**7 June 2017**

**Press release**

**“Donegal’s Wainfest underpins values and aspirations of Creative Ireland” says Taoiseach**

In his address at the recent launch of Creative Ireland’s local Culture & Creativity Plans, An Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD described Donegal’s Wainfest as the event that best illustrates the values and aspirations underpinning the new Creative Ireland programme.

“I asked to see a representative sample of the kind of activities and events that are coming through in these programmes” said An Taoiseach “and I’ve picked out just one event from one programme, not because it’s the biggest or necessarily the best, but because it illustrates the values and aspirations that underpin the programme.”

He continued “it’s an event from the Donegal programme called Wainfest – an arts and books festival for children. There are many things to say about Wainfest. It’s been around for 21 years – so we’re building on what we already have; It was in fact created by the Donegal Library Service – a testament to the role of local authorities in arts and culture; It’s about children – and it’s becoming more apparent every day that Creative Ireland is really about children; It embraces heritage alongside the arts – something that is of crucial importance in Creative Ireland because it involves place and language as core elements of identity and culture; And Wainfest is a collaborative effort, involving Donegal County Council, the Regional Cultural Centre, the County Museum, the County Donegal Heritage Office – and now Creative Ireland”.

He also said he loved the title of the festival – “a festival for ‘wains’”.

Speaking following the launch Eileen Burgess Divisional Manager for Cultural Services in Donegal County Council said she was absolutely delighted that An Taoiseach picked out Wainfest from among hundreds of other projects as an exemplar for the Programme.

“I am thrilled that An Taoiseach chose to highlight Wainfest. It is a wonderful festival for children and every year our staff put their heart and soul into organising this event for the children of Donegal. As soon as we heard about the concept of Creative Ireland we were confident that Wainfest would be an excellent fit. Wainfest is about gifting our children with every creative opportunity and that too is one of the cornerstones of the Creative Ireland programme. ”

“In 2016 alone over 3,400 children from all over the county participated in Wainfest and this number is growing every year. Plans for our 2017 festival are well underway and we have already secured a number of high profile authors and facilitators”.

Dave Rodden author of ‘Knights of the borrowed dark” and winner of the Specsavers’ Senior Children’s Book of the Year Award and the Most Read Novel at the School Library Association Great Read Awards has been confirmed for this year’s Wainfest, as has well known author and broadcaster Eanna Ni Lamha.

Eanna is author of ‘Wild Things at School’, a member of the panel on the RTÉ 'Mooney Goes Wild' radio programme since 1994 and the wildlife expert on ‘The Six O’Clock Show’ on TV3.

For more on what’s happening this year visit [www.wainfest.ie](http://www.wainfest.ie) or follow Donegal County Library on Facebook or Twitter.

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