

STRATEGY 2026 -2030



# THE STINGING FLY

NEW WRITING

[stingingfly.org](http://stingingfly.org)

NEW WRITERS



# Introduction

This Strategy sets a sustainable course for The Stinging Fly until 2030, furthering its role and purpose as a robust and pioneering organisation, committed to the development of literature on the island of Ireland.

The growth we seek to achieve in this period is less about expansion and more about enhancement: constantly seeking to strengthen and build upon the opportunities we offer new and emerging writers, guided by our enduring values of excellence, commitment, community and social justice.

The purpose and vision of The Stinging Fly remain constant. We exist to enrich lives and deepen understanding through literature, propelled by a vision of a world made more compassionate through literature.

Our mission to seek out, nurture, publish and promote the very best new writing is well established and stays true. However, we now also acknowledge what has become a defining feature of who we are and what we do: our steadfast support and championing of writers as they work towards the development of a sustainable practice.

The Strategy defines our ambition for 2030 and states the strategic priorities that we will pursue to deliver on that ambition. Our work will continue to focus on three interdependent areas: nurture and development, publication and promotion and, now, sustainability and impact.

We will continue to work both independently and in partnership with others, maintaining and developing national and international alliances that serve to expand our reach and impact. We will ensure that some of these relationships also extend and diversify our funding base as we seek to grow our financial resources and organisational capacity during this five-year period.

Alongside everything we do to achieve our strategic priorities, we will work to realise our ambitions in the areas of equality, diversity and inclusion, climate action and fair pay, fair practice. This work fulfils both our statutory and moral obligations. For us, it remains values-led: the right thing to do.

Midway through this strategy, in 2028, we will celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Stinging Fly magazine. We are proud that we have sustained its impact and appeal over the decades. This strategy supports us as we assure our future, now as an organisation with charitable status, at the heart of literary life in Ireland and with an influence far beyond.

**Amy Herron**  
Chairperson

**Declan Meade**  
CEO & Publisher



# Who We Are

The Stinging Fly is a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital and a registered charity. It is governed by a voluntary board of trustees with Declan Meade, founding editor and publisher, as Chief Executive, leading a highly committed artistic and administrative team. Together, we operate as:

## A MAGAZINE OF NEW WRITERS, NEW WRITING

We published the first issue of The Stinging Fly magazine in March 1998 and we continue to publish two issues every year. The magazine remains central to who we are and what we do. Open submissions are accepted, read and considered for every issue. We work with all our writers to edit their stories, essays and poems in preparation for publication. Our aim is to feature the best new writing from Ireland and beyond in each edition, offering readers an eclectic and enlivening mix of fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

## A BOOK PUBLISHER

Since 2005 we have published landmark, award-winning debut story collections by writers such as Colin Barrett, Kevin Barry, Claire-Louise Bennett, Mary Costello, Wendy Erskine, Michael J Farrell, Nicole Flattery, Danielle McLaughlin, Liadan Ní Chuinn, Mary O'Donoghue and Cathy Sweeney. We have also re-issued key works by Maeve Brennan; published anthologies of contemporary fiction and theatre; and published masterful new work by Sean O'Reilly and Philip Ó Ceallaigh. We tend to work closely with our book authors over an extended period of time so that they can deliver the best possible work. We seek to connect all our authors with the widest possible readership within Ireland and do everything we can to help them establish relationships with agents and editors outside of Ireland.



# Who We Are

## AN EDUCATION PROVIDER

We bring groups of writers together so they can learn to engage more deeply with their own work and the work of others. Having organised our first one-day fiction workshop in 2007, we have developed a workshop programme that now includes four six-month fiction workshops, a four-month poetry workshop, an annual summer school, an online seminar series and an ongoing mentoring project. We also regularly collaborate on projects with other arts and literature organisations and festivals, nationally and internationally.

## AN ONLINE PLATFORM

Our website [stingingfly.org](http://stingingfly.org) allows us to engage with writers and readers across the world. It is home to our magazine archive with all of the work we've published since 1998 and it also houses our online store. We regularly publish original new content online, including essays, in-depth book reviews, roundtable discussions, and a monthly fiction series. We also regularly record and release new episodes of our ongoing podcast series, which further showcases the work of writers featured in the magazine.



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Everything we do is imbued with  
the spirit of the fly that stings...

‘God has specially appointed  
me to this city, so as though  
it were a large thoroughbred  
horse which because of its  
great size is inclined to be  
lazy and needs the stimulation  
of some stinging fly.’

— **Plato**, The Last Days of Socrates



# Context

A strategy cannot be developed in isolation of stakeholders or context. As part of the development process, The Stinging Fly consulted with internal and external stakeholders. Their views helped to shape and strengthen the choices we have made in this strategy.

