



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme



Rialtas Áitiúil Éireann
Local Government Ireland



Culture & Creativity Strategy

2023–2027



Roscommon

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Forewords

Foreword by An Cathaoirleach

As Cathaoirleach of Roscommon County Council, I welcome the opportunity to work again with the Creative Ireland Programme to sustain and develop our cultural landscape and creativity through the themes of People, Place, Practice and Partnerships.

The Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023–2027 strengthens and reinforces Roscommon County Council’s commitments to the core principals of the programme. It also identifies our strategic approach to fostering and facilitating the creative, artistic and cultural activities in our county in partnership with individual communities, creatives, agencies and organisations. A greater understanding, awareness and appreciation of transient beauty, creativity and innovation helps to define our county identity, our sense of place and underpins our wellbeing, thus enhancing the quality of life for people of all ages in County Roscommon.

I would like to compliment the outstanding work of the Arts, Heritage and Library departments as well as Roscommon Arts Centre for their community focussed approach, which is making culture more accessible to all in County Roscommon. I would also like to compliment Roscommon County Council’s Culture and Creativity Team together with the local communities and creatives on the success of the 2018–2022 Programme and I look forward to building on these achievements over the lifetime of this second Strategy.

Go n-éirí an t-ádh leis an stráiteis.

Cllr. Tom Crosby
Cathaoirleach, June 2022/2023

Foreword by Chief Executive

The Creative Ireland Programme 2023–2027 is a collaborative inter-departmental and inter-agency programme which places creativity at the heart of our future as a society. Participation and access are central to the vision of the programme, 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 intrinsic value of individual and community creativity in our society nurtures the lives and wellbeing of our communities and is vital to the creation and sustainability of vibrant communities and our county. I believe that creative and cultural activity will bring communities together to strengthen our economy and promote our sense of identity, preserve our culture and celebrate our diversity. Roscommon County Council’s Culture & Creativity Strategy 2023–2027 will work to support creatives of all disciplines; enhance creativity in the lives of everyone from our young children to our older community; enrich public engagement with creativity in all its forms; and deliver continued strategic and sustainable investment in cultural infrastructure. I believe that this Strategy will develop culture and creativity in the county in yet more exciting and innovative ways and will reinforce the great drive and momentum of the previous Strategy.

I welcome the Culture & Creativity Strategy 2023–2027, which is centred on a model of wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development, recognising the integral part creativity and culture play in the economic and social development of County Roscommon. I look forward to the delivery of the various programmes and initiatives which will evolve during the lifetime of the strategy.

Shane Tiernan
Chief Executive, October 2022



Lawlor Family – Music Generation
Roscommon - 'My Creative Life'
Cruinniú 2020. **Photograph:**
Brian Farrell

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 Roscommon Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023–2027 is to support people’s participation, inclusion and expression within communities, and further strengthen local creative economies.



Fir na Búille - Publication by Anna Robertson, Úna Bhán Tourism. Open Call 2021. **Photographer:** Tony Murphy

2 Culture and Creativity in Roscommon

The Roscommon Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023–2027 will prioritise the themes of **People, Place, Practice and Partnership**, in order to extend opportunities for creative participation, inclusion and expression within communities. This strategy sets out Roscommon’s part in the next Creative Ireland five-year journey, centred on a model of wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development, recognising the integral part creativity and culture play in the economic and social sustainability of County Roscommon.

Roscommon is rich in culture and heritage, a county of castles and kings, of stately homes, spectacular landscapes and natural beauty. The county is the location of the birthplace of Halloween, the geographical centre of Ireland, and the longest shoreline of the River Shannon,

inspiring an abundance of water and mythically themed creative projects. Developing the cultural landscape in the county has been to the fore of the work of the Culture and Creativity Team as part of the Creative Ireland Programme — a team of local cultural agents, operating as part of the local authority structure, supporting a wider community of practitioners, educators, creatives and audiences — delivering the framework for culture and creativity across Roscommon.

Culture in Roscommon crosses traditional and contemporary forms, offering a range of platforms for connecting people and creativity at high quality professional arts events. Multiple creative opportunities are embraced in smaller scale, community-run festivals in towns and villages across the county, drawing on the collective imagination and creativity of the county.

Mural by Friz - Ballyleague Men's Shed Repair Café, Co Roscommon Open Call 2022 (Featuring pet donkeys and mascot dog Reo) Own photograph.



