



Irish Writers Centre

Climate Action Policy & Plan 2025-28

Overview

The Irish Writers Centre (IWC) is dedicated to fostering a more sustainable environment. Recognising the environmental damage our collective actions have caused to date, and keeping in mind the historical nature and protected status of our building, we commit to promoting sustainable thinking through our education and programming activities, as well as adopting a pro-active, practical approach towards reducing our environmental impact, both in our building on Parnell Square and while travelling to offsite locations.

This environmental policy document contains: an outline of our climate- and environment-themed programming efforts to date; an update on the sustainability measures adopted in our building on Parnell Square; three core pledges regarding our sustainability goals for the future; and an action plan outlining our intentions spanning the next four years (2025-28).

Our Programmes

Climate-themed courses and programmes have comprised an important strand of the IWC's regular programming activities for the last seven years.

We believe that arts and cultural organisations have a responsibility to use their platforms to build awareness of, promote, and inspire sustainable thinking, and aim, over the next four years, to become a contributing voice in the Irish cultural sector and wider Irish society in this regard.

To date, climate-themed programmes at the Irish Writers Centre have included:

- **Courses:** Climate- and environment-themed courses taught at the Irish Writers Centre have included *Writing the Non-Human* with Doreen Cunningham, *Bruised, Burning, Beautiful: Writing through Emergency* with Kerri ní Dochartaigh, *Writing for Biodiversity and Climate* with Jane Robinson, *Writing Place* with Marcel Krueger, *Put the Planet in Your Prose* with Lynn Buckle, *Writing the Wild* with Declan Murphy, and *Travel Writing* with Manchán Magan.
- **Writing for a Change:** A writing competition, organised in association with the Five Lamps Festival and the National Botanic Gardens, which invited members of the public to respond to the theme of environmental climate change through a piece of formally innovative flash fiction. First run in 2019, a second edition of the competition was organised in 2020, shortly after which the three winning entries were published in the climate-themed literary journal Channel.
- **Climate Writing Sessions:** A free-to-join, online resource for writers, established in July 2021, the year of the centre's 30th anniversary, proposed by award-winning author writer Lynn Buckle and launched by special guest Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland. The overall theme is awareness of the planet and encouraging writers to promote positive climate solutions in their work. Following [Lynn Buckle's](#) impeccable stewardship of curating and hosting the sessions, we were honoured to have [Kerri ní Dochartaigh](#) at the helm for the past two years. Going into the fifth year, 2025, we are delighted to welcome poet [Alice Kinsella](#). Sessions have taken on a variety of different formats including workshops, group discussions and long-form interviews. Guests have included nature writers (Robert Macfarlane, Doreen Cunningham); fiction writers (Marianne Lee); poets (Grace Wells, Alice Kinsella); and activists (Manchán Magan and Clodagh Daly).
- **Writing the Earth:** A cross-disciplinary development programme, organised in association with iCrag, the Science Foundation Ireland Research Centre in Applied Geosciences, that took place from March to June 2023. The programme culminated in a live event hosted at Pearse Street Library where the selected writers performed and/or read from their finished works.

Our Building

Sustainable thinking has played an important role in the day-to-day running of our organisation ever since the publication of our first, internal sustainability report in 2018.

Though limited in our capacity to change by our building's protected status and by the fact that it is rented and not owned, since then, we have introduced a number of new, practical measures to limit energy use and waste production in our building. These have included:

- **Waste:** Reusable cups are now used for the serving of cold drinks and biodegradable cups for hot. A sign has been placed at reception, encouraging patrons to bring their own cups and/or water bottles to the Centre. All bins are clearly labelled to prevent cross contamination between recycling and general waste.
- **Energy use:** Team members are reminded to turn off all electronic devices (computers, printers, monitors, etc.) when leaving the office at the end of the day. Sensor lights and LEDs have been installed wherever possible throughout our building. All lights and heating devices are switched off at the end of the day.
- **Printing:** Members of staff are reminded to minimise printing wherever possible. All facilitators are encouraged to distribute reading materials via email or cloud service rather than printout. Printed matter – brochures, booklets, posters, etc. – has been scaled back dramatically and is now produced on an as-needed basis. All booking services now take place via the website, meaning receipts are no longer printed in-office.
- **Travel:** As an organisation with a national remit, we seek to maximise opportunities to connect with writers throughout Ireland. Such engagement requires staff members, and individuals we engage on a contract basis, to travel to gatherings and events. Currently, the majority of this travel is completed using public transport. From 2025 onwards, we will recommend that public transport should be used for journeys relating to IWC business, unless there is no public transport option.
- **Training and discussion:** Issues relating to sustainability are raised regularly at team meetings. Members of staff are encouraged to apply sustainable solutions wherever possible while organising programmes and planning events.