We also considered the policy and environmental context within which The Stinging Fly will be operating over the period of this strategy.

The Arts Council's literature policy remains writer-focused and writer-centred, as they seek to create the best environment for writers to create their best work. In pursuit of this aim, the Arts Council state that their support for publishing continues to be concentrated on indigenous, independent literary publishers and journals that platform new, challenging or distinctive voices. The Arts Council also acknowledge that writers need readers and, as such, wish to develop and enhance Ireland's reading culture.

As a result of Arts Council investment, Ireland's reputation for literature is excellent and the landscape of literary publishing in Ireland is buoyant. A strong cohort of established writers exists alongside an increasingly diverse and ever growing pipeline of new and emerging talent. This is both an opportunity and challenge for The Stinging Fly in managing an ever-increasing number of submissions.

Over the lifespan of this strategy, The Stinging Fly will also attend to the Arts Council's broader policy priorities including but not limited to Fair Pay, Fair Practice; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Digital Arts and Climate Action. It is our intention to be exemplary in our thinking and practice in response to these policies.

Beyond the policy context, The Stinging Fly recognises that the period to 2030 is likely to be characterised by uncertainty, with accelerating change likely across political, economic and social systems. It is impossible to predict the extent to which our world will be impacted by climate breakdown or through developments in artificial intelligence. We understand that as an organisation we must be change-able and also ready to support writers and to engage readers as they live and work, write and read within this evolving context.



# Our Purpose

Why The Stinging Fly exists and its unique contribution to others

To enrich lives and deepen understanding through literature

# Our Vision

The ideal – in the world – that the Stinging Fly is working towards

Our vision is of a world made more compassionate through literature

# Our Mission

What The Stinging Fly does to be true to its purpose and vision

To seek out, nurture, publish and promote the very best new writing, steadfastly supporting and championing writers as they work towards a sustainable practice



# Our Values

## Excellence

We believe that writers and readers deserve excellence. In all aspects of our work – our publishing, our teaching, our mentoring – we push for outcomes of the highest standard.

## Commitment

We believe that writing is a craft, a practice that demands discipline, dedication and time. We support our writers, nurturing their potential and furthering their ambitions. We make space for them to produce their best work.

## Community

We believe that writing has the power to bring people closer together. Through our work we cultivate supportive communities of writers and readers, within Ireland and beyond.

## Social justice

We believe that literature matters and can be a force for positive change. We play our part in advocating for and contributing to a fairer and more just society.



# 2030 Ambition

Our ambition is that The Stinging Fly will continue its work at the heart of literary life in Ireland. We will be recognised nationally and internationally for our leading role in supporting and promoting brilliant new writers and exceptional new writing.

A hallmark of our success will be the care and insight with which we nurture new and emerging writers, empowering them over time to produce their best work.

More writers will benefit from the access opportunities we offer as standard across our programme of activities.

More readers throughout Ireland and across the world will enjoy excellent new writing thanks to our exemplary publications in print and online. In 2028 we will celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Stinging Fly magazine.

Through times of great change and uncertainty, we will remain steadfast in our commitment to the core values which have shaped our culture and informed our work from the very start. We will continue to encourage writers and readers to engage more deeply with the world around us and with one another.

Thanks to sustained relationships with the Arts Council, the T.S. Eliot Foundation, and other funders, we will have the financial resources and organisational capacity to further our influence and impact, while delivering on our aligned ambitions for new writers and new writing.



# Strategic Priorities

Three areas of strategic priority hold our ambition for 2030.

01

## Nurture and development

**Goal:** We encourage and enable writers to produce their best work.

02

## Publication and promotion

**Goal:** We share exceptional new writing with the widest possible audience.

03

## Sustainability and impact

**Goal:** We are a robust organisation, responsible and responsive leaders within the Irish literature sector.

### STRATEGIC ENABLERS

Over the coming years our work across these three areas of priority will be enabled by working in partnership with others and by enhancing our financial resilience. These capabilities are essential to ensuring the sustainability of our organisation and to achieving our strategic impact.

### POLICY PRIORITIES

Alongside our strategic priorities we will continue to make real the principles and practices of our policies, principally equality, diversity and inclusion, climate action and fair pay, fair practice. Our commitment here is first and foremost values-led: we believe in playing our part in creating the conditions that allow new writers and new writing to flourish.



# 01 Nurture and Development

We encourage and enable writers to produce their best work.

### Why this goal?

We believe that writers at all stages of their careers and from all backgrounds, ethnicities and traditions are deserving of encouragement and support. We want to create an ecology in which a truly diverse range of writers and writing thrives. We aim to inspire writers to produce work that is ambitious, innovative and true. To that end, we seek to continuously enhance our education programme, exploring new initiatives and partnerships that ensure we are responsively and powerfully enabling writers to realise their potential.

