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# / flourish

Clare County Council –  
Arts Development Plan  
2019-2023



# / flourish

v. flour·ished, flour·ish·ing, flour·ish·es

to blossom

to grow vigorously; succeed; thrive; prosper

to be at the peak of development, activity, influence, production, etc.; be in one's prime



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## Foreword by Cathaoirleach, Clare County Council

Clare takes great pride in its' creative arts, a sector that is vibrant and active within the county made up of individual artists, communities and organisations. Clare is home to more than 150 festivals and cultural events each year, many of which nurture and foster the county's strong tradition of Irish music and dance. Recent government policy sees creativity being placed at the forefront in terms of our skills set as a society to respond to challenges. This is an acknowledgement of the role arts and creativity have to play in promoting individual, community and national wellbeing. Clare County Council has long recognised that participation in arts and cultural activity drives personal and collective creativity, with in turn brings significant benefits for our people and our places in terms of wellbeing.

Clare County Council is a committed partner in the delivery of Creative Ireland and its goal – "enabling creativity in every community". As the first county in Ireland to appoint an Arts Officer, we pride ourselves on our developed sensibilities to the arts and value our artists, who are central to life in our communities and who play such an important role in bringing enjoyment, creativity and cultural activity to our beautiful county.

County Clare has long nourished creativity and free artistic expression; this magnificent place, for thousands of years, has been the source of inspiration for some of the most talented artists. This plan sets out how Clare County Council will support the artists and people of Clare to continue this longstanding and valued ethos. The plan has been written for and by the people of the county, following extensive consultation. It is a living plan, it will develop over the years, meander in different directions and bring us places we haven't dreamed of yet – as the arts should.

I look forward to travelling this road.



**CLLR. MICHAEL BEGLEY**  
CATHAOIRLEACH

## Foreword

As one of the leading local authorities in arts development in Ireland, Clare County Council responds and reacts to changes in the cultural climate, which surrounds us, in innovative and strategic ways – working with the wealth of artistic talent in the county. At national level Project Ireland 2040 lists Arts, Culture and Heritage as elements supporting quality of life<sup>1</sup> and this theme runs through this comprehensive Strategy for the period 2019-2023.

As a Local Authority we want to ensure there is a cultural vibrancy in the places where we live and work, places where artists and creative practitioners are active and respected, places where cultural expression is a welcomed and access to creative activity is easy for all our citizens, regardless of where they are or where they have come from. In Clare, the arts have been prioritised through programmes, projects and actions that will ensure that we, as a county, continue to blossom and maintain our reputation as a cultural and artistic county.

This plan highlights the role the Arts play across all of the service areas the local authority provides to the people of Clare. The Arts Office is continuously challenged to meet all of the expectations and demands by artists and communities, but it is a challenge that we relish, highlighting the appetite by the people of Clare for access to cultural and creativity both as an expression of place and as an individual need.



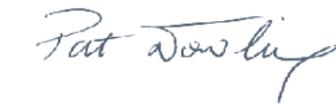
**GERRY FLYNN**  
CHAIRPERSON, HOUSING, SOCIAL AND  
CULTURAL STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

**APRIL 2019**

In particular, the Council is looking forward to the opening of a new gallery as part of the re-location of the public library in Ennis onto the Glór site.

We acknowledge and support the vital role our artists play in creating and maintaining this environment and how they give voice to the important role that creativity and cultural expression plays in our local communities, towns and villages. It is our experience that the arts can be most effective when high standards of artistic excellence and practice are achieved. This in turn can only be achieved by creating the conditions for professional artists of a high calibre to do good work and this plan sets out to achieve this.

This plan reflects the changing and challenging environment which the arts find themselves and it sets out specific targets, partnerships and projects to be undertaken. It allows, however, for development, for changes in direction, for responsiveness, progressiveness and ambition. It is a plan that will guide us on a journey with no specific end in sight, but with an acknowledgement that the arts and creativity offer us all an opportunity to be more creative individuals, creative communities and a more creative society in terms of our ideals and aspirations.



**MR PAT DOWLING**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,  
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

<sup>1</sup>Project Ireland 2040, Building Ireland's Future, National Planning Framework. Pg 80. Fig 6.1



## Introduction

The arts in County Clare make our county unique; they give us our world renowned special character and are integral to our sense of place. The arts have over the years reflected and expressed our values, knowledge and traditions and continue to do so, the sign of a dynamic and progressive county. The arts contribute to so many aspects of our lives and have tangible and intangible benefits, contributing to our quality and enjoyment of life, and our sense of place and local pride. They also facilitate economic activity and provide employment.

Clare County Council acknowledges that the successes in the arts to date in the county have evolved from the role and work of individual artists across all art forms. The creative spirit of all Clare artists has not only influenced the policies laid out in this plan, but has informed and inspired the work of the local authority in terms of arts development.

Clare County Council views the arts as a central strategy in its cultural, social and economic development. This Arts plan will provide the basis for input to the Local Authority Service Delivery plan and form part of the Social Development Directorate's work plan for the coming years. Previous plans have focussed on public access to the arts and capacity building in the arts as key areas for development with particular emphasis on the visual arts and traditional arts.

Central to this plan and to all Arts Office activities and programmes is the artist. Clare County Council remains fully committed to supporting the role of the individual artist in creating artworks and working with their local communities. We will support them by continuing to create employment activities for artists, support them in their artistic practice and engaging them in relevant professional development opportunities.

As there have been many advances made within the arts, and many positive outcomes achieved, this plan proposes to build on the continued success achieved in these areas. This plan charts a clear approach to maintaining an Arts Service which is of a high standard, adaptive to change and future-proofed. It reflects the growing importance placed on the arts by society in general in terms of social cohesion, creative economies and cultural identity.

The plan will focus on the resources available to the Arts Office and on managing and maintaining existing facilities and programmes whilst linking in with local, national and international partners to develop further creative opportunities for the arts to flourish in Clare.

## 2. International and National Policy Context

The policies and strategies set out in this plan have been designed to align to the international, national, regional and local context.

### European

With individual EU Member States responsible for their own culture sector policies, the role of the European Commission is to help address common challenges, such as the impact of digital technologies, changing models of cultural governance and the need to support the innovation potential of the cultural and creative sectors. The culture sector is increasingly seen as a source of job creation, and contributes both to growth in Europe and quality of life for EU citizens. The culture sector is also an excellent conduit for promoting social inclusion and supporting cultural diversity.

