



PRESS RELEASE

ST. PATRICK CLIMBS THE STEPS OF THE MANSION HOUSE

Lord Mayor of Dublin welcomes St. Patrick ahead of the National Celebrations

Dublin, 15th March 2016: St. Patrick made his eagerly awaited arrival in Dublin this morning, climbing the steps of the capital's iconic Mansion House. The Patron Saint was welcomed by Ardmhéara Bhaile Átha Cliath /Lord Mayor of Dublin, Críona Ní Dhálaigh to her residence on Dawson Street. This year's Festival celebrations officially begin on Thursday 17th March and are filled with unmissable events that run over four days and nights until the 20th March.

Ardmhéara Bhaile Átha Cliath Críona Ní Dhálaigh, who welcomed St. Patrick, said, *"It is my pleasure to welcome St. Patrick here to Teach an Ardmhéara (The Mansion House) here in Dublin. The official residence of the Lord Mayor for over 300 years, the Mansion House has welcomed many local and international dignitaries and St. Patrick is very welcome to join their ranks. I hope St. Patrick enjoys the great range of events on offer over this Festival weekend and that the people of Dublin come out to join him in celebrating our National Day. Guím Lá Fhéile Phádraig daoibh agus tá súil agam go mbainfidh sibh sult."*

Concluding the Festival's three year thematic journey of '**Past, Present and Future**', this year's parade theme '**Imagine if...**' is inspired by the imagination of the youth of Ireland as they look to the future...the next 100 years. Ireland's leading pageant companies have responded artistically and will bring these thoughts and ideas to life with spectacular pageantry and performance.

Accompanying St. Patrick were two members from both the Artane and Clondalkin bands who will also participate in this year's parade celebrations along with music ensembles from the USA, UK and Brittany. Artistic creations from groups including Spraoi, Inishowen Carnival Group, Downtcha Puppets, Artastic, Brighter Futures, City Fusion, Buí Bolg and Dublin Institute of Technology will be presented.

Noel John McLoughlin, Faighté Ireland's Marketing Director commented: *"Fáilte Ireland is delighted to support the festival once more. St Patrick's Day is a fantastic opportunity for Ireland to showcase our own culture and talents and promote all that is great about Ireland on an international stage. Last year, the event attracted 112,000 overseas visitors, benefiting the economy by €73m. However it is also viewed and written about globally - allowing us to open up a priceless and colourful shop window to the world. Last year, coverage of the St Patrick's Festival reached an audience of over 300 million and I'm sure we will exceed this in 2016."*

Susan Kirby, St. Patrick's Festival CEO commented; *"The arrival of St. Patrick never fails to bring a great sense of occasion and excitement ahead of the Festival. We are grateful to St. Patrick for his timely arrival and that he is here with us to celebrate this important milestone year. We are very excited about delivering four days and nights of fantastic events that will turn Dublin City into a theatre of live entertainment."*



St. Patrick's Festival will get underway on Thursday, 17th March with the Festival parade, followed by other events such as Gaelstage, Festival Céilí, Festival Treasure Hunt, Donovan's 50 Years of Music Tour, and Festival Big Day Out.

Another main highlight of St. Patrick's Festival 2016 is the Festival's cultural programme 'I Love My City' which returns once again with a series of engaging, evocative and intimate cultural events and happenings curated by the Festival and staged in some of Dublin's most beautiful, historical and prestigious venues. Entertainment, from a variety of disciplines including literature, film, music, spoken word, visual art and gastronomy will be presented throughout the festival. The *I Love My City* programme of events will be presented from the 17th – 20th March and are either FREE ticketed or PAID ticketed, those wishing to register or buy tickets for all events should visit www.stpatricksfestival.ie

St. Patrick's Festival will take place from the 17th – 20th March. For details on the programme please visit www.stpatricksfestival.ie, download the official app, or interact with the Festival on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter by using the hashtag #StPatricksFest.

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NOTES TO EDITOR

St. Patrick's Festival is funded by Fáilte Ireland and Dublin City Council.

The principal aim of St. Patrick's Festival, since its inauguration, is to develop a major annual international festival around the national holiday over which the Irish people would stand proud. It sets out to reflect the talents and achievements of Irish people on many national and world stages, and it acts as an exciting showcase for the manifold skills of the people of Ireland, of every age and social background.

There were over 112,000 out-of-state visitors at St. Patrick's Festival in 2015, including about 100,000 overseas visitors and 12,000 visitors from Northern Ireland. These visitors spent an average of 6.5 days in Ireland, and 4.5 days in Dublin, with two people travelling in the average visiting party. With an average expenditure per person of just over €650 in Ireland, including over €450 per person in Dublin, this means that out-of-state visitors generated an estimated total expenditure of €73m while in Ireland, including expenditure of €51.3m while in Dublin.



As the one national holiday that is celebrated in more countries around the world than any other, St. Patrick's Day is the day when everyone wants to be Irish.

Why was it started?

- To offer a national festival that ranks as one of the greatest celebrations in the world
- To create energy and excitement throughout Ireland via innovation, creativity and grassroots involvement, and marketing activity
- To provide the opportunity and motivation for people of Irish descent (and those who sometimes wish they were Irish) to attend and join in the imaginative and expressive celebrations
- To project, internationally, an accurate image of Ireland as a creative, professional and sophisticated country with wide appeal.

The first St Patrick's Festival was held over one day, and night, on March 17th 1996. The live audience for the day was estimated to be 430,000.

Preparation for the first St. Patrick's Festival used to take only 5 months, but with the growth of the Festival, it now takes 18 months to plan for Ireland's biggest annual celebration.