

PRESS RELEASE: 9 JULY 2021

COMHAR and **Foras na Gaeilge** are delighted to share the most recent information about the new and exciting project: **‘Léitheoirí na Gaeilge’** (**‘Read in Irish’**).

Léitheoirí na Gaeilge (Read in Irish) is a new multi-annual pilot project that aims to promote reading in Irish; develop reviewing in Irish; and to provide the general public with a centre of information for all details about the availability of reading material in Irish. An **Advisory Process** was undertaken between **December 2020 – January 2021** and this summary is provided to give an account of the main points that it generated.

Contextual information

- An information package, questionnaire and electronic link to a survey were shared with approximately 180 relevant parties connected with reading.
- The electronic link to the survey was also shared on the website léitheoirí.ie (readinirish.ie), so that the general public would have access to it.
- The advisory period began on 15 December 2020 and ended on 29 January 2021.
- Feedback was received from 73 relevant parties based in different sectors (including education, language planning, publishing, book sales, the arts etc.) as a response to either the MS Word questionnaire or anonymously through Survey Monkey.
- There were 12 responses by email and 61 responses through Survey Monkey (16% : 84%).
- The information was laid out bilingually. 18 of the respondents answered in English and 55 in Irish (25%: 75%).

The following challenges involved with promoting reading in Irish were recognised:

- lack of marketing and information;
- difficulties with distribution and access to the books;
- gaps in the market (general fiction, pleasure reading, material for children 6-9 and 9-12, and material for teenagers);
- encouraging reading in the education system and in the early childhood years; and
- difficulties with the language/learning Irish and finding suitable material.

The following policies were recommended:

- some of the previously-announced aims of the project (e.g. a central digital platform, graded reading system, publication of book lists, more reviews);
- a writing campaign to provide more newly-written books for the 9-10 age group (around 4th Class in primary school) to remedy the fact that many children no longer read for pleasure from that age onwards;
- more audiobooks and e-books;

- organising competitions to develop reviewing skills;
- more material about the authors and the books; encouraging events and book clubs focused on different age groups and suitable for all language levels;
- for new Irish-language books to be discussed by the English-language media;
- resources to help people who have dyslexia or other learning difficulties;
- collaborating with TG4/RTÉ and animators such as Cartoon Saloon to create recognisable characters for children which would be linked with books about their adventures;
- a ‘World Book Day’ strategy for Irish; and
- specifically about **public libraries**:
 - a ‘Reading Challenge’ for every age group to read 6 books in Irish;
 - a national marketing campaign for clubleabhar.com in partnership with libraries, BorrowBox, booksellers etc.;
 - to create a database of writers who would be available to read their work at events; and a once-off grant to buy stock.

Keep an eye on the temporary pages at readinirish.ie/léitheoirí.ie and on the Twitter account [@leitheoiri](https://twitter.com/@leitheoiri) for more information. We can also be contacted at leitheoiri@comhar.ie.

COMHAR

COMHAR is a non-profit company that has been involved in the business of publishing for seventy eight years; the main principles and philosophy of the company originated from the Comhchaidreamh movement in Irish universities; with a board of voluntary directors drawn from and representing all areas of Irish-language life and society. **COMHAR** publishes a monthly literary magazine, *Comhar*, since 1942, a magazine for post-primary readers, **COMHARÓg**, an annual peer-reviewed academic journal, **COMHARTaighde**, a digital portrait collection of living Irish-language writers, *Portráidí na Scríbhneoirí Gaeilge*, and it runs two book publishing imprints, *LeabhairCOMHAR* & **Cló Léann na Gaeilge (CLÓ)**, and is working on other publishing projects in the Irish community. **COMHAR** is grateful for the ongoing support of Foras na Gaeilge, An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta, Clár na Leabhar Gaeilge and the Arts Council.

Foras na Gaeilge

In the Good Friday Agreement, it was stated that a North/South Implementation body (An Foras Teanga) be set up to promote both the Irish language and the Ulster Scots language. Under the auspices of this body, Foras na Gaeilge carries out all the designated responsibilities regarding the Irish language. This entails facilitating and encouraging the speaking and writing of Irish in the public and private contexts in the Republic of Ireland, and in Northern Ireland where there is appropriate demand, in the context of part three of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.



Further information:

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