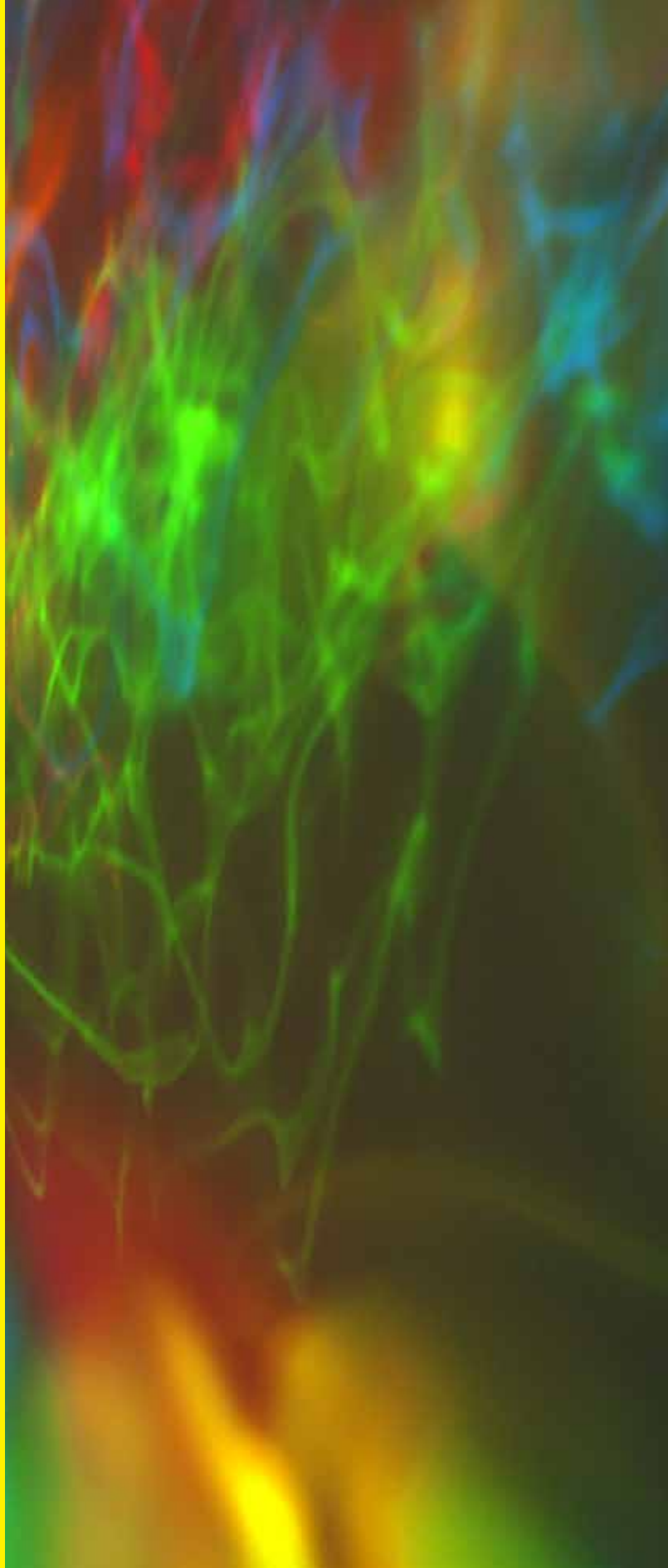





A New Light

Strategic Pathway (2020-2026)







The publication of a new strategy, A New Light, has come both in reflection in the journey that the centre has taken since opening in 2006, but also to outline our positive ambition as a creative cultural centre of distinction for the north east of this island.



Solstice Arts Centre: Theatre Goers Arriving for a Performance, 2006 - Image by Ros Kavanagh

Solstice Arts Centre attracts 85,000 visitors per annum whilst regularly disseminating its creative work nationally and internationally. It is a centre of special moments and qualitative experiences, valued by visitors and artists alike.

