



Clár Éire Ildánach  
Creative Ireland  
Programme



Rialtas Áitiúil Éireann  
Local Government Ireland



# Culture & Creativity Strategy

**2023–2027**



**Galway County**

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# Forewords

## Foreword by An Cathaoirleach

I sincerely welcome the publication of Galway County Council’s Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027 which builds on the major commitment of our Culture and Creativity Team to support creativity in our county.

Over the past five years we have embraced the Creative Ireland Programme and have been inspired by the response and engagement we have been met by, in our communities and by artists and creatives in towns and villages across the county. Our strategic priorities for the past five years have served as a prevailing guide to support our values of collaboration, participation, inclusivity and empowerment to realise a vision that every person in our county will have the opportunity to realise their creative potential.

Under the Galway County Creative Ireland Strategic Plan 2018-2022, the Galway County Council Arts Office, Archives, Architecture Conservation, Community, Heritage, Public Libraries and Tourism departments have collaborated with each other and with local communities throughout Galway County to bring to life projects which were funded and supported through Creative Ireland.

These diverse and unique projects encouraged creatives and communities across our county to use the platform of Creative Ireland for creative inspiration. The programme has been a beacon of positivity, participation and has embraced culture and creativity in so many forms. We have truly seen the power of culture and creativity in achieving community wellbeing and social cohesion particularly in our more recent challenging times.

Galway County at its heart is steeped in Culture, Creativity and Language and we have a long history in investing in culture. We recognise that a vibrant cultural sector also plays a very important role in improving amenities and the attractiveness and liveability of all our towns and rural areas. The Creative Ireland Programme supports our commitment to our investment in our cultural heritage which underpins social cohesion and supports strong, sustainable economic growth in Galway County.

## Cllr Michael Maher

Cathaoirleach, Galway County Council.

## Foreword by Chief Executive

As Chief Executive, I am delighted to welcome Galway County Council’s Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023 – 2027; our second five-year strategic plan for the development of our Creative Ireland Programme in County Galway.

Our first five-year strategy was created to bring coherence to our individual culture-based strategies (Heritage, Libraries, Arts and Galway County Local Economic and Community Development Plan) and to align the work of the Culture and Creativity Team to enhance the life of our communities.

Through the work of our Culture and Creativity Team and Creative Ireland Co-ordinator we have received a total investment of €761,406 during the 2018-2022 period. This directly supported 85 key projects under the Creative Communities Strand and 81 Oruinniú na nÓg projects over the lifetime of this strategy. Over the past three years we have faced many extraordinary challenges and our immediate focus was to put in place a community response to COVID-19 which focused on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of people living in Galway at a time of extreme uncertainty.

The COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted the importance of community-based initiatives centred around culture and creativity in combatting the negative effects of COVID-19 and this was borne out by partnerships between Healthy Ireland and Creative Ireland both nationally and locally. Our Creative Ireland Programme truly highlighted the importance of creativity at times of crisis, and we welcomed additional Covid Care funding received to support those most vulnerable in our society.

Our 2023 -2027 Culture and Creativity Strategy is an opportunity to align with the work and ambition across the local authority. It will support the delivery of our regional and local authority policies, plans and priorities to include Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP), Regional Enterprise Plans,

Corporate Plan and County Development Plan and will serve to embed culture and creativity within the development of new regional and local plans and strategies including the draft Galway County Tourism Strategy.

Our Galway County Corporate Plan 2020-2024 states one of its six Strategic Goals “to improve, protect and promote our environment, culture, heritage and language in the interests of present and future generations”. Elsewhere the role of culture and creativity is highlighted ‘to ensure that the arts contribute to the enrichment of people’s lives...’. By focusing on creative place-making as a priority in our new Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027, we will support our towns and villages to bring creativity to the heart of their community.

Finally the key to the successful delivery of this strategy is the strength of our internal collaborations and our community partnerships. We are committed to delivering a dynamic, ambitious and inclusive programme, supported by our strategic priorities over the coming five years. Our approach has always been one of collaboration and inclusivity and we will continue to respond to the many opportunities offered to us by the Creative Ireland Programme.

I wish to commend the continued commitment of our Culture and Creativity Team to the Creative Ireland Programme and look forward to the continued collaboration with our local communities in creating a vibrant creative society for us all.