The County Arts Plan aims to provide opportunities for participation in the arts; to enrich the lives of children and young people through the arts; to support artists working in all art forms at all stages of their career and in a wide range of contexts to create high-quality work; and to develop strategic and sustainable investment in our arts infrastructure.

The Local Enterprise Office supports, promotes and celebrates excellence and innovation in contemporary craft, design and art with a range of supports to creative businesses in the county.

Roscommon Arts Centre is a vibrant, purpose-built arts space, committed to presenting a dynamic and ambitious multi-disciplinary programme of events that creates and develops audiences for the arts and contributes to local arts development in County Roscommon. The centre recognises and supports the artist’s role as being central to the artistic process, developing supports for artists at all stages of their careers through increased opportunities at the centre. Creativity is also central to the Council’s other main cultural buildings King House and the Douglas Hyde Centre.

Roscommon places access and understanding of its heritage at the heart of its cultural offering. Heritage is seen as central to the wellbeing of the county and a focus for cultural development. The county’s Heritage Plan provides a vision to increase access to, and engagement with, all aspects of heritage from built to the natural environment in Roscommon. From embracing its built and natural landscape to biodiversity and continuing field studies, the Plan promotes appreciation and enjoyment of its shared heritage as a means to improving the quality of life and wellbeing of its citizens.

The county is home to a vibrant Library Service which provides for the cultural, education, recreation, information and learning needs of people of all ages throughout the county and strives to provide and develop a comprehensive, quality, modern and accessible service. It acts as a centre for knowledge and learning, as a resource for culture, reading and the imagination, as a resource for children and young people, as an access to information communication

technologies, as an important archival repository, as a local studies research centre and as a vital community facility and public space for a range of activities. The Library Service is an important lever in the economic, cultural and social development of the county.

Through the Creative Ireland Programme 2018–2022, Roscommon has proudly celebrated the achievements of a number of our key cultural figures including **Roderic O’Conor** 1860–1940, visual artist; **Douglas Hyde** 1860–1949, first President of Ireland, academic, linguist and scholar of the Irish language; **Aleen Cust** 1868–1937, first female veterinary surgeon in Ireland & Britain; **Margaret (Gretta) Cousins** 1878–1954, suffragist, educator, musician and theosophist; **Brian O’Doherty** 1928–2022, artist, art critic, writer and academic; **John McGahern** 1934–2006, writer; **Erwin Springbrunn** 1939–2015, master goldsmith & gem cutter. The 2023–2027 Programme will continue to highlight the life and legacy of remarkable Roscommon cultural figures, historical and contemporary, through the lens of Creative People, Place, Practice and Partnership.

Creative Lives: Reflections on the impact of a selection of Creative Ireland projects in County Roscommon 2018–2022

*“I have always had a passion for local history. I believe that there is a duty to preserve the history of our area and what better way to do this than with living history. This project enabled me to capture the stories of the generations that have come before us in their own words before it is lost to us. **Fir na Búille** is a celebration of local culture and traditions and I was delighted to be part of preserving these stories for future generations. The Creative Ireland funding gave me the opportunity to do this.”*

Anna Robertson, Úna Bhán Tourism

"In 2020 I was granted funds which helped me produce a photo-documentary book on the traditions of Roscommon's mosaic industry. The first print run sold out in less than one month. I went on to print three times this amount due to the success of the project. The book highlighted a piece of local history that was unspoken about for many years. The funding allowed me to collaborate with a local writer and together we produced an artefact that became the first ever piece of written literature based on this industry. The project went on to see more success as I was interviewed by RTÉ Radio One and most recently where I was filmed by BYOC Films for a short documentary on the story of my book. The book is stocked in local shops and can be found in the Edward Murphy Library in the National College of Art and Design as well as other local libraries.

The success of the first grant gave me the confidence to apply for a second grant in response to the Creativity in Older Age Funding in April of 2021. Through this funding, I worked closely with local livestock marts whilst connecting with older persons who were involved in this community. I was lucky to have the opportunity to speak with people from this farming community in several locations, in their homes, on their land, at the marts and at local nursing homes. A collection of audio recordings from those involved in this community was collected; this was the central focus of the project. The aim was to collect stories and memories, encouraging recalling of both past and present farming experiences from participants. This, as well as a collection of photographs, was exhibited at Roscommon Arts Centre in March 2022. I feel my art practice has developed and matured considerably thanks to this support and funding. It gives me and other artists the ability to make and showcase work specific to communities, that has an impact on the wider community."