Designed by award-winning Grafton Architects, the building has always inspired us to dream and be ambitious. In this strategy, we are mindful however, that our future is not just tied to a physical space, but to interconnected physical and virtual pathways that will ensure our purpose responds to changing communities, technologies and societal trends.

Janus-like, we will create new encounters to the extraordinary wealth of our surrounding cultural heritage, whilst connecting to new diverse populations of the county. *A New Light* anchors the centre as a cultural destination that welcomes domestic and foreign visitors, communities, artists, and binds them to creative encounters of depth and conviction. At Solstice, we are open to explore a new rhetoric, new definitions, systems of scientific and communal interconnection that interweave with social, public and educational partners.

To ensure our strategic priorities are met with robust actions, *A New Light* will be underpinned by two, three-year operational plans. This will also allow Solstice to adjust and flex its responses to shifting fiscal and societal environs.

We thank our funding partners, Meath County Council and The Arts Council. We are grateful to Solstice's staff who have contributed to the centre's considerable reputation of operational and artistic excellence, our many collaborators, artists and users who have lit our way. We look forward to working collectively and exploring new perspectives in *A New Light* in the coming years.

Jackie Maguire
Chairperson

Belinda Quirke
Director

Board of Directors:

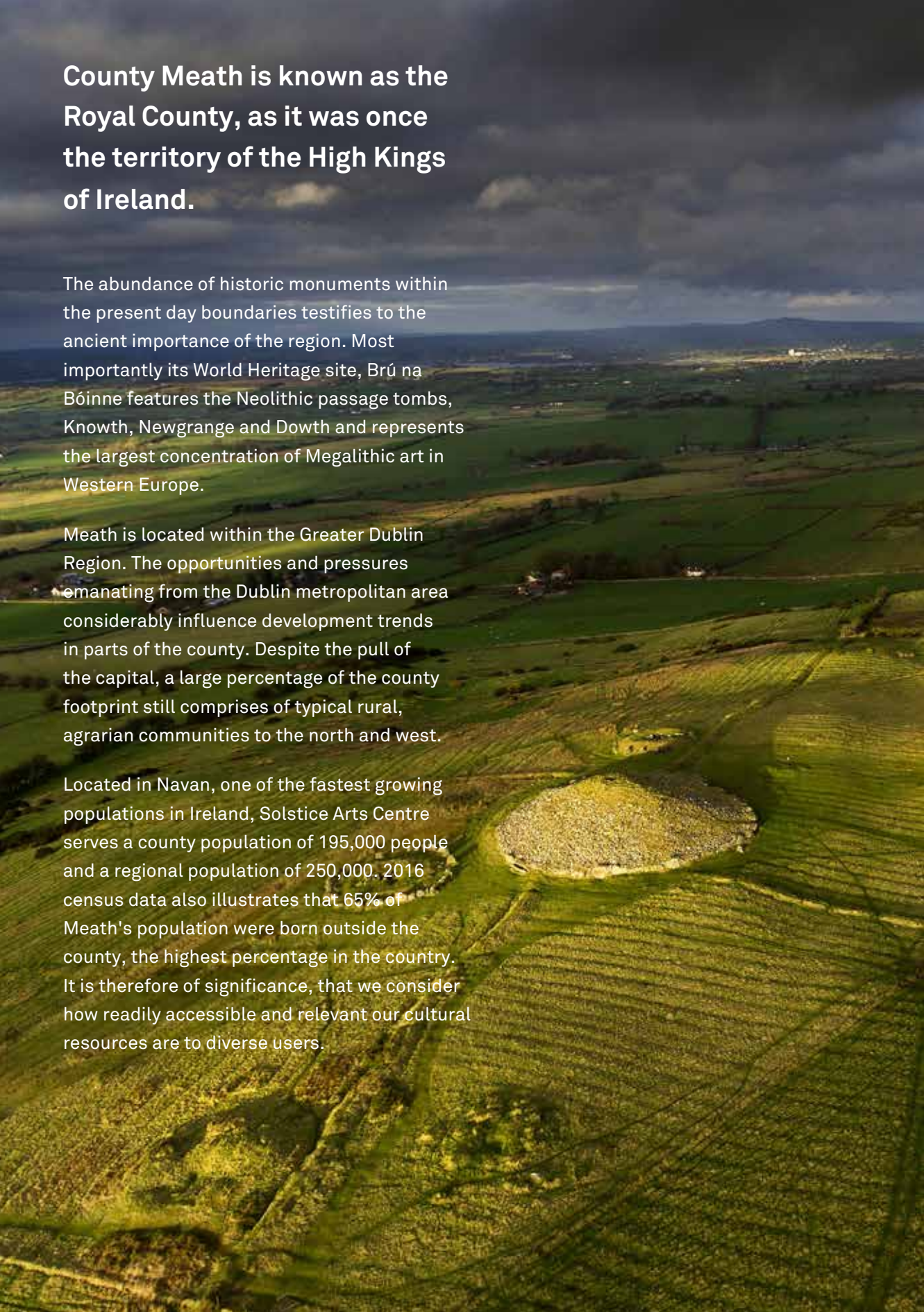
Cllr. Yemi Adenuga, Cllr. Francis Deane, Cllr. Padraig Fitzsimons, Paul Gaffney, Caitriona Heslin, Arthur Lappin, Helen Stanton