## Mr Jim Cullen

Chief Executive



# 1 Creative Ireland 2023–2027

The Creative Ireland Programme is an all-of-government initiative committed to enhancing access to, engagement with, and enjoyment of Ireland’s culture and creativity. Within the broad range of available definitions, creativity is considered as a set of innate abilities and learned skills; the capacity of individuals and organisations to transcend accepted ideas and norms and by drawing on imagination to create new ideas that bring additional value to human activity.

The vision of the Creative Ireland Programme 2023–2027 is to mainstream creativity in the life of the nation so that individually and collectively, in our personal lives and in our institutions, we can realise our full creative potential thereby promoting individual, community and national wellbeing.

The Creative Ireland Programme will deliver through collaboration and partnership, promoting understanding, and appreciation of the value of creativity in all its forms — whether through the arts, culture, heritage, or technology.

The Creative Ireland Programme will prioritise its work around five aspects for the period 2023–2027:

- Creative Youth
- Creative Communities
- Creative Industries
- Creative Health and Wellbeing
- Creative Climate Action and Sustainability

Through the Creative Ireland Programme, *Creative Communities* supports the partnership between the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and Ireland’s local authorities. This partnership enables citizens and communities to explore their culture and creativity at local level and, where appropriate, leverage that creativity to strengthen wellbeing, advance social cohesion and support economic development.

*Creative Communities* is also innovative in deploying creativity to achieve greater integration across targeted policy priorities. This has delivered new creative engagement initiatives in relation to for example children and young people, older persons, climate action, and local economies. Individuals’ and communities’ perceptions about the role and value of culture and creativity as central to our wellbeing in its broadest sense is being enhanced.

The opportunity embraced within the Galway County Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023–2027 is to support people’s participation, inclusion and expression within communities, and further strengthen local creative economies.



Bouncing Off the Walls.  
**Photograph:** Aengus McMahon

## 2 Culture and Creativity in Galway County

County Galway is the second largest county in Ireland and has the largest Gaeltacht population in Ireland representing 49.7% of the national Gaeltacht population. The county borders five other counties and has a rich and diverse built, natural and cultural heritage. It also has four main inhabited islands, Inis Móir, Inis Óirr, Inis Meáin and Inisbofin. Galway County Council serves a population of 192,995 (based on Census 2022, an increase of 1.2% since 2016).

From its inception the Creative Ireland Programme has greatly enhanced the work of all the Culture and Creativity Team to build on the cultural advancement of our county. It has facilitated an enhanced level of coordination, focus and leadership for cultural services within the local authority. This unique programme has presented considerable opportunities to collaborate on diverse creative projects with other members of the Culture and Creativity Team, with common themes of working with young people, communities, older years and supporting artists and creatives across the county. It has also supported and enhanced the wide range of cultural programmes already in place through our Arts Office, libraries, conservation, heritage and community development provisions in the county and the co-ordination of the programme sits with the Arts Office.

The Galway County Creative Ireland Bursaries have been one of the most impactful and successful parts of our programme. The Bursary is open to community groups, organisations, venues, artists, performers and those involved in the culture and creative sectors. These bursaries enabled groups and individuals to develop high quality projects/programmes. It also supported and encouraged greater access, knowledge and appreciation of the arts, creative industries, heritage and the Irish language and reflected one or more of the strategic objectives identified in the

*Galway County Creative Ireland Strategic Plan 2018-2022.*

Since 2018, we have supported 52 bursary projects to the value of €115,000. The extraordinary responses from all areas of the community reflects a wide range of genres and creative interests. The broad nature of our strategic priorities has allowed us to support ambitious and curious projects to include Lace Notes by Headford Lace Project (Music and Lace), Carrying the Stones – Interface Inagh (International story and visual arts project), Salt by Vanessa Earls (Community/photographic project), Frank the Man with the Camera (Heritage & Film project), If Walls Could Talk by Nova Productions (Folklore & Film Production) and Bouncing off the Walls, Athenry Handball Alley (Multidisciplinary project).

The Creative Ireland Programme has greatly enhanced the work of the *Arts Office* in delivering on its vision to develop a county that is a beacon for arts and culture: locally focused, nationally engaged and globally ambitious. The *Arts Office* has taken the lead in developing and growing the *Cruinniú na nÓg* Programme and audience. Since 2018, we have curated over 97 events/workshops on craft, music, dance, circus, theatre, coding, graphic novels, and visual arts for children aged 2-22, and it has grown year on year.