Laura Earley, Visual Artist

"If one is prepared to regard oneself as a vessel in which all kind of impressions can gather, then you are willing to give it a good shake and accept the result, I think that outcome is pretty near to the term creativity"

Erwin Springbrunn

— Master Goldsmith & Gemcutter, Hidden Gem Exhibition, King House Boyle

"I was born in a town called Nazareth in Ethiopia. My family wanted me to study something else, you know, to study and do a 'proper' job, something where you get your payment. To be a doctor, a pilot something like that – the usual wishes. Then, the Mekuria dance academy came from Addis Ababa to my town to do auditions, and I got accepted. They trained us with basic ballet, jazz, African contemporary, Ethiopian traditional dance, everything. And I just fell in love with dance, and I decided this is the only thing I want to do. So when I chose this and my parents saw me, they were happy. They just advised me: make sure you are good in this field. Make sure that this is the right thing for you.

I was looking for places where I could study more. A friend had mentioned Ireland, and I knew about Irish dancers like John Scott and Liz Roche. Then the team from the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance in Limerick came to Ethiopia, with Prof Helen Phelan and her husband, Míchéal Ó Súilleabháin, God bless his soul. They had a music concert. That's the first time I met them, and they helped me. I came to Limerick in 2016 and finished my Masters in 2018. Now I live in Roscommon. I have two families, my Ethiopian family, and my Irish family. I am married to a Roscommon woman.

I love Ireland. I'm so lucky, honestly. I can work as a dancer. I have my own dance company. When I'm creating work, I let my creation process decide. I don't want to deliberately, or purposely put something in there. I want to see the process, and then see if it has worked.

I get up in the morning, stretch to prepare for the day. Have breakfast and respond to

emails. I'm also a member of the Roscommon Artist Panel. Every dancer has to keep their body in shape, so I do yoga at home, stretching exercises, improvisations. I love watching movies, and I also relax by listening to music. Music is inspiring. Sometimes I'll find something in a music composition or my class, for my rehearsals, or when I'm warming up, getting ready. I'll hear something and think: this is so cool, I'll use it for this class, or that school. I also relax by dancing."

Laura Earley Roscommon's Mosaic Tradition 2020

Hidden Gem Exhibition Opening
Minister Catherine Martin & Doris Selz, March 2022. King House Boyle, Co Roscommon
Photographer: Brian Farrell

When I'm dancing, I feel really happy, it makes me feel free. It helps me to let everything go. When I'm dancing, anything I've experienced in my life, whether it's good or bad, if someone made me angry or happy, I just let it go. That's why I love it."

Mintesinot Wolde, Dancer

— In conversation with Gemma Tipton, What I Do, The Irish Times 8/10/2022



3 The Creative Ireland Vision for Roscommon

Roscommon: A Creative Place: A Creative People

Our Creative Ireland Vision for Roscommon is aligned to the Roscommon Corporate Plan 2019–2024 which sets out the Council's objectives under three priorities: Quality of life and well-being for all; Economic and community development; Quality service to our people.

Ensuring that the arts and creative sector play a major role in supporting the heritage, cultural and community development of County Roscommon was a key objective of the Roscommon Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) 2016–2021. This is an objective which will be reflected in future LECPs as arts and creative development are a strong and growing component of Roscommon's business and social communities.

The Roscommon Tourism Strategy recognises that a quality tourism product has to be developed through innovation and creativity and to achieve this we must encourage the creative sector, artists and creators who will be imaginative in presenting our story, to get involved in planning and implementation.

Roscommon County Council's Culture and Creativity Team is representative of the key local authority services which include the arts, libraries, heritage, tourism, community and enterprise.

We believe that culture is not static, that it is always changing and evolving. We believe in access by all to all our programmes. We believe strongly in collaboration and in the ongoing need to share resources, to share ideas and to create opportunities for and with everyone in order to play a part in creatively shaping our county.

Artists, writers and creatives have always expressed our collective identities in story, song, dance, ritual, celebration and commemoration. In embracing Creative Ireland, Roscommon County Council recognises the relationship between creativity, participation, place and people. This strategy provides an opportunity to encourage a multiplicity of voices and forms of expression, from which new ideas can emerge and old stories can be reimaged.