The **2019–22 Work Plan for Culture** sets out five main priorities for European cooperation in cultural policy-making:

- Sustainability in cultural heritage
- Cohesion and well-being
- An ecosystem supporting artists, cultural and creative professionals and European content
- Gender equality
- International cultural relations

### Irish

Here, at home, local authorities, in the main, fall under the remit of the **Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government**. However, it is the **Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht** that provides resources, policy and the legislative framework to support the stimulation and development of the Arts in Ireland.

The arts as defined in the Arts Act 2003, incorporates "any creative or interpretative expression (whether traditional or contemporary) in whatever form, and including particular, visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus and architecture and includes any medium when used for those purposes."

The development of this Arts Plan comes from Section 6 of the **Arts Act 2003** which requires Local Authorities to prepare and implement arts development plans *in which local authorities set out their assistance in respect of activities, projects or undertakings for the purposes of stimulating public interest in the arts, promoting knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts or improving standards in the arts within their functional area.*

**The Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht** fund the arts and arts agencies in a variety of ways eg **Culture Ireland, Creative Ireland<sup>11</sup>** and the **Arts Council**. Government funding for the arts is generally channelled through The Arts Council, the national agency for funding, developing and promoting the arts in Ireland.

The priorities of the Arts Council as set out in its ten-year strategy **Making Great Art Work 2016-2025** include

**THE ARTIST:** *Artists are supported to make excellent work which is enjoyed and valued.*

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:** *More people will enjoy high-quality arts experiences.*

**INVESTMENT STRATEGY:** *Public monies are invested effectively to realise priorities.*

#### **SPATIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC PLANNING:**

*Well planned arts provision to benefit people across the country.*

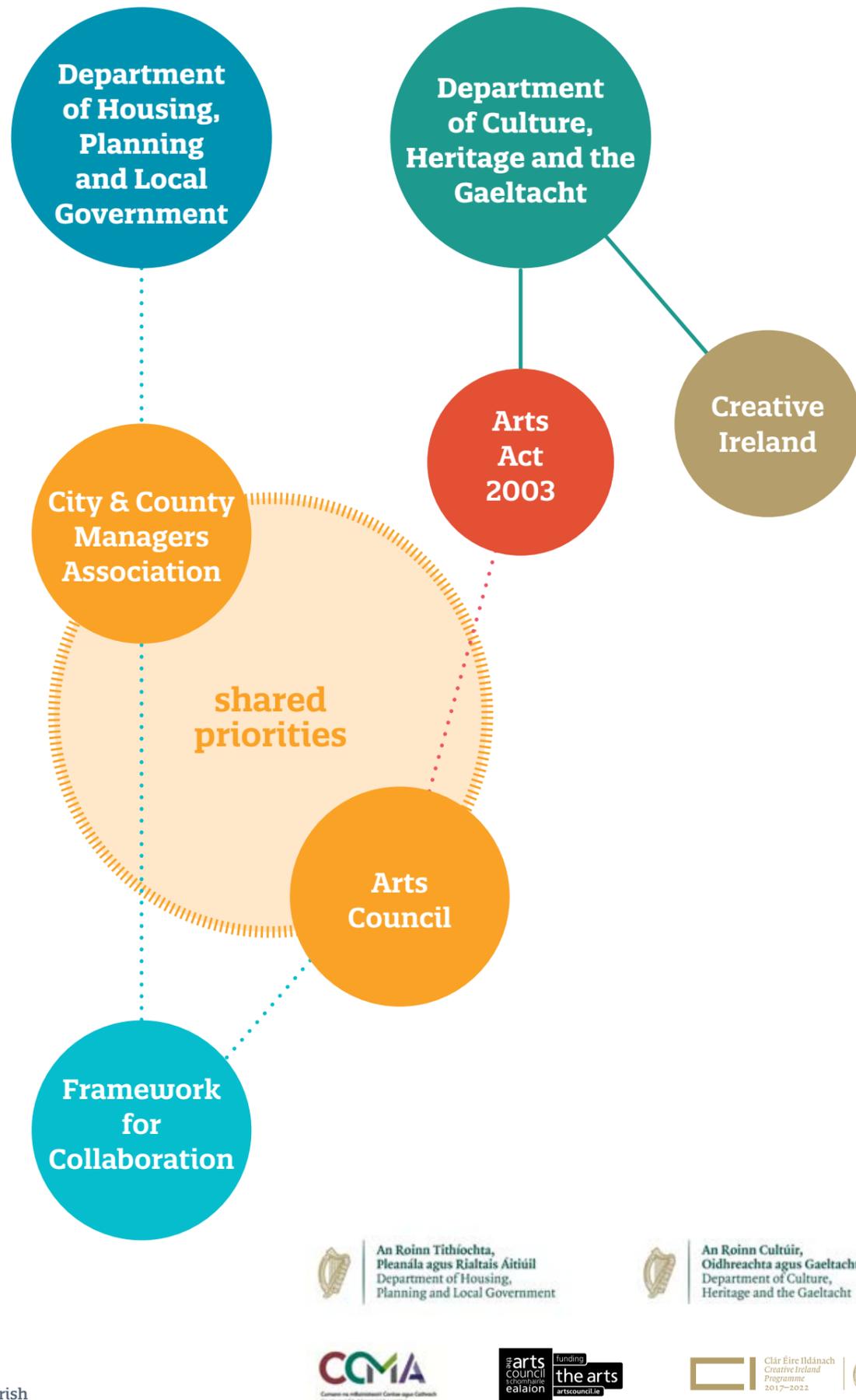
**DEVELOPING CAPACITY:** *The Arts Council and the arts sector have the knowledge, skills and inventiveness to realise the strategy*

In 2016 the Arts Council and the City and County Managers Association (CCMA) published *A Framework for Collaboration*. The purpose of the agreement is to highlight the value and clarify the current position of the 30-year strategic partnership between the Arts Council and local authorities nationwide, and to set out a vision and broad goals for what is to be achieved by the partners over the next ten years.

Under the terms of the agreement the emphasis is shifting from annual arts programme funding to a more strategic focus, expressed in individually negotiated agreements between each local authority and the Arts Council. This agreement will lead to possibilities for new investment by the partners in the development of the arts in Clare focused on common objectives with strategic intent. Clare Arts Office will enter into the negotiations around this Framework with the Arts Council.

<sup>11</sup> **Creative Ireland**, a cross-focused programme, based around the proposition that participation in cultural activity drives personal and collective creativity with significant implications for individual and societal wellbeing and achievement.