Key Arts Programmes supported by Creative Ireland included:

- Branar's Pop up 'Lil Peeps Animation and Stories were commissioned through the Creative Ireland Programme in collaboration with Galway County, City and Roscommon Creative Ireland Programmes. This unique work for young audiences featured on RTE over the Cruinniú weekend with new stories and animations for a younger audience.

- Commission of a new album Caoin by County Galway based renowned vocalist, performer and visual artist Ceara Conway with Ireland's most exciting contemporary traditional Irish musicians was a very inspirational addition to our programme. This album has been nominated for an Irish Folk Award in 2022.
- In collaboration with Ballinasloe Libraries, the Arts Office supported the Ballinasloe Strings Festival (2018) and Ballinasloe ComicCon (2019-2021), a unique range of festivals in The Gallery at Ballinasloe Library. ComicCon was an exciting programme of graphic art workshops, tutorials, gaming, interviews, musicians, cosplay celebrating Creativity, Science and Music open to all ages and interests.
- The Imagination Playground Tour with Bricí Spraoi offered children in county schools the opportunity to explore this breakthrough play space with large blue blocks of all shapes, designed to encourage child-directed free play.

**Galway Public Libraries** are dynamic, civil and cultural spaces with an ethos to nurture creativity and literary appreciation in the communities that they serve. The Creative Ireland Programme has also enabled the library service to engage, to nurture, to expand and to enrich the creativity and the imagination of the Galway County communities young and old.

Key library Programmes supported by Creative Ireland included:

- *Galway's Great Read*, an annual programme of events promoting their literary heritage, our history and unique culture.
- *Look Beyond Our World: Read My World*, a project involving authors and young people in the interpretation of diverse stories exploring topics of inclusion, equality, appreciation of difference, and understanding of other people's lives and circumstances.

- *Déan É*, a week-long Science and Technology programme of multi skilled sessions in robotics, coding, traditional crafts, marine dimensions and up-cycling designed to inspire children to explore the world around them by helping to build creativity in all its guises.
- Galway Libraries collaborated with NUIG and Trinity College to promote the 100th anniversary of the successful campaign for votes for women entitled *Women of the West: Art, Citizenship and Literature* (2018).
- *Eilís Dillon: Language, Landscape & Literature* (2020), with two commissions:
  - Ruth O'Donnell, visual artist created an art piece '*Family Memories: Cuimhní Clainne*'
  - Virtuoso Máirtín O Connor composed a new suite of music '*Journey*' in response to one of her best known and highly regarded translated works, *Caoineadh: Airt Uí Laoghaire*
- New publications by Galway Public Libraries, the Creative Ireland Programme allowed them to publish *Women of the West: Art, Citizenship & Literature and Westward Ho! A Ramble through Galway 1840 – 1950 Collected Essays* and create a two-part travel documentary film *Westward Ho! Travel Writers Remembered*.

The Creative Ireland Programme has offered the **Architecture Conservation Office** an opportunity to engage with a wide community of stakeholders. A significant impact was that it helped to mobilise and engage with the community as the most important existing delivery mechanism.

- *Heart of Gort Project*: is a community-based project, which began in 2017 as a project designed to 'localise the Sustainable Development Goals' in a small historic Irish town. The project is a collaboration between Galway County Council, Burren Lowlands Forum and Baile - the ICOMOS Ireland NSC for Small Towns and Villages. The Heart of Gort festival encouraged local community groups to





SALT. Photograph:  
Markus Voetter.

collaborate in celebrating their town. This led up to 2020 with the launch of a webinar to promote energy efficiency and sustainability in the traditionally built town centre which also involved the launch of a short video, highlighting the attributes of the town: Gort, A Connected Town.

**Galway County Archives** are full of stories waiting to be unearthed, they are a treasure trove from which to learn, find inspiration and develop curiosity about our lives and the world around us. Artists and creatives can re-imagine archival material to connect with their audiences in innovative ways.

The Archives project *Sowing a Seed: Archives to Art* merged archives and arts to celebrate creativity and promote both a sense of cultural identity and the archives.

*“I was interested in working with the archives as they can contain layers of meaning, stories, and possibilities beyond the immediate content that they hold. They contain traces to which artists can respond”.* – Kathleen Furey, Artist, *Sowing a Seed: Archives to Art* exhibition catalogue, 2018.

