

PRESS RELEASE
14 September 2021

Well Festival is on the move:

Well Festival of Arts and Wellbeing marks change of date with flagship event at Garter Lane Arts Centre; Open Call to participate

The Well Festival of Arts and Wellbeing has announced that, after eight successful years, the festival is to change dates and will now take place in February 2022. To mark this significant move, the festival will host its annual much-loved flagship event *We haven't had an earthquake lately...* at Garter Lane Arts Centre on Friday 8 October at 7:30pm. This event celebrates the joy of reading and members of the public are invited to come along and enjoy an uplifting evening of readings and music. Admission is free and booking is essential through Garter Lane on www.garterlane.ie or (051) 855038. Further details are available from www.wellwaterford.com

The Well Festival of Arts and Wellbeing champions and celebrates the health benefits of participation in the arts by everyone. Every year, this Waterford festival features an exciting line-up of fun, free, inventive and sociable arts events for all ages, with musicians, artists, poets, theatre makers, filmmakers and dancers, and *Wellies*, a special programme strand for younger audiences. The festival is presented by Garter Lane Arts Centre, Waterford City and County Libraries and Waterford Healing Arts Trust.

Announcing the change of date of the festival, Sile Penkert, Executive Director of Garter Lane Arts Centre, said "In 2020, due to the prevailing COVID-19 related public health guidelines, the Well partners presented a hybrid festival, with most events taking place online. Following this significant upheaval, we took the opportunity to review and reflect on the festival from a range of perspectives. We felt that, due to the concentration of festivals in Waterford in October, we should consider moving to a different time of the year. We believe that a festival which champions the wellbeing benefits of the arts can be welcome in February, a challenging month from a mental health perspective, as we all know. Our experience at Garter Lane Arts Centre, and that of our festival partners in Waterford City and County Libraries, is that there is a clear appetite to attend and participate in events in February, after a long quiet January, so this move makes sense to us."

The festival partners felt it was important to offer their loyal audiences an opportunity to come together for one event in October to mark this significant change. Highlighting details of the flagship event *We haven't had an earthquake lately*, Claire Meaney, Director of Waterford Healing Arts Trust, said "Earthquake is one of our most popular events every year, with a great number of keen Waterford readers seeking to share their favourite feel-good writings with the wider public in a relaxed and convivial atmosphere, and we didn't want to lose this in 2021. All are welcome to attend, but we also want to hear from you if you turn to a good book or poem to lift your spirits or be inspired. We're calling on all avid readers to submit their favourite piece of writing (not self-written) for consideration for *We haven't had an earthquake lately....* Submissions should be emailed to what@hse.ie by **Tuesday 28 September** with "Earthquake" in the subject line. Successful applicants will be invited to read their selections in public on the night. We're very excited to present *Earthquake* at Garter Lane Arts Centre this year, as the larger venue will allow us to accommodate our audience safely, with plenty of space. We are extremely grateful to The Book Centre Waterford, our loyal hosts for many years, for kindly agreeing to continue to sponsor this event."

Breda O'Shea, speaking on behalf of festival partner Waterford City and County Libraries, added "We are very excited that *Earthquake* will continue in its traditional date this year, as this celebration of the power of writing brings together people of all ages with a common desire to share their literary discoveries. Every year, participants and audience members leave at the end of the evening feeling uplifted, surprised and inspired by the choices of their fellow literature lovers. Over the coming weeks, we will be reaching out to our library members across the City and County to encourage people not to miss out on this wonderful opportunity."

The Well Festival of Arts and Wellbeing is funded by the Arts Council, the HSE and Waterford City and County Council, with generous support from Sanofi. See www.wellwaterford.com See the Well Festival also on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

"We haven't had an earthquake lately" is a quote from Winnie the Pooh, by AA Milne.

ENDS

Further info: Waterford Healing Arts Trust (051) 842664 / what@hse.ie