County Meath is known as the Royal County, as it was once the territory of the High Kings of Ireland.

The abundance of historic monuments within the present day boundaries testifies to the ancient importance of the region. Most importantly its World Heritage site, Brú na Bóinne features the Neolithic passage tombs, Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth and represents the largest concentration of Megalithic art in Western Europe.

Meath is located within the Greater Dublin Region. The opportunities and pressures emanating from the Dublin metropolitan area considerably influence development trends in parts of the county. Despite the pull of the capital, a large percentage of the county footprint still comprises of typical rural, agrarian communities to the north and west.

Located in Navan, one of the fastest growing populations in Ireland, Solstice Arts Centre serves a county population of 195,000 people and a regional population of 250,000. 2016 census data also illustrates that 65% of Meath's population were born outside the county, the highest percentage in the country. It is therefore of significance, that we consider how readily accessible and relevant our cultural resources are to diverse users.





Loughcrew Landscape, 2014 - Image by Ken Williams

WHAT WE DO





*An Arts Centre is more than a building.
It is a place of life and celebration
where each day brings new opportunities
to be inspired and connect.*

OUR VISION

We are a vibrant, creative anchor and cultural destination in the north east of Ireland, bringing people together for remarkable inclusive cultural experiences that make us better at living.





Audience at 10th Birthday Gala Concert with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, 2017 - Image by Barry Cronin 2017

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to be a thriving regional arts centre of excellence in the north east of Ireland, connecting artists and their work to local, national and international audiences.





OUR VALUES



Home

We aspire for Solstice to be an open comfortable space of welcome and belonging for all our users. Between the daily grind and domestic life, we are a third space of individual freedoms.

Awaken

We believe that arts and culture illuminate our lives, and awaken possibility in everyone. We create extraordinary creative moments that stir hearts and minds. We commission and produce contemporary arts that resonate with our lives and lands.





Bold

Solstice is a cultural resource that shares our creative projects beyond all types of barriers and borders. We like to be audacious and ambitious about what we can do and where we can do it.

Brilliance

We are a catalyst for artistic excellence and quality user experiences. Our staff are resilient and resourceful, using shared expertise to deliver operational and corporate brilliance.