Further collaborations included projects:

- *Island Images: From the Chambers Archive* is a recent publication (2022), which examines and brings to life a wonderfully evocative photograph collection, dating from 1929 to 1938, and celebrates life and work on the west coast islands of Ireland. The Archives worked with archivists and heritage professionals from counties represented in the photographs to explore and highlight the history and culture of the islands in a bygone era.
- Another successful collaboration with library colleagues in 2021 was the *Westward Ho! Travel Writers Remembered* programme which focused on travel writing, that produced a beautifully shot two-part film documentary showcasing the magical Connemara landscape, and the work of artists from the period 1840-1950.

- An accompanying publication *Westward Ho! A Ramble Through Galway 1840-1950, Collected Essays* has been very well received.

*“Delightful 19th century watercolour paintings of the streets of Galway and the Connemara landscape by William Evans of Eton, as well as the mid-20th century work of James Humbert Craig and Raymond Piper are sprinkled throughout the pages. This exquisitely produced book is available free from libraries in Galway city and county”.* – Paul Clements, *The Irish Times*, 16 July 2022.

The various projects undertaken by Galway County Council Archives, under the Galway County Creative Ireland Strategic Plan 2018-2022, provided opportunities to work with colleagues and creatives from a variety of creative and cultural milieux. They provided welcome opportunities to engage with and to attract new and different users to the archives, to raise levels of curiosity, and to illustrate how archives can be a way for people to engage with the past to better understand the cultural and historical context of spaces, places and heritage; a way to aid an ability to learn, critique and explore.

Galway County's Heritage Office initiated several very successful and worthwhile projects through the Galway County Creative Ireland Strategic Plan 2018-2022. Working with communities, the Heritage Office sourced projects which sparked interest from local heritage groups.

- To celebrate the centenary of the first transatlantic flight, accomplished by Alcock and Brown in 1919, the Heritage Office in collaboration with Alcock and Brown 100, Clifden Chamber of Commerce, Creative Ireland and Galway Education Centre developed a Junior and Senior Bi-lingual workbook for primary schools. These online workbooks provided a link between heritage, education, science (STEM), geography and aviation.
- ‘*Reading Your Local Landscape*’ was a training course held in the Teleworks Centre, Mountbellew in 2019 in association with



Mountbellew Heritage and Tourism Network. Eleven participants received training in all aspects of built, natural and cultural heritage. Following skills training through classroom work and field trips to local heritage sites, the participants completed practical projects. These included the development of a heritage trail and biodiversity action plan for Mountbellew and the development of a detailed tour itinerary and content to guide visitors around Carrownagappul Bog, where Galway's Living Bog project is based.

- The *Forged Gates Project 2020-2022*, the Heritage Office worked directly with Skehana Heritage Group and Holy Rosary College Mountbellew. The vernacular forged wrought iron field gate is a very valuable, but often neglected, aspect of the cultural heritage of our rural landscape in County Galway. Over 200 hundred locally forged gates have been recorded, in addition photographs of the remaining local forges were taken and interviews, podcasts and recordings were undertaken with members of the local community including farmers, blacksmiths, descendants of blacksmiths and others who have knowledge of the work of the blacksmith and the forged gates of the area.
- In 2019, the Heritage Office, Archives and Galway Public Libraries marked the 120th anniversary of the establishment of local government in Ireland, through the programme *Pumps, Piers and Potholes, 120 years of Local Government*. The Heritage Office focused on the 'Reminiscences' aspect of the project, with oral history recordings of former staff.

Celebrating culture and creativity in local communities is a key factor in creating attractive places to live and visit and tourists are attracted to areas that are inhabited by dynamic and engaged communities where everyone gets to be creative. A more recent example of cross-collaborative opportunity that extends Galway's reputation as an attractive place to visit was created by our Tourism

Officer working in partnership with the Galway County Culture and Creativity Team.

- **This Place: An Ait Seo:** The project commenced during the COVID-19 pandemic and sought to capture the raw beauty of the region and to tell local stories in a creative and engaging way. This stunning publication (2021) featuring poetry by Erin Fornhoff and Maire Holmes, photography by Matthew Thompson and designed by Red & Grey reflects the beauty and uniqueness of both east and west of the county in this time.
- **Wandering Kite Festival:** This free kite festival took place in two stunning locations in County Galway in 2021 and 2022. Following on from the success of the 2021 inaugural Festival in Oughterard, County Galway, the festival wandered to the new location of Omey Beach Strand. Audiences were treated to some of the biggest kites in the world flown by some of the world's most renowned kite-flyers. The festival also included kite making workshops, music, art installations and fun for all the family.