Figure 1



## LOCAL CONTEXT

### Position of Clare Arts Office

Clare Arts Office is a service of Clare County Council located within the Social Development Directorate of the Local Authority. The overarching vision for the Social Directorate (Culture, Arts, Sport and Recreation) is that: *Clare will be a regional/national centre of culture, sport, arts, heritage, business and built environment ensuring Clare is a preferred international destination for investment and innovation where the people and businesses of Clare are supported by the Council.*

This vision will be realized by:

*Deliver[ing] a sustainable, community-centred County, underpinned by a vibrant social housing sector through a high standard of built environment and comprehensive arts, sport and culturally advanced support programme which will be central to the future of social development advancement of County Clare.*

Within the Social Development Directorate Clare Arts Office is located within the Clare library service. The Arts Office forms part of the Cultural Team which is a mechanism for co-operative development of the cultural strand of the work of the Local Authority led by the Director of Service. The Cultural Team is led by the library service who in turn administers the **Creative Ireland Programme** in Clare County Council. The Creative Ireland Programme has led to the development of the **2017 Clare Culture and Creativity Plan**.

### Local Policies

In preparing this Arts Development Strategy 2019-2023, the Arts Office is informed by a range of Clare County Council plans and policies including the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023, the single most important policy document for the County representing an agreed economic, social, cultural and environmental blueprint for the future planning, growth and development of County Clare.

Changes introduced by the Local Government Reform Act 2014 recognise and strengthen the crucial role of local authorities in encouraging and promoting local economic and community development in response to local need. The County Clare Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021 aims to promote a more integrated and targeted approach to addressing the strategic social, community and economic issues facing the County in a way that meets the priority needs of the community. What constitutes the needs of the community is heavily influenced by the views sought from the communities themselves through the LECP process, but within the context of Government Policies and priorities.

Extensive external analysis, such as demographic information, has been captured in the Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 including the strong trends in urbanization in the county, leading to a sense of decline amongst rural communities. Clare also has a larger population of young people than national and regional averages.

All of these plans and policies have influenced the development of the arts in Clare and will continue to do so over the life time of this plan.

## Methodology

For us the process to develop a strategy was as important as the outcomes. It involved an extensive formal programme of consultation within Clare County Council, with our stakeholders, with artists and with the community. Our process involved a wide-ranging programme of consultation and discovery including in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, focus groups, public meetings, desk research and literature review. We also received submissions from members of the public and ran an online survey for artists.

Local and national policy documents were consulted which provided data on both the external and internal environment within which the arts service presently operates. The plan is guided by national guidelines and policies such as the Arts Council of Ireland's Making Great Art Work & National Guidelines on Public Art. The plan aligns itself to the core values of **Clare County Council's Corporate Plan (2016–2020), Clare County Council's Development Plan (2017–2023), the Local Economic and Community Plan (2016–2021) and 2017 Clare Culture and Creativity Plan.**

Many of the submissions reflected the values identified through the Creative Ireland Clare consultation process which began in March 2017 and recommenced again from December through January in 2018, including a public meeting in January 2018 which explored the Creative Ireland Vision 'That every person living in Ireland will have the opportunity to fully realise his or her creative potential' and the specific Creative Ireland vision for County Clare, to 'ensure the people of Clare discover and have access to cultural expression through creative activity'.

The outcomes of these consultations reflected the ongoing close engagement we have with our publics and the very honest dialogue and robust discussion which is an ongoing feature of Clare Arts Office.

In particular, Clare Arts Office recognises the need to develop further meaningful and deeper consultations and conversations in the particular areas of

- a) **Children and Young People**
- b) **Diversity**
- c) **Older People**



## CONSULTATIONS – WHAT YOU SAID ...

Our consultations demonstrated that people recognised and valued what we have achieved over the years but were very clear as to the level of demands from artists, individuals and communities.

The consultation process confirms that there is a vibrant active community of practicing artists, arts organisations, amateur and voluntary arts practitioners and groups of all ages, engaged in the practice and development of the arts across the county. Their dedication and commitment is acknowledged as central to the dynamic cultural environment enjoyed by Clare citizens and visitors to the county.

However, there are gaps in arts provision. Through the consultation process a range of shared development and investment needs emerged.

A core issue raised during the consultation process was a need for the development of new arts infrastructure, both hard (building based i.e. artists studios, creative community hubs and co-working spaces) and soft (platforms/networks/forums) to provide visible points of access to arts, and to help expand opportunities for creative engagement in, for example, youth arts, arts-in-education and arts-in-health initiatives. Artists expressed the need to access studio spaces that support individual artform practice, as well as co-working spaces to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and artistic innovation through links with other sectors. A geographic spread for such spaces also emerged, such as in the East Clare area and the Shannon area.

Other high priority issues to emerge focused on the need to consolidate and expand opportunities for participation in arts programmes, activities and events throughout the county.

A recurring issue was the large number of young arts graduates who leave the county following graduation due to a lack of opportunities at home. While this is a national issue, there is the need to create opportunities for young arts graduates, through local arts programmes, where they could be mentored by established artists/practitioners.

The role the arts can play in helping to tackle issues relating to economic development and social inclusion was felt by many to be greatly under-utilised and under-valued. The need to establish an infrastructure of partnerships, business supports and facilities to create the right conditions for development of the creative and cultural industries, in order to stimulate their potential for the local economy was highlighted by a number of contributors, as was the opportunity to think through new development models for artists and creative micro-businesses, in the craft, design and digital media fields – to support the development of cultural tourism product and programmes.

In particular, concerns were raised around resources, funding and accessibility from the perspective of the cultural sector, and awareness and information from the public perspective.

## Setting the Scene

In combining local and national policies, Clare Arts Office adopts the following approaches:

- + We understand that how we define, identify with, and participate in the arts varies from community to community and person to person.
- + It is the practitioners who work in the arts sector, both professional and volunteers, who provide the foundation for the arts to thrive in Clare. We recognise that people involved in the arts possess vital creative abilities and skills which should be supported and valued and that County Clare is home to many individuals and arts/cultural organisations who have achieved excellence and distinction on the national and international stage.
- + Clare County Council views the arts as a central strategy in its cultural, social and economic development. We are committed to supporting more connected and culturally engaged communities, enabling better access to cultural services, and supporting cultural enterprise and tourism. The arts provide diverse opportunities for individuals to develop into more literate, informed, articulate and confident citizens, which in turn support local economic initiatives and development, as well as individual wellbeing.
- + The arts have a vital intrinsic value and can provide great social, health and wellbeing, quality of life, environmental and economic benefit to individuals and communities. The arts are inextricably linked to creativity, which is increasingly prioritised in local and national strategies as a key catalyst for innovation, learning, entrepreneurship, business differentiation and overall economic prosperity.
- + There is a need to retain, develop and attract dedicated and talented individuals and to create environments where people working in the cultural sector are valued and have rewarding and sustainable careers.
- + The Arts Office will promote best practice management of the arts including increasing communications, marketing and information.
- + Clare enjoys large and engaged audiences in the arts. However, there is scope to increase participation in the arts and spread participation more equitably by targeting excluded groups.
- + Clare enjoys a greater percentage of young people than regional or national averages. Immersing people in culture from an early age fosters a deep appreciation and engagement in the arts and to this end we will look towards collaborative planning with children and supporting more targeted cultural initiatives for young people, so as to unlock their full creative potential.
- + Arts participation in rural areas is of particular concern, particularly in those areas that are suffering population decline.
- + We will endeavour to promote sustainability and environmentally friendly approaches through our policies, projects and programmes.