Together

The diversity of our users enriches our vision. We nurture an inclusive and equitable environment, leveraging positive societal impact through our collective activities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Connect

We want to connect to our unique environs and county in meaningful ways; look to the streets, peoples, rivers and fields, our Neolithic inheritance – reflecting societal and environmental change in the north east of the country, championing cultural curiosity and participation for all. We will create encounters of excellence using our artistic expertise, and through collaborating with others.

Solstice is a shared place. It is a place for people to meet, play, reflect and explore. We provide engagements with national and international artists and companies, whilst presenting work in partnership with local community, social and performing groups.





Conversations Across Time with Navan Male Voice Choir, Dumbworld, 2017 - Image by Patrick Redmond

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Create

We are a beacon of arts practice in the north east, offering supports and resources to professional artists whilst nurturing creative life in the region.

Solstice creates opportunities for artists to develop their art form in qualitative ways. Through artistic collaboration, we take the time to cultivate artistic work and commissions.

We awaken and hone our own exploration and expertise, by listening to and involving diverse stakeholders. It is important to us that we do our best for artists by ensuring like everyone, artists are supported in their career, and acknowledge that their unique creative work is essential in helping us navigate, voice, and enrich our daily lives.





This is How we Fly, (Associated Artists 2018 - 2020), 2018 - Image by Patrick Redmond

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Continuity

Secure our mission, grow responsibly and ensure our vitality for future generations.

Solstice operates the centre for our citizens, on behalf of Meath County Council. The iconic nature of the building has fuelled our ambition as a significant cultural destination and artistic focal point. In its second decade, Solstice needs to ensure that its financial and governance structures can withstand potential vulnerabilities from external economic and social factors, whilst facilitating a growth in programme activities, philanthropic and capital development.

Solstice recognises how its staff contribute to its excellent artistic and operational reputation. It is therefore essential that we invest in our team to develop their shared expertise, and futureproof the strength of our internal resources. We will continue to cultivate a positive working environment to maintain a high duty of care for visitors, staff and artists.





STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE

Everyday Solstice measures and monitors its performance by analysing statistical, evidence-based and comparative data. The measurement of operational performance in the arts can come from very personal, emotive places that are often hard to quantify and express.

At Solstice, we endeavour to gauge the success of both educational and intimate artistic creative engagements, alongside the inevitable sell-out foot stompers. We encourage feedback and critique from our users and stakeholders who, with us, are invested in sustaining our future.

We will know we have achieved our Strategic priorities if

- Visitor footfall to the centre increases year on year, and is increasingly representative of the diverse populations around us, art lovers and tourists
- Solstice is a thriving ecosystem for the creation of new artistic work in the region
- Solstice is financially stable, with the ability to forecast
- We are flexible, agile and responsive to creative, fiscal and environmental variations
- New forms of creative encounters will be created with new collaborative partners
- The reputation of our artistic programme and operational activities continues to grow
- Solstice staff are motivated and feel valued in a positive work environment



GESAMTKUNSTWERK, Julianstown Youth Orchestra, 2017 - Image by Patrick Redmond

MONITORING & EVALUATION

Our corporate governance structures are closely monitored by the Board of Directors, the director, and by our public stakeholders to ensure that we operate in a transparent, diligent and efficient manner.

The strategy will be monitored and evaluated by reviewing and appraising of evidence collected from (i) participant (ii) audience (iii) artist feedback (iv) artistic critique (v) collegial response (vi) in house appraisal (vii) event data (viii) event production and fiscal reports.

Two, three-year operational plans will galvanise our strategy. The director will review our strategic process providing updates to the Board of Directors. at bi-monthly meetings. An annual strategic implementation report will be reviewed by the Board of Directors.



Author:
Belinda Quirke on behalf
of Solstice Arts Centre



long, I belong



Solstice Arts Centre DAC Ltd.

Company Reg: 387313

Charity Reg: CHY 17588

Solstice DAC is solely owned by Meath
County Council and is governed by a
voluntary Board of Directors who are
connected to, or live in the county.

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