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES
How we will achieve our goal	What success will look like
Design and deliver an inclusive education programme tailored to the needs of writers working across genres and at different stages of their career.	Distinct initiatives and bespoke supports will be fostering and enabling new writing talent from all sections of society.
Partner with others to diversify or extend the education opportunities we offer.	More writers will be accessing more learning and development opportunities.
Advocate for and with writers to advance the culture and conditions that make writing a viable and sustainable profession.	The Stinging Fly will be effecting and influencing the policies and practices that bring about positive change for writers in their working lives.



# 02 Publication and Promotion

We share exceptional new writing with the widest possible audience.

### Why this goal?

We believe that there is an abundance of great writers in Ireland producing work which deserves to be read. Working independently and collaboratively with others, we want to introduce this work to readers, nationally and internationally, digitally and in print. We want to maximise the audience for new writers and new writing and to do so in environmentally responsible and innovative ways.

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES
How we will achieve our goal	What success will look like
Produce and promote an excellent literary magazine bi-annually (available in print and online) featuring ambitious and innovative new writing.	There will be ten editions of The Stinging Fly magazine, each of which affirms the distinctiveness and openness of our editorial vision.
Publish in book form at least one new work of literary fiction each year by a new, emerging or under-represented writer.	We will have furthered our reputation as a publisher of note and have introduced readers to a new work by at least five exceptional writers.
Further invest in our online content and develop our digital capacity to reach new and diverse audiences and promote wider access and deeper engagement.	We will be reaching and engaging with an extensive, world-wide audience of writers, readers and industry peers across a range of accessible and dynamic digital platforms.
Continue to forge alliances in Ireland and internationally that advance interest in new writers and new writing.	We will have expanded the network of connections that inform and enable our work whilst tending the relationships we enjoy with long-standing partners.



# 03 Sustainability and Impact

We are a strong organisation, responsible and responsive leaders within the Irish literature sector.

## Why this goal?

To achieve our ambitions on behalf of writers and readers, we need to ensure that The Stinging Fly is a well-resourced and well-managed organisation. As a registered charity, we will demonstrate the highest standards of governance, enabling us to fully comply with the Charities Governance Code. We want to sustain the valued support of the Arts Council and the T.S. Eliot Foundation while also expanding and diversifying our funding base. We seek to develop the capacity we need for a sustainable future, while safeguarding the culture and values that are at the heart of who we are and which are critical to our success.

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES
How we will achieve our goal	What success will look like
Secure the capacity and capabilities we need to succeed as an organisation and to achieve our ambitions for writers.	Our board and team will have a shared sense of purpose and the collective competence to deliver this strategy and to lead thinking and best practice within the literature sector.
Model exemplary governance and management practice.	The Stinging Fly will be fully compliant with the Charities Governance Code and fulfil all its statutory obligations.
Sustain the culture of how we work and our responsiveness to the communities we serve.	People and organisations will be choosing to work with us and to support us because of our purpose, values and exemplary output.
Build our financial resilience, carefully managing existing funding relationships while pursuing viable new income generation and fundraising opportunities.	We will have a secure financial position, with committed partners supporting our ambitions.



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# Implementation and Impact

We will prepare annual plans detailing key actions to deliver our strategic objectives. As part of the process to develop an annual plan, we will review progress on and ensure the continued relevance of our strategic priorities, goals and objectives. We will conduct a mid-term review of this strategy in 2028.

A matrix of performance indicators, aligned with the outcomes stated here, will also be developed to robustly measure our impact and achievement.



# Acknowledgements

This strategy was developed following consultation with The Stinging Fly’s board, executive and members of the wider editorial team; subscribers; writers and The Arts Council. The process was independently facilitated by Janice McAdam.

<b>Chief Executive:</b>	Declan Meade
<b>Programme Manager:</b>	Eoin Rogers
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<b>Communications Officer:</b>	Chiamaka Enyi-Amadi
<b>Poetry Editor:</b>	Annemarie Ní Churreáin
<b>Eagarthóir Filíochta:</b>	Ailbhe Ní Ghearbhuigh
<b>Non-fiction Editor:</b>	Emma Dabiri
<b>Contributing Editors:</b>	Dan Bolger, Danny Denton, Cal Doyle, Olivia Fitzsimons and Mia Gallagher
<b>Reviews Editor:</b>	Gillian Moore
<b>Online Editor:</b>	Ava Chapman
<b>Website:</b>	Ian Maleney

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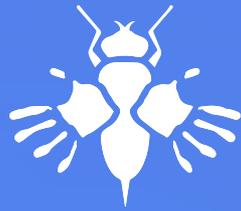
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