### Setting out our Stall - What Clare Arts Office Does?

Clare Arts Office serves a population of 118,627 (Census, 2016) spread over an area of 1,330 square miles (3,450 km<sup>2</sup>). The county has a strong trend towards urbanisation with almost 50% of the county's population residing in towns and villages.

The Arts Office has one full time staff member and a part time theatre attendant based in Cultúrlann Sweeney, Kilkee, Co. Clare. Ancillary support is provided by the Clare library service.

Clare Arts Office works to strengthen Clare's position as a centre of excellence for the arts and to ensure a successful and thriving arts environment. We work to maximise our potential with regional partners in the Mid West and at the same time we work to develop, co-ordinate, motivate, inspire and strengthen artistic activity throughout the county. We promote the arts as a worthwhile activity for all.

At the core of all of our work is the artist. We offer professional and practical development initiatives across all art forms, thus affording practitioners the time, space and skills to develop their practice. Examples include professional development initiatives with Visual Artists Ireland, creative opportunities with the Irish Traditional Music Archive, bursaries to the Tyrone Guthrie Centre and the Drama League of Ireland Summer School. We also offer financial support, work opportunities and peer networking.

We co-ordinate key cultural events such as Culture Night and Cruinniú na nÓg and manage community and educational activities, building audiences, increasing capacity and civic participation.

We collaborate and work in partnership with a number of local and national agencies in order to deliver our initiatives as we recognise this as key to maintaining and developing policy and programming e.g. Encountering the Arts in Ireland, VAI, Dept. of Education, Create, Theatre Forum, Youth Theatre Ireland, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, Clare Local Development Company, Galway 2020.





## What Informs how we work

### OUR VALUES

Clare Arts Office commits to being guided by the following principles and values for the duration of this plan:

#### Recognition

The arts have a valuable role to play in society, within diverse artistic practices and public engagements. The role of social and cultural traditions within the arts is actively encouraged and respected.

#### Collaboration:

We value collaboration as a force to lead, shape and determine projects with artists, partners and communities in Clare. We are committed to communicating and working in a spirit of partnership, mutual respect, openness and transparency with partners, stakeholders and our local arts sector and we recognise and respect the expertise and insight of the artistic community in the county.

#### Integrity

We commit to the highest standards of ethical behaviour, integrity and accountability. We commit to achieving high quality in our work, to engaging in continuous professional development and to working in a progressive, innovative and creative manner. We commit to equality of opportunity and respect the rights, dignity and diversity of all our stakeholders.

### OUR VISION

The vision of Clare Arts Office is that through the creativity inherent in County Clare, every person will fully realise their own creative potential and the value of the arts in society.

## OUR MISSION

Our mission, informed by the consultations surrounding this plan, is to enable the further development of the arts in Clare by focussing on the following strategic priorities:

### Providing Open and Accessible Opportunities for All

### Offering Strategic Supports to Artists

### Fostering continued appreciation and development of the arts

The Strategic Priorities have evolved by developing an understanding of the available external resources to the programme in Clare as well as the capacity of Clare County Council to deliver on the priorities outlined. These intentions will remain fluid throughout the lifetime of the strategy as new cultural and creative resources develop locally, nationally and internationally

Each strategic priority is underlined by a number of commitments and a number of specific actions. It is envisaged that more / refined actions will take place over the lifetime of this plan as we adapt to changing circumstances and avail of opportunities that may arise.

## Branch 1: Promoting Public Engagement with the arts through Open and Accessible Opportunities for All

It is Clare County Council's view that public access to and involvement in quality artistic activity is of paramount importance to arts development in the county. As noted in the Creative Ireland Clare strategy, inequality of access is acknowledged and the Arts Office will work to ensure communities of all types find opportunities to participate and access the arts. Participation by artists and creative practitioners in devising, developing and delivering access opportunities will be central to the development of projects and programmes and we will work to ensure access for all remains a consistent objective within all projects and programmes that will be developed.

We are specifically concerned with access for

- a) **diverse communities**
- b) **children and young people**
- c) **older people**

We commit to:

- + support artists, organisations and communities to make works of excellence through the development of programmes, in collaboration with highly skilled and experienced cultural practitioners and professionals that deepen and enrich experiences and encourage active participation.
- + strive to make Clare a county of excellence in terms of inclusivity and participation in the arts across all sectors of the community by developing forward-thinking, innovative, safe and inclusive services to improve equality of opportunity and to provide for connected and engaged individuals and sustainable communities.

- + provide easy access to high-quality, innovative, exciting, challenging and engaging programmes for existing and new communities and practitioners, ensuring that the arts are woven into the fabric of daily life.
- + communicate opportunities widely, openly and transparently and we will be clear and accountable in our decision making.
- + continue to embrace the arts as a valued element in strategies for cultural development and a central element in strategies for community development (inclusive of communities of interest) throughout the county.
- + acknowledge the unique creativity that we have in our communities and we will endeavour to strengthen our collective creative capacity as a whole for the benefit of all those in the county.
- + identify those who are not accessing and participating in culture, or are doing so at a low level, with the aim of addressing their needs and ensuring greater participation. We will prioritise working with disadvantaged and marginalised communities and we will actively encourage gender and diversity balances throughout our programmes.
- + develop digital resources so as to foster a dynamic approach to the changing landscape of arts creation, participation and access and manipulate digital platforms for cultural access and experiences
- + continue to explore and develop opportunities to leverage and cross promote cultural programmes in the county and activate the cultural community, stakeholders and local communities to provide diverse opportunities for engagement.