The Roscommon Culture and Creativity Team plays a key role in the development and delivery of this strategy, working with local communities and creatives to foster innovation and creativity while ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion. The team will oversee a coherent approach to cultural support, development and programming, reflecting the objectives of relevant existing plans and strategies for the county, in particular the Local Economic and Community Plan, and the Creative Ireland vision.



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 Roscommon 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.

Franziska Lienberger - Craft Call,
July Stimulus 2020. Own Photo.

5

The Strategic Priorities for Roscommon

People : Place : Practice : Partnership

Roscommon’s strategic priorities have been developed from review, extensive mapping and information gathering annually on the work and achievements of each project delivered under the Creative Ireland Strategy 2018–2022. They provide for collaborations which will support, design, develop and deliver projects of scale, sustainability and impact over the next five years 2023–2027, recognising the integral part creativity and culture play in the economic and social development of County Roscommon.

The strategic focus on these key priorities is designed to consistently drive collaboration and ambitious thinking. Every project will have a principal focus (e.g. building a creative place), but its design and delivery must include elements of people, practice and partnership.

Fundamentally, in delivering projects and actions under the *Creative Communities* Pillar, all projects must have an output for, and an impact on, communities, for each project annually or as part of a developmental project over a number of years.

Priority 1: Creative People

Support, develop and deliver projects that support the ambitions of creative people, that develop creative skills, and build valuable relationships and networks, prioritising the following:

- Creative Children & Youth: Opportunities for children and young people in formal and non-formal settings to draw on their imagination to create new ideas, with a special focus on *Cruinniú na nÓg*.
- CARE Creative Ageing in Roscommon: Projects which contribute to a meaningful life for older people.

- Creatives: Encourage and support a multiplicity of voices and forms of expression, from which new ideas can emerge and old stories can be reimaged.
- Innovation: Support and celebrate excellence, innovation, and access to contemporary creativity in the county.
- Respect, support and inclusion of all voices and cultures that make up our county.

Priority 2: Creative Place

Support, develop and deliver projects that build on, and celebrate, the creativity of communities of place and interest, and that bring communities together to share experiences, skill, and ambition, prioritising the following:

- Partnerships which 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.
- Opportunities for people to engage with and enjoy culture and creativity at a local level, in ways that underpin equality of access.
- Programming and infrastructural development of cultural venues, festivals, events and outdoor spaces in the community to provide focal points of creativity that enable audiences to access quality local, national and international creative experiences.
- Developing conversations around climate change to generate positive creative action.
- Programmes to celebrate the life and legacy of acclaimed Roscommon cultural figures in their Creative Place.

Priority 3: Creative Practice

Support, develop, and deliver projects that practice creativity, that centre on community-engaged arts practice, that support professional development, and that lead to sustainable careers, prioritising the following:

- Supports to indigenous creatives and creative businesses to sustain, develop and grow their practice and business through commissioning, mentoring, skills development, training, design, branding and marketing, and to explore how local creatives can add value to ‘non-creative’ businesses.
- Nurturing local leaders in creativity and the arts based on our unique culture and creativity.
- Development of creative workspaces.
- A vibrant library service with provision for cultural, educational, recreational, research and information needs as well as spaces for creative practices.

Priority 4: Creative Partnership

Support, develop, and deliver projects that foster unique, unexpected and creative partnerships between agencies, individuals and communities to drive scale, impact and ambition, prioritising the following:

- Partnerships which build on the agility and integrated approach of the Culture and Creativity Team to sustain further delivery of targeted collaborative programmes.
- Partnerships which invest in culture and creativity to support environmental, social, and economic agendas at local, regional, national and international level.
- Community Partnerships to develop cultural capacity to plan, programme, produce and manage creative projects at a local level, building local engagement.
- A Celebration of Partnership by sharing project outcomes widely through relevant national and local websites, media, libraries, committees, SPC, PPN, LCDC, Town Teams, publications and digital media.

The Creative Ireland Programme is driven by the desire to build better and stronger connections between people, departments and institutions, centred on a model of wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development. The Culture and Creativity Team believes these Strategic Priorities will ensure a creative and coherent approach which reflects the objectives of the Creative Ireland Vision for Roscommon — A Creative Place: A Creative People.

6 Implementation by the Roscommon Culture and Creativity Team

Roscommon 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 Service and members of the Culture and Creativity Team for Roscommon County Council comprising the Arts, Heritage, Tourism, Library, Social Inclusion and the Local Enterprise Office.

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

Map of Roscommon



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

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