Our pledges

The Irish Writers Centre is committed to becoming a more environmentally equitable organisation. In order to achieve this, we pledge to:

1. Foster awareness of the ongoing climate crisis via a diverse range of education and programming activities, including courses, events, development programmes, and collaborations with relevant organisations.
2. Optimise energy consumption by conducting a building-wide survey of water and electricity usage, and by minimising our digital footprint via the streamlining of digital services.
3. Minimise waste production by investing in more sustainable and renewable services and products, and by participating in resource-sharing with other organisations.

Sources

This policy was developed using literature from a number of relevant organisations including: the Arts Council of Ireland, Julie's Bicycle EU, Performing Arts Forum / Green Arts Initiative Ireland, and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI).

Monitoring & Evaluation

The implementation of this environmental policy and action plan is the responsibility of all IWC staff and board members. Matters relating to its implementation will be discussed regularly at staff meetings and board meetings. Monitoring responsibilities will lie with the CEO, Mags McLoughlin (mags@irishwriterscentre.ie).

This policy will be reviewed annually from 2025 onwards. The next review will be January 2026.

A full evaluation of its outcomes will be undertaken at the end of its lifespan (i.e. 2028).

Pledge	Actions	Timeline
Foster awareness of the ongoing climate crisis via a diverse range of education and programming activities, including courses, events, development programmes and collaborations with relevant organisations.	Increase the number of climate- and/or nature-themed writing courses to five per year.	2025-28
	Increase the number of Climate Writing Sessions to nine per year.	2025-28
	Dedicate a page on our website to the Climate Writing Group, cementing its status within our regular programming activities.	2025
	Create stimulus opportunities (development programmes, writing competitions, etc.) to promote new writing about the climate crisis.	2025-28
	Organise quarterly sustainability meetings for the Irish Writers Centre team, ensuring sustainability is highlighted in our programming and education activities.	2025-28
	Organise bi-annual training sessions for the Irish Writers Centre team to foster better awareness of how sustainable practices can be applied within the organisation.	2025-28

Pledge	Actions	Timeline
<p>Optimise energy consumption by conducting a building-wide survey of water and electricity usage, and by minimising our digital footprint via the streamlining of digital services.</p>	<p>Increase signage around the building, reminding patrons to be conscious of energy use when turning on lights and/or heaters.</p>	<p>2025-26</p>
	<p>Minimise our digital footprint by compressing existing images on our website and configuring a plugin to auto-create .webp versions of the images (in place of .png and .jpg files).</p>	<p>2025-26</p>
	<p>Engage in regular instances of digital decluttering to limit energy use in the maintenance of our digital systems.</p>	<p>2025-28</p>
	<p>Conduct a building-wide survey of water and electricity usage, determining our annual consumption and setting targets for year-on-year reductions thereafter.</p>	<p>2026-27</p>
	<p>Actively engage with our new landlord (Dublin City Council, 2025 -) to explore energy-efficient heating, light and insulation options to lower energy consumption.</p>	<p>2025-28</p>

Pledge	Actions	Timeline
<p>Minimise waste production by investing in more sustainable and renewable services and products, and by participating in resource-sharing with other organisations.</p>	<p>Increase signage around the building, reminding patrons to be mindful of bin type when disposing of waste.</p>	<p>2025-26</p>
	<p>Explore using more sustainable refuse options (e.g. compost bins) to cut down on waste production in office.</p>	<p>2025-26</p>
	<p>Phase out non-reusable goods and products (e.g. paper hand towels, single-use wipes) and replace with reusable alternatives (e.g. recycled office paper, eco-friendly cleaning products) wherever possible.</p>	<p>2025-26</p>
	<p>Introduce a fair-usage clause regarding printing in all contracts of work, limiting the amount of paper used for classroom notes and/or readings.</p>	<p>2025-26</p>