Programme Area	Partners	Funders	Duration	Sector / Area	Plans
<b>Clare Youth Theatre</b> – an annual theatre programme for teenagers that seeks to give young people experience in all aspects of theatre from acting, to producing, directing, technical experience etc. CYT is led by the members and responds to their interests and issues affecting them through theatre and drama.	Supported by the Arts Council of Ireland and affiliated to Youth Theatre Ireland	Funded by the Arts Council of Ireland	2019 - 2024	Community – Youth Ennis	Continue and expand Clare Youth Theatre to at least two other locations over the duration of this plan.
<b>Cruinniú na nÓg:</b> An annual national event in June, run by Creative Ireland, aimed at children, young people and families which provides free opportunities for young people to participate in, and to enjoy culture and creativity county wide.	An initiative of Creative Ireland and led by Clare County Council Library Service	Funded in Clare through Creative Ireland	2019 - 2022 <b>Continue for the duration of Creative Ireland</b>	Community – Young People <b>Countywide</b>	Build Cruinniú to expand to East Clare and the Shannon region.
<b>Artist in Schools Scheme (Primary)</b> – An annual scheme run by the Arts Office in which primary schools can avail of an arts day or a longer term project with an artists (across all art forms). <b>Artist in Schools Scheme (Secondary)</b> – A pilot scheme run by the Arts Office in which secondary schools can propose an arts activity to compliment / develop arts participation in the school community.	These schemes compliment the Arts Council's Creative Associates Scheme and the Creative Engagement Scheme run by the Dept. of Education. They are underpinned by the Artist-Teacher Training course run annually in the Clare Education Centre by the Dept. of Education	Supported in Clare by the Arts Council of Ireland	2019 - 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Community – Young People <b>Countywide</b>	Develop strategic initiatives within the programme to compliment opportunities available for schools through other funding streams.
<b>Creative Youth Partnerships</b> A pilot scheme by Creative Ireland to encourage greater opportunities for young people to engage in the arts	To be run by Limerick & Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) with support from Clare and Limerick Arts Offices	Funded through Creative Ireland	2019 -	<b>Countywide</b>	
<b>Music Generation</b> A national initiative aimed at providing opportunities for young people, who may not otherwise have the opportunity, to participate in music classes and activities.	Run by LCETB with support from Clare Arts Offices	Funded through Dept. of Education and Clare County Council	2019 – 2024	<b>Countywide</b>	It is proposed to continue supporting this initiative to increase participation by young people in music activities.

Programme Area	Partners	Funders	Duration	Sector / Area	Plans
<b>Cultural Companions</b> – a creative project to reduce rural isolation. This initiative provides a connection point for older people interested in attending cultural activities to meet like-minded people in their area, providing companionship and developing audiences for the arts.	An initiative of Age and Opportunity and led by Clare County Council's Age Friendly Office	Funded in Clare through Creative Ireland	2019 – 2022 <b>Continue</b>	Community – Older Age <b>Countywide</b>	Encourage arts organisations to establish their own similar audience development programmes.
<b>Arts in Health Programme</b> Clare Arts Office's Arts in Health programme is made up of the following programmes:  <b>A Time to Seek</b> – Artists Residence in St. Joseph's Hospital, Ennis. This long term residency, with artist Eleanor Feely, is aimed at providing creative opportunities and experiences for hospital residents. The residency creates events inside and outside of the hospital environment working in tandem with community groups such as Clare Youth Theatre and venues such as glór.  <b>Raheen Day Care Centre</b> – an annual participatory arts programme led by artist Nicola Henley aimed at providing opportunities to the day care centre attendees to participate in various artform workshops, most notably in the visual arts.	Managed by the Arts Office  Supported by the Arts Office and Friends of Raheen Hospital	Funded by the HSE Mid West  Funded by the Arts Office and Friends of Raheen Hospital	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Community – Older Age <b>Ennis</b>  Community – Older Age <b>East Clare</b>	Further develop the intergenerational and outreach aspects of the programme.  Establish multi-annual funding for the programme to assist with continuity and delivery.
<b>Bealtaine</b> – an annual festival each May celebrating Creativity in Older Age. Events and workshops take place countywide.	An initiative of Age and Opportunity programmed primarily in Clare by Clare Arts Office, Clare Library Service and glór	Funded by Clare County Council	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Community – Older Age <b>Countywide</b>	Work on key national projects with Age and Opportunity and other partners showcasing older artists through the Bealtaine Festival.
<b>Diversity Actions</b> Clare Arts Office currently works with a number of marginalised and diverse communities in Clare and has an inclusive policy when programming events such as Culture Night etc.	Led by Clare Arts Office	Funding to be sought	2020 – 2024 <b>New Initiative</b>	Diverse Communities	Develop targeted and specific actions to increase participation in the arts by diverse communities, promote cultural diversity through the arts and offer diverse artists increased opportunities to share their talents in the county.

Programme Area	Partners	Funders	Duration	Sector / Area	Plans
<p><b>Creative Placemaking</b> Working with interested parties we will identify locations in Clare for a Creative Placemaking initiative, working with local communities to promote creativity and creative approaches to community development.</p>	Led by Clare Arts Office	Funding to be sought	2020 – 2024 <b>New Initiative</b>	Community – Artists <b>Countywide</b>	Working with interested parties we will identify locations in Clare for a Creative Placemaking initiative, working with local communities to promote creativity and creative approaches to community development.
<p><b>Public Art Programme</b> Gaining Ground concludes in 2019.</p>	Commissioned by Clare Arts Office	Funded through Clare County Council's Per Cent for Art Programme	2020 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Community – general <b>Countywide</b>	A new programme of artists commissions will be devised through the pooling of Per Cent for Art funding.
<p><b>Folk Radio</b> <i>Folk Radio</i> is a concept for a new artists-led, on-line radio station and digital sound archive, based at X-PO in Kilnaboy. Led by artist Tom Flanagan this community-based project is engaging the wider and existing communities active in and around X-PO, a former post office. <i>Folk Radio</i> is making a series of radio programmes, exploring the meaning of 'the rural', in the context of a community that is made up of both local and newcomers to the area. Folk Radio relates to a long tradition of radio in empowering local communities with the tools to interrogate cultures and opinions of people and their traditions.</p>	Commissioned by Clare Arts Office through the Gaining Ground Public Art Programme	Funded through Clare County Council's Per Cent for Art Programme	2019 <b>Conclude</b>	Community – general <b>North Clare</b>	

