

## **Press Release**

**06/10/15**

### **McMonagle offers local writers a ‘Guide to the Short Story’**

For the second year running, Longford County Arts Office have offered budding writers a unique opportunity to expand their skills.

Facilitated by renowned writer Alan McMonagle, the course intends to give ‘A Guide to the Short Story’. Using a mix of theory, exercise and class discussion, the ten-week guide will lead participants through topics including: finding a voice; beginnings – opening lines, paragraphs and chapters; constructing characters; dialogue; place/setting; engaging the reader; conflict; point of view; editing and presenting your work for publication.

“Early last year I facilitated a ten-week course in prose writing,” Alan told the Longford Leader. “Initially the intention was to run the course on a Tuesday night for a group of ten. The level of interest and the standard of applicants was so high we had to put on a second night.”

Travelling from Galway every week for the duration of the course, Alan revealed that the interest and enthusiasm shown by the writers made for “a memorable couple of months”.

Unfortunately, Alan pointed out that the short story is “a notoriously ‘hard sell’”, but went on to add that, “In these fast times of shortened attention spans, the short story is and can be a wonderful way to capture the idiosyncrasies and flip-flop patterns of life”.

Within the ten-week programme, Alan hopes to instil an appreciation for the short story within participants as well as getting them to craft their own stories.

“For each of the ten weeks I would hope to zone in on one element of what I consider goes into the making of an effective short story (character, dialogue, voice, beginning, ending and so forth) and gently steer participants towards the completion of a successful piece of short fiction,” he concluded.

Meeting every Wednesday night at the Creativity Centre Ardagh the writers participating in this year’s course are: Karen Goode, Ann Gerety Smyth, Maria FitzPatrick, Sally Martin, Caroline Coyle, Herbie Massop, Kate Ennals, Rose Byrne, Brian McLoughlin, Frank Horne and Kitty Rodgers

**Ends**

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