other books are *Yeats on Theatre* (2021), *A History of Irish Theatre 1601-2000* (2002),  *A History of the Media in Ireland* (2009) and he is co-editor of the *Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre* (2016).  He is currently editing the *Cambridge History of the Irish Novel* and writing a new book about Irish literary salons. He was the 2022 Macgeorge Fellow at the University of Melbourne, and curated the *Unseen Plays* series for the Abbey Theatre (2021);  from 2009 to 2014, he served as the first chair of the Compliance Committee of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland.  He was elected to Membership of the Royal Irish Academy in 2007, and to Fellowship of Trinity in 2016.

Simon O’Connor, Director of Museum of Literature Ireland

**Simon O’Connor** is the Director of the Museum of Literature Ireland, a creative collaboration between University College Dublin and the National Library of Ireland, located on Dublin’s St Stephen’s Green. MoLI has won numerous awards since opening, including the Business to Arts Best Philanthropic Support of the Arts award 2021,  Red Dot Best Exhibition Design 2020,  IDEA Exhibition Design Gold Award 2021, and is shortlisted for the European Mies Van Der Rohe Architecture Award 2022. A composer by training, Simon was also the founding curator of the Little Museum of Dublin, building that museum from scratch in 2011 and winning numerous awards in the process, including the European Commission’s Europa Nostra award for Cultural Heritage. He has presented exhibitions on many writers, including Bram Stoker, Christy Brown, Lafcadio Hearn, Kate O’Brien, Nuala O’Faolain and Chris Haughton. As a composer, he has studied with Donnacha Dennehy and Kevin Volans, and is published on the Ergodos label. Notable works include the acclaimed piano suite *What is Living and What is Dead*, and the song cycle collaboration with mezzo-soprano Michelle O’Rourke, *Left Behind* – Songs of the 1916 Widows.

Colm Ó Cuanacháin – Executive Director of Fighting Words

Colm was appointed Executive Director of Fighting Words in 2023. He joined Fighting Words in 2020 as Education Director. Colm was a primary school teacher in Gaelscoil na Cille and principal at Gaelscoil Aonach Urmhumhan and Gaelscoil an Ghoirt Álainn Educate Together in Cork. Colm has a PhD in human rights education from the University of Leicester. Colm worked in human rights and development education with Comhlámh, served as Secretary General of Amnesty International in Dublin, as head of campaigns with ActionAid International and as Senior Director with Amnesty International in London.

Elaina Ryan, Chief Executive Officer, Children’s Books Ireland

Elaina grew up in Wexford and Waterford. She holds a BA in Languages and Cultural Studies from University of Limerick and an MLitt in Publishing from University of Stirling. She has a background in children’s book publishing and is co-Artistic Director, with Niamh Sharkey, of Towers and Tales Children’s Book Festival in Lismore, County Waterford. Elaina has led the team in Children’s Books Ireland since 2013.

Dr. Audrey Whitty, Director of the National Library of Ireland

Previously Audrey was Deputy Director and Head of Collections and Learning at the National Musum of Ireland and has held various curatorial and leadership positions at the National Museum of Ireland and The Corning Museum of Glass, New York. A graduate of University College Dublin and Trinity College Dublin, Audrey has led on the development of significant exhibitions and research projects including the acclaimed Proclaiming a Republic: The 1916 Rising exhibition, A Dubliner’s Collection of Asian Art: The Albert Bender exhibition, Alison Lowry: (A) Dressing Our Hidden Truths – An artistic response to the Legacy of Mother and Baby Homes and Magdalene Laundries.