Programme Area	Partners	Funders	Duration	Sector / Area	Plans
<p><b>Gangani Residency</b> The 'Gangani Legacy' is a sound and music research project based in West Clare led by composer Ian Wilson. It aims to explore the complex legacy of immigration and assimilation and their influences on people living in Clare, both from an indigenous and outsider perspective; and how these might be found in certain place names, aspects of language or dialect, customs and idioms, heritage and culture, employment, sport and local attitudes. The resulting piece will include the creation of 40-minute sound work that will include contributions (spoken and musical) from people of all backgrounds and walks of life from West Clare. The outcome of the project will be two performances in West Clare and the availability of a high quality CD recording of the work.</p>	Commissioned by Clare Arts Office through the Gaining Ground Public Art Programme	Funded through Clare County Council's Per Cent for Art Programme.	2019 <b>Conclude</b>	Community – general <b>South West Clare</b>	
<p><b>Men who Eat Ringforts</b> Sean Lynch will work collaboratively with environmentalist Sinead Mercier, curator and editor Michele Horrigan and folklorist Eddie Lenihan to complete fieldwork about, produce a publication on and develop a wider public understanding of fairyforts in County Clare. This collaboration will involve production of aerial and ground photography alongside Landsat imagery of a broad selection of sites in North and West Clare. Visits to each location will involve dialogue with local landowners, individuals involved in local history and more incidental encounters with the general public.</p>	Commissioned by Clare Arts Office through the Gaining Ground Public Art Programme	Funded through Clare County Council's Per Cent for Art Programme	2019 <b>Conclude</b>	Community – general <b>West Clare</b>	
<p><b>Some Destroyed Sites:</b> A public art commission in Shannon through the medium of contemporary dance, creating an inter-generational project culminating in a video installation in the town.</p>	Commissioned by Clare Arts Office through the Gaining Ground Public Art Programme and supported by the Creative Ireland programme	Funded through Clare County Council's Per Cent for Art Programme	2019 <b>Conclude</b>	Community – general <b>Shannon</b>	

## Branch 2: Offer Strategic Supports to Artists

Central to all projects and programmes laid out in the Arts Plan is the provision of supports, guidance, space and opportunities to artists to create, take risks, succeed (or not) and learn from their efforts.

### We commit to:

supporting artists to develop competence and confidence, across all levels, in their abilities to create works of excellence and enhance their own creativity, to promoting the arts and artists of Clare locally, nationally and internationally so as to further build on the cultural reputation of the county and most importantly to assist professional artists to operate at a viable standard of living.

### Underlying this:

We will support artists to make / produce / perform works of excellence.

We will communicate opportunities widely, openly and transparently and we will be clear and accountable in our decision making.

We acknowledge the unique creativity of our artists and we will endeavour to strengthen our collective creative capacity as a whole for the benefit of all artists in the county.

We will encourage innovative projects and ideas by artists, organisations and communities and support their implementation and work collaboratively with artists to develop them.

We will specifically nurture, encourage and create opportunities for young artists to develop their creative capacity, participate in ongoing schemes and create artwork.

Programme Area	Partners	Funders	Duration	Sector / Area	Plans
<p><b>artform development – schemes / Projects / programmes</b></p> <p>Creating Space – an annual scheme that offers visual artists / film makers the opportunities to develop / create new work.</p>	Artists	Supported by the Arts Council of Ireland	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue following a review</b>	Visual artists & film makers <b>Countywide</b>	Review this scheme in 2019 with a view to assessing its impact on artists and the communities they work with.
<p><b>Artist Residencies in Cultúrlann Sweeney, Kilkee</b></p> <p>Initiated in 2018, this scheme invites Clare artists into the theatre for a six month period to devise / develop new work in tandem with the West Clare community. Zara Starr and the Unlimited Dream Theatre Company were the inaugural recipients.</p>	An initiative of Clare Arts Office	Funded by Clare County Council	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Community and artists <b>West Clare</b>	Continue these residencies across artforms.
<p><b>Response to artists</b></p> <p>The Response Scheme was an open fund which the Arts Office used to react / respond to initiatives from artists / arts organisations looking to work in County Clare.</p>	Managed by Clare Arts Office	Funding stream(s) to be sourced	2020 – 2024 <b>New initiative</b>	Community and Artists <b>Countywide</b>	Re-establish this fund as a strategic initiative to match /co-fund projects (local, national and international) already in receipt of funding to enable them to take place in Clare.
<p><b>Professional development / Mentoring</b></p> <p>Clare Arts Office works with a variety of partners at local and national level to develop / run professional development courses for artists. Current plans include Child Protection Training for Artists and the development of a regional Visual Artists Ireland clinic in Limerick for artists in the mid west. Specialist mentoring of artists participating in the Embrace, Arts &amp; Disability programme is also underway. Artist focussed events such as the First Friday talks take place in glór in association with The Artist Resource Room.</p>	Partner organisations to date include Visual Artists Ireland, Create, Theatre Forum, the Western Development Commission as well as the Local Enterprise Office and Clare Local Development Company	Funded by Clare County Council and partner organisations	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Artists <b>Countywide</b>	Develop targeted initiatives to assist artists in response to suggestions made through the consultation process of this arts plan.

Programme Area	Partners	Funders	Duration	Sector / Area	Plans
<b>Visual Arts – Exhibitions</b> Over 30 exhibitions annually are held in the Gallery at Scariff Library, the Foyer of the County Museum and Cultúrlann Sweeney, Kilkee.	Managed by Clare Arts Office	Funded by Clare County Council	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Community Groups / Artists <b>Countywide</b>	Over the duration of this plan it is envisaged that a new gallery will open in Ennis as part of the Clare Cultural Centre Development encompassing glór and a new library.
<b>Burren College of Art</b> Clare Arts Office supports the Burren Annual exhibition.	Coordinated / curated by the Burren College of Art	Funded by Clare County Council	2019 – 2024	Artists / General public <b>Ballyvaughan</b>	We plan to further develop this initiative to provide greater access to Clare artists to this exhibition over the course of this arts plan.
<b>Courthouse</b> Clare Arts Office supports the employment of a part time curator and the main exhibition programme of the Courthouse Gallery and Studios in Ennistymon.	Managed by the Old Ennistymon Heritage Society	Funded by the Arts Council of Ireland	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Community & Artists <b>North Clare</b>	We aim to continue working with the Courthouse to develop their artistic programme and improve remuneration for artists / arts workers.
<b>Artist Studios</b> 16 studios are available to artists in Tulla and Ennis (EASI studios).	Managed by the Arts Office	Funded by Clare County Council	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Artists <b>Countywide</b>	We will work to maximise occupancy and activity at the artists' spaces.
<b>Riches of Clare Concerts</b> An annual series of free summer lunchtime traditional music concerts featuring on average over 60 Clare musicians annually.	Co-ordinated by Clare Arts Office	Supported by the Arts Council of Ireland	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Musicians <b>Countywide</b>	We aim to continue the concert series, and funding dependent, to broaden our reach county wide with visits to summer festivals. We also plan to produce another of the popular Riches of Clare CDs.
<b>Duala – Creator in Residence Scheme.</b> An open call initiative to artists to respond to Clare items in the national archive in a unique format.	Partnership project with the Irish Traditional Music Archive	Supported by the Arts Council of Ireland	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Artists <b>Countywide</b>	We will evaluate the first residency by Jack Talty and Maurice Gunning with a view to continuing this partnership with ITMA.
<b>Artworks Collection</b> Clare County Council has a significant collection of public artworks county wide and a smaller collection of artworks in Council buildings and venues.	Managed and maintained by the Arts Office	Funded by Clare County Council, the Per Cent for Art Programme, voluntary contributions	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Community – Artists <b>Countywide</b>	It is our intention to commission an artwork for the ClareAbbey roundabout during this plan. We will aim to develop a donations / purchasing policy for artworks and maximise public exposure to the County Art Collection through exhibitions and education programmes, subject to the necessary resources being available.