Participation in all forms of creative and cultural activity contributes to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities, and through the implementation of community-based initiatives, the Council aspires to ensuring that every citizen regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity is aware of, and can take part in and experience, the value and importance of creativity in their lives. This has been particularly relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic, when involvement in cultural and creativity activities enabled vulnerable individuals to stay connected and keep well within their communities.

New projects which specifically tackled our vulnerable members of society were supported through Creativity in Older Age funding which targeted our older members of the community living in nursing homes and isolated areas. Projects included:

- **The Nursing Homes Project** which is an archival project where a folklorist engaged



Sewing a Seed: Archives to Art.  
Photograph: Laura Griffin.

with nursing homes to keep residents engaged through stories and song, culminating in a participatory event for their families and communities, and a DVD to support the process of transmission of folklore from older people to children in the community.

- **Creative Carers** which recognise the 'invisible' nature and social exclusion of carers and involves them in a programme of varied creative activities which will culminate in an exhibition of their works and materials.

We welcome the potential creation of a new post of Creative Communities Engagement Officer which will be jointly funded by the Creative Ireland Programme and Galway County Council. This will greatly support the Culture and Creativity Team and the Creative Ireland Co-ordinator to broaden creative engagement locally and enhance the

strategic role of culture and creativity within local government. It will further embed collaborative programmes within Galway County Council and support the wider links to our local policies of relevance to wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development.

Finally in developing our strategic priorities for the coming five years we have taken into consideration the future developments and priorities within our communities and considered where best to make the greatest impact. We plan to broaden our Culture and Creativity Team to ensure a full representation of key priorities are delivered so we bring ambitious projects to fruition. We will continue to advocate to ensure culture and creativity can be further embedded within public policy at a local level.



### 3 The Creative Ireland Vision for Galway County

This plan serves as a strategic framework for the future actions of the Council during this period and identifies 5 strategic priorities with clear objectives that underpin our Creative Ireland vision for Galway County as follows:

A creative county, where everyone can enjoy culture and creativity to their full potential, where interconnectedness and collaboration between communities, creatives and agencies produce dynamic, innovative and engaging programmes and collective engagement contributes to social, economic, and environmental wellbeing.



### 4 How The Creative Ireland Programme Works Principles and Values of Creative Communities

*Creative Communities* will continue to support local authorities as a wellbeing strategy through:

- **Policy** — Working in partnership across government supporting local authorities to deliver relevant local, regional, and national policies and priorities.
- **Practice** — Flexible, cross-cutting Culture and Creativity Teams providing an agile and adaptable approach central to the delivery of *Creative Communities* as it addresses locally-relevant priorities.
- **Participation** — Providing more opportunities for people to engage with and enjoy culture and creativity at local level in ways that underpin equality of access.
- **Partnership** — Between central and local government, and Galway County County Council and our local culture and creative sectors.

This approach is based on addressing a shared, strategic agenda while delivering on the challenges and opportunities unique to each local authority area.

The *Creative Communities* partnership will be delivered in line with the following principles and values:

- i. Broaden access to, and participation in, cultural and creative activities locally.
- ii. Use culture and creativity as a catalyst for collaboration and innovation in achieving greater wellbeing, social cohesion, and economic development.
- iii. Strengthen the capacity of local authorities to integrate culture and creativity across place-making, regeneration, renewal, and the development of more vibrant, creative, and sustainable places.
- iv. Investing in culture and creativity to support environmental, social, and economic returns that help deliver local authority agendas – from local and regional, to national and international.
- v. Build on the agility and integrated approach of Culture and Creativity Teams to sustain further delivery of targeted collaborative programmes.