Programme Area	Partners	Funders	Duration	Sector / Area	Plans
<b>Vision Symphony</b> One of five national projects funded by the Arts Council's Invitation to Collaborate Scheme, this major musical composition by Dave Flynn will be performed by the Irish Memory Orchestra, accompanied by visually impaired musicians, in glór in October 2019.	Managed by Clare Arts Office in conjunction with the Irish Memory Orchestra and 3L.	Funded by Clare County Council and the Arts Council	2019 <b>Complete</b>	Musicians <b>Ennis</b>	
<b>Cultúrlann Sweeney</b> Primarily programmed over the summer months, Cultúrlann Sweeney in Kilkee offers a year round film club, music and theatre events as well as lectures and talks to the community in West Clare.	Managed by Clare Arts Office	Funded by Clare County Council	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Engaging performing and visual artists and providing events for local audiences <b>West Clare</b>	We aim to continue programming the venue over the summer months, provide residency opportunities to artists in the shoulder season and offer specific events in the shoulder season to targeted audiences.
<b>Culture Night</b> A national initiative each September which normally sees approx. 50 cultural events take place in over 15 locations countywide.	Managed by Clare Arts Office	Funded by the Department of Culture and Clare County Council.	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Community – Artists <b>Countywide</b>	We aim to increase event numbers and participants over the term of this plan particularly in the South East Clare / Shannon region.
<b>WRAP Fund</b> The Western Regional Audio Visual Producers Fund is based in Galway, and offers creatives working in the film and audio visual sector in the West of Ireland opportunities for funding and professional development.	Managed by Clare Arts Office	Funded by the Western Development Commission, and local authorities in the West of Ireland	2019 – 2021 <b>Continue</b>	Artists <b>Countywide</b>	We will evaluate the impact of the WRAP fund in County Clare with a view to offering increased continued targeted supports to the audio visual sector in the county and to attract national and international filming to Clare. The promotion of indigenous film making in the county is a key priority.
<b>Galway 2020 – European City of Culture</b> A major European cultural initiative in the West of Ireland in 2020.	Supported by Clare Arts Office	Funded by EU, Government Departments, Local Authorities Commercial Sponsorship	2019 – 2021 <b>Continue</b>	Community – Artists <b>Countywide</b>	We will support Galway 2020 in their endeavours and seek to maximise opportunities for Clare artists and communities to participate in, benefit from increased cultural activity and tourism in the West of Ireland and from any legacies that may derive from there.

### Branch 3:

#### Foster continued development of the arts and artists

Clare Arts Office is committed to ensuring that the intrinsic, social, educational and economic value of arts is communicated, well understood and appreciated by existing and potential stakeholders and communities. We recognise that the arts are key players in these areas in ways that are often unseen or intangible. We also note strategic opportunities in supporting and investing in emerging or established cultural / creative hubs to create centres of excellence that can perform at a national and international level.

##### We commit to:

- + Work to develop appropriate physical spaces for the arts to include studio space, performing spaces, exhibition spaces, recording spaces and creative hubs countywide to meet the needs of artists and communities.
- + support the implementation of key national and local legislation, policies, programmes and plans which promote high quality and excellence in the delivery of all of our programmes and opportunities for all.
- + create and sustain relationships, strengthen existing partnerships and develop new initiatives to maximise opportunities for the arts.
- + continue to promote Clare as a County of Culture through all appropriate channels so as to communicate and raise awareness of the wealth of creativity and artistic endeavour in the County.
- + forge alliances and build strategic partnerships at local, regional, national and international level to develop advocates for culture in the county.
- + continue to mainstream the arts within the Local Authority and aim to ensure appropriate funding and capacity to allow for the delivery of sustainable services and programmes, as well as availing of opportunities to access alternative funding mechanisms and staff resources.
- + remunerating artists fairly for their work, both preparatory work and work in production, as endorsed by the Social Development Strategic Policy Committee in April 2019.
- + improve and strengthen linkages between the Arts Office and other sections of Clare County Council.

##### Underlying this we will:

- we will deliver high-quality experiences across all of our programmes by working with highly skilled and appropriately experienced cultural practitioners and professionals.
- make a commitment to increase investment in documenting, monitoring and evaluating our projects and programmes so as to enable the delivery of evidence-based programmes focusing on real needs and requirements of our communities and practitioners.
- aim to provide excellent service with a well-resourced, well-trained adequate staffing complement. We will enhance and invest in the professional skills of staff in the Arts Office so as to meet the changing needs of artists and communities.
- actively participate in nationally co-ordinated projects, opportunities and research and development initiatives.
- continue to provide advice and information on legislation, programmes, policies, plans and funding opportunities so as to promote high quality and excellence in the delivery of all of our programmes and opportunities for all.
- maximise opportunities for continued professional development, training and skills for cultural practitioners, professionals and communities including working with educational partners to develop high-quality, appropriate programmes in further education in the arts.
- research new ways to measure outcomes and impacts, which focus on people and quality of life, to better demonstrate the value of the arts to communities. Work with key partners to promote and measure the output, impact and value (intrinsic, social, economic, environmental, health and wellbeing) of Clare's culture. Develop appropriate methodologies where required.

Programme Area	Partners	Funders	Duration	Sector / Area	Plans
<p><b>Connection Points</b> The Arts Office regularly organises opportunities for artists to gather and network e.g. First Friday talks, training sessions, information clinics, focus groups etc.</p>	Clare Arts Office regularly works with local organisations such as glór, the Courthouse Gallery and Studios etc. as well as national organisations to provide opportunities for artists to gather and network both in Clare and nationally.	Clare County Council and partner organisations	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Artists <b>Countywide</b>	We plan to continue these opportunities. We will also prioritise support to local networks, groups of artists who have gathered together as collectives to develop themselves professional / address artform specific issues.
<p><b>Arts Grants</b> Clare Arts Office manages two specific grant schemes under the 2003 Arts Act – Arts Act Grants and Arts Festivals Grants</p>	Managed by Clare Arts Office	Funded by Clare County Council	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Artists & Communities & Festivals <b>Countywide</b>	We will review the operation of our grants scheme through the 2019 Community Supports Scheme in late 2019.
<p><b>Arts Awards</b></p>	Clare Arts Office currently awards grants and bursaries to over 100 individuals, organisations, festivals and communities	Funded by Clare County Council	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Artists & Communities & Festivals <b>Countywide</b>	Funding dependent, we will organise an Arts Awards night in glór annually to celebrate our support of local artists, festivals and events.
<p><b>Professional Opportunities for artists</b></p>	Clare Arts Office currently awards grants, bursaries, commissions and opportunities to artists.	Funded by Clare County Council and partner organisations	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Artists <b>Countywide</b>	All schemes will be reviewed over the lifetime of the plan in conjunction with artists. Any new schemes will be developed in conjunction with artists. Specific attention will be given to the development / use of creative technologies.
<p><b>Arts Office Communications</b> Clare Arts Office currently has a web presence on the website of Clare County Council and Clare County Library. It has its own social media accounts and runs the social media accounts for a variety of its programmes and projects.</p>	Managed by Clare Arts Office	Funded by Clare County Council	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Artists & Communities & Festivals <b>Countywide</b> <b>Nationally</b> <b>Internationally</b>	Funding dependent an independent website will be established by the Arts Office to promote programmes and projects underway and to raise the profile of artists working with us. We will endeavour to use creative technologies as far as is practicable to increase our offer / promotion and to reach new artists / audiences.
<p><b>Arts Office Promotion</b> Clare Arts Office enjoys a positive relationship with local media.</p>	Managed by Clare Arts Office / Clare County Council's communication section	Funded by Clare County Council	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Artists & Communities & Festivals <b>Countywide</b>	The Arts Office will aim to secure increased national and international coverage for the events and programmes it engages in.

Programme Area	Partners	Funders	Duration	Sector / Area	Plans
<p><b>Audience Development</b> Clare Arts Office works with festivals and venues throughout the county eg. glór, Cultúrlann Sweeney etc. to bring the best of local, national and international talent to the area.</p>	Managed by Clare Arts Office	Funded by Clare County Council	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Artists & Communities & Festivals <b>Countywide</b>	The Arts Office will continue to promote audience development and greater access to the arts, particularly by marginalised communities.
<p><b>Venue Development</b> Clare Arts Office recognises the need for the upkeep and timely maintenance of venues in the county and the need for advancing IT and technical equipment. Sustainability is a key issue.</p>	Supported by Clare Arts Office	Funded by Government Departments	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Venues <b>Countywide</b>	The Arts Office will support initiatives to upgrade existing venues and to provide new facilities, as appropriate and within the resources available to it.
<p><b>Local Authority Support</b> Clare Arts Office works within the local authority structure of Clare County Council. It acts as a conduit for individuals, the creative sector and professional organisations to access necessary supports and points of connection within the local authority.</p>	Managed by Clare Arts Office	Funded by Clare County Council	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Artists, Producers, Communities & Festivals <b>Countywide</b> <b>Nationally</b> <b>Internationally</b>	<p>The Arts Office will continue to act as a connection point for creative citizens. We will endeavour to respond in a timely fashion to requests for assistance and advice, subject to the resources available.</p> <p>The Arts Office will seek to establish a cross directorate internal working group to assist with issues pertaining to commissioning, granting of permits etc.</p>
<p><b>National Supports – Arts Council</b> The Arts Council of Ireland supports Clare County Council through the Framework for Collaboration: A Memorandum of Understanding between the Arts Council and Local Authorities.  The Arts Officer will sit on the national Working Group of the Framework for Collaboration.</p>	Arts Council supported projects are managed by the Arts Office	Funded by the Arts Council and Clare County Council	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	Artists & Communities & Festivals <b>Countywide</b>	Clare Arts Office will enter into a framework agreement with the Arts Council in 2019.
<p><b>National Supports – Association of Local Authority Arts Officers (ALAAO)</b> The Association of Local Authority Arts Officers promotes and highlights the work being carried out by local authorities at local level in the arts and the supports offered by local authorities.</p>	Clare Arts Office is a member of the ALAAO	Supported by the Arts Council and the City and County Managers Association CCMA	2019 – 2024 <b>Continue</b>	<b>Nationwide and internationally</b>	Clare Arts Office will continue to work with colleagues in the local authority sector to promote the work of local authorities and to advocate for policy and programme reforms / supports for the benefit of artists and communities.

# flourish

## Implementation Approach

This arts strategy takes an overarching view of County Clare's arts landscape, emphasising that support for the primary role of the artist and engaging citizens with the artistic life of the county are core priorities. The Arts Office will lead the implementation of this strategy, working with a variety of partners and agencies.

Clare County Council is committed, in partnership with others, to the delivery of the actions of the plan over the period 2019–2023. The core funding to cover the actions detailed in this strategy is enabled through an annual budget allocation jointly provided by Clare County Council and the Arts Council towards the implementation of the County Arts Programme. In addition, further allocations may arise through the Per Cent for Art Programme, Creative Ireland, Dept. of Culture and the HSE. New funding sources will be identified as appropriate to the projects / programmes undertaken.

Progress in the delivering of this strategy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis through the Council's review management process and annual returns to the Arts Council of Ireland. The Local Authority's Annual Report will include an account of the achievements and progress in the delivery of this Arts Strategy.

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# Appendix 1

## Consultations

Large number of respondents submitted observations / responses during consultations on the Arts Plan. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude. Thanks to all who took the time and effort to respond and to contribute. It is very much appreciated.

The consultations for this Arts Plan comprised of

- a) feedback from the public meetings for the Creative Clare strategy
- b) focus groups relating to Arts in Education and Arts & Disability
- c) surveys were submitted by (as described by the respondents) recent graduates / multi-media specialists / art educators/artists/ documentary makers /creative writers / community workers/ poets /non-professional musician / musicians / art lovers / promoters / arts and disability activists / homemakers /creative facilitators / curators
- d) submissions were received from artists, musicians, community groups, community workers, arts and disability activists, curators, arts organisations
- e) meetings and focus groups with internal staff in Clare County Council
- d) ongoing and emerging discussions with artists and arts organisations

General perceptions, needs and suggestions have emerged from the consultations which Clare Arts Office will endeavour to meet. Certain specific suggestions submitted will be evaluated in greater depth as to their potential for development.

Just some of the ideas which emerged included:





this  
must be  
the place