Oileánra Image. **Photograph:**  
Aengus McMahon



# 5

## The Strategic Priorities for Galway County

### Strategic Priority 1: Broaden access and participation

Galway is one of Ireland's largest counties with its most substantial Gaeltacht. It has an increasingly diverse cultural makeup, changing age demographics and a unique geographical breadth with four inhabited islands. It has a wide ranging cultural and creative heritage, a dynamic artistic and creative community, a great depth of archive material which resonates across its population, and funding and expertise available to support new and exciting programmes and activities. Our challenge is to make this great resource accessible and to enable all communities and individuals to realise their cultural potential. It is through this creative interaction that our communities will become more resilient and cohesive. We will seek to achieve this through the following actions:

- Broaden access to activities for target groups in cultural and creative hubs across the county, e.g. Libraries, Arts/Heritage Centres, Community Centres, Family Resource Centres.
- Ensure that children and young people are consulted when developing our *Cruinniú na nÓg* and other Creative Ireland projects and programmes.
- Focus on diversity and inclusivity by delivering meaningful and engaging creative and cultural programmes that enable participation from seldom heard, disadvantaged and minority groups through our Creative Ireland Bursaries and Culture Team projects.
- Support projects of scale between communities, creatives and artists across different sectors and county boundaries (e.g. one large scale bursary project and investment in one artist residency in each area supporting one theme for a full year).

- Provide support to programmes that engage communities of all ages across their lifetimes (*Cruinniú na nÓg*, Arts & Creative Charter for Older People - as artists, audiences, creators, critics, teachers and learners).
- Support the delivery of Creative projects in the Irish Language.
- Raise the profile of Creative Ireland and create better awareness of the Creative Ireland Bursary Scheme across all community groups (e.g. Quarterly Newsletter Galway County, Public Participation Network Newsletter, Newspaper Articles, New Appointments in Newspapers and local radio, media and social media channels).

### Strategic Priority 2: Leverage culture and creativity as an economic catalyst

Galway has a great tradition of identifying and harnessing synergies across culture, heritage, gastronomy and tourism and has reaped the economic benefits of combining these strengths creating attractive places to live and visit. We have an eclectic range of crafts, designers, creative industries, artists and arts organisations which can be encouraged to collaborate with the support of the Culture and Creativity Team and the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) with a view to building an innovative creative environment which can drive economic growth. To achieve this we will:

- Support the development of creative industries by placing creativity at the heart of entrepreneurial support.
- Foster a dynamic and vibrant entrepreneurial environment by developing opportunities for collaboration from craft to code across all our creative industries and encouraging partnerships

between the private and public sector working closely with the Local Enterprise Office.

- Develop mentoring in collaboration with the Local Enterprise Office to build the capacity of the local creative economy.
- Tell our stories on traditional and digital platforms in a compelling and creative way; through Gaeilge and English and using local creatives across disciplines i.e. artists, designers, photographers, film makers and musicians, sound artists and agency expertise.
- Capitalise on the local strengths in the audio-visual sector by maximizing their impact and contribution to our economic and cultural wellbeing.
- Support creatives and communities to develop innovative and unique projects which will enhance local economic activity through cultural innovation to support creative practice and contribute to the economic growth.
- Support a strong and sustainable culinary industry in County Galway developed through of our Region of Gastronomy designation and the Bia Innovator Campus to expand interest in the Culinary Arts.

### Strategic Priority 3: Build capacity and further strengthen our Creative Programme

The Galway County Creative Ireland Programme has made great inroads since its establishment in 2017 and has had success in implementing programmes that have had a real impact by collaborating across areas within the local authority. In the coming five years we seek to continue to strengthen our network across sectors, departments and stakeholders and to encourage placing creativity at the heart of programme planning. We recognise the limitations of our available resource and aim to build capacity within the team and to raise its profile both internally and externally. The following actions will support this ambition:

- Build a stronger creative network within the local authority identifying internal opportunities to collaborate across service delivery functions (e.g., Healthy Ireland, Regeneration, Environmental Services, Climate Action, Sports Partnership) and develop a mechanism to implement this as a way of working.
- Build capacity within the Culture and Creativity Team, offering training and supports and recruiting a coordination and support role to enhance the work of the team.
- Recognise and publicly document the positive contribution the Creative Ireland Programme makes to enhance the lives of all communities through our partnerships, online channels and local and national media.
- Through the work of our Culture and Creativity Team, ensure that all our communities have access to the many opportunities through the programme.

### Strategic Priority 4: Creative Place-Making

This is an area which needs to be further supported in the next planning cycle for both urban and rural settings. There continues to be a lack of spaces and places that facilitate artistic and creative work, exhibitions, cultural experiences and performance. While we recognise that the team's resources have constraints there is a great opportunity to bring communities and creatives on board to reinvent existing spaces. To this end we will:

- Engage with our communities and maximise the Public Participation Network to encourage the creative use of our public spaces.
- Engage with our internal stakeholders to advocate for cultural spaces within the future planning of the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund and Town and Village Renewal Schemes.
- Provide opportunities for projects to embrace our natural and unique built heritage while respecting our environment and biodiversity.



- Engage with creatives to re-imagine places and spaces to work and experience culture and creativity.
- Support community led, co-design initiatives to re-imagine spaces and/or buildings and to inform public realm or creatives spaces / building proposals which may be progressed through the various funding programmes such as Rural Regeneration Development Fund and Town and Village Renewal.
- Support the development of creative places that will become attractive and vibrant centres for the entire community.
- Maximise the potential of the tourism market to grow demand for locally grown and created products by local artisans, artists, creatives and other businesses within towns/ creative places.
- Engage communities in the planning, development and design of the public realm, regeneration and place-making initiatives and foster community ‘custodians’ of their urban, rural public spaces and creative places.
- Create opportunities to support towns to preserve and repurpose heritage infrastructure and to invest in refreshing a town's appearance so that creativity is evident within the fabric of urban and rural places.
- Facilitate the animation of creative places by providing performance spaces.
- Communicate local stories in a creative and engaging way to support conveying of visitor information and interpretation.

**Strategic Priority 5: Celebrate and Promote Galway as a Creative County**

The Galway County Culture and Creativity Team has produced an impressive array of programmes and projects that have had long term impact on the cultural and creative landscape reaching both national and global audiences. The Creative Ireland Programme has been integral to this. We need to

continue to build on this and recognise that the showcasing and recording of these original and impactful initiatives is critical to becoming a beacon for arts and culture. To build on this work we will:

- Strengthen our global reputation and profile as a county rich in cultural and creative assets through continued promotion and marketing of existing designations building on the success of previous projects.
- Showcase innovative, original and creative outputs that ‘leave an enduring mark’ on the cultural landscape of the county.
- Build a high quality, sustainable digital platform to showcase and record creative programmes of work to showcase a and build the county’s profile.
- Develop a creative approach to the marketing of County Galway and ensure all campaigns are executed with a pillar of Creative Direction’ which will include engaging artists, musicians, film makers, designers to develop high quality and artistic collateral including film/ video pieces, books and pamphlets.



Bouncing Off the Walls.  
**Photograph:** Aengus McMahon



## 6 Implementation by the Galway County Culture and Creativity Team

Galway County has a Culture and Creativity Team in place to guide and oversee implementation of this Strategy.

The Culture and Creativity Teams are the cornerstone of *Creative Communities* across all 31 local authorities in Ireland. These teams bring together a significant range and level of expertise and, in many cases, include professionals from architecture, archives, the arts, climate action, community, enterprise and environmental development, heritage, information and communication technologies, Irish language, libraries, spatial planning, tourism and more. This depth of technical expertise affords each local authority a level of insight, resources and delivery experience which few other public or private sector organisations can match.

The role of this team is to:

- Provide a collective forum for the ambition of culture and creativity within the local authority.
- Focus on diversity and inclusivity and enable harder to reach communities to participate in cultural and creative activities.
- Build on existing in-house expertise and strategies across areas of wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development to leverage culture and creativity to deliver on targeted local authority agendas.
- Enable a shift in how the cultural and creative sector is valued within and across local authorities and ensure that culture and creativity is embedded across local authority plans, policies and project teams.

- Drive cross-collaborative actions that support change and positive outcomes locally, and potentially between local authorities at regional level.
- Be innovative and take risks — try new projects and new ways of working.

The delivery of the Strategy is led by the Director of Services for Economic, Rural and Community Development and the members of the Culture and Creativity Team for Galway County Council include the Arts Officer, County Librarian, Executive Librarian, Heritage Officer, Architectural Conservation Officer, Tourism Officer, Community Development Officer and County Archivist.


These structures and processes are a critical success factor that will enable *Creative Communities* to deliver on strategic priorities for Galway County.

## Map of Galway County



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A Government of Ireland Initiative.  
Tionscnamh de chuid Rialtas na hÉireann.

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 CreativeIrl  
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[creativeireland.gov.ie](http://creativeireland.gov.ie)



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