



Crockery Mountain
Dungarvan
Photo Credit Peter Grogan

Creative Climate Action

Report
2023 -2025



Seaweed Girl
Waterford Festival of Food
Photo Credit Pat Brown



Average Ordinary
Everyday Superhero
Irish Wheelchair Association



Comeragh Mountain Sheep Farmers
Nire Valley



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACT 2 Waterford was the second phase of ACT (Action Climate Targets) Waterford, an interdisciplinary creative climate action initiative delivered through a partnership between Waterford City and County Council (WCCC) and South East Technological University (SETU), and funded by the Creative Ireland Climate Action Fund. Coordinated by Calmast STEM Engagement Centre at SETU, the programme ran from January 2024 to December 2025 and sought to meaningfully engage communities with climate change through creative practice, with the ultimate aim of encouraging behavioural change and climate action.

The partnership of Calmast, SETU and Waterford City and County Council provided scientific, technical and policy expertise to the project. ACT 2 Waterford comprised four distinct creative community climate action projects, each led by an experienced creative practitioner or arts organisation: Donate a Plate (Crockery Mountain), Between Land and Sea, Reflecting the Past, Imagining the Future (Climate Action in the Comeraghs) and Take the Bus for a Change. Together, these projects engaged communities across Waterford through workshops, performances, festivals, exhibitions and collaborative making, reaching adults, young people, families and people with disabilities in both urban and rural contexts.

An independent evaluation was conducted by Sinéad Begley and Associates using a mixed-methods approach that reflected the adaptive and evolving nature of community-based creative work. Data was gathered through online surveys, interviews, written reflections, and artist feedback. While the level of participant feedback varied across projects due to differences in scale and engagement formats, the evaluation provides robust qualitative and quantitative evidence of impact, particularly for Crockery Mountain, which generated the largest volume of participant responses.

Overall, ACT 2 Waterford was found to be highly effective in delivering positive community experiences and achieving its core objective of connecting people to climate action through creativity. Participants consistently described the projects as inspiring, enjoyable, inclusive and meaningful. Importantly, the majority of participants, many of whom had not previously engaged in climate action initiatives, reported increased awareness of environmental issues, a stronger sense of personal agency, and concrete changes in behaviour, particularly around consumption, reuse, waste reduction and sustainability. The majority of survey respondents (91%) agreed that the creative aspect of the project made them feel more engaged with climate action and almost all respondents (97%) have made new connections in their community.

Creative engagement emerged as a key strength of the programme. Across projects, creativity acted as a non-threatening and accessible entry point to climate conversations, enabling participants to engage emotionally, socially, and practically with complex issues. The role of the artists was central to success: participants repeatedly highlighted the skill, trust, inclusivity, and local presence of the creative practitioners as critical to sustained engagement and positive outcomes.

ACT 2 Waterford also delivered significant social value. The projects promoted strong community connection, intergenerational exchange, wellbeing benefits and a sense of shared ownership over highly visible public artworks and outcomes. In the case of Crockery Mountain, the reuse of donated crockery not only diverted waste from landfill but also preserved social history and personal memories within a permanent public artwork, amplifying both environmental and cultural impact.

The evaluation also identified learning for future initiatives, including the need for continued flexibility in community engagement, clear communication with participants and adequate resourcing for artists delivering complex participatory work. Several projects are continuing beyond the funded period, indicating sustainability of impact and capacity-building within the creative and community sectors.

In conclusion, ACT 2 Waterford demonstrates that well-resourced, artist-led creative climate action can successfully engage diverse communities, inspire behavioural change and deliver lasting environmental, social and cultural value. The findings strongly support continued investment in creative climate action as an effective complement to policy-led and technical climate responses.

INTRODUCTION

Creative Ireland, in collaboration with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), through Creative Climate Action, funded creative and cultural projects that meaningfully connected people with the profound environmental, social and economic changes arising from climate change, and that transformed this connection into behaviour change or climate action.

ACT (Action Climate Targets) Waterford is an interdisciplinary initiative that brought together Waterford City and County Council (WCCC) and South East Technological University (SETU). The project was funded by the Creative Ireland Climate Action Fund and coordinated by the Calmast STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Engagement Centre at SETU. The first phase of the project took place from 2022–2023.

ACT 2 Waterford, the second phase of this community climate action project built on the foundations established during ACT 1, consisted of four distinct creative community climate action projects, each led by a different creative practitioner or arts organisation:

- Take the Bus for a Change, Joanne Donohoe

- Between Land to Sea, Spraoi
- Reflecting the Past, Imagining the Future (Climate Action in the Comeraghs), Mollie Anna King
- Donate a Plate (Crockery Mountain,) Seán Corcoran

A fifth project took the form of an online community engagement initiative, managed by Community Manager Kate Twohig. Due to the distinct nature of this strand and its focus on digital engagement and project delivery processes, findings relating to this work are addressed within the PR & Marketing section of this report rather than the participant evaluation sections.

The overarching ambition of ACT 2 was to extend the reach of creative climate action across Waterford City and County and to engage as many communities as possible. Drawing on the learnings from ACT 1, it was recognised that for the project to be genuinely co-created with communities, its direction and shape needed to remain flexible and responsive, evolving over the course of the two-year programme.

OUTLINE OF TEAM AND KEY PLAYERS

PROJECT TEAM

The project team for ACT 2 remained unchanged from ACT 1 (2022).

KATHERINE COLLINS – PROJECT DIRECTOR, WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL

Katherine Collins is Waterford Cultural Quarter (WCQ) Project Manager and Creative Waterford Coordinator. She has a specific remit to connect people and places through creative community engagement. In her Creative Waterford role, she oversees projects such as ACT Waterford, the annual Open Call, local authority projects as well as social, economic and wellbeing programmes.

EOIN GILL – PROJECT DIRECTOR, CALMAST SETU

Eoin Gill is a director of Calmast STEM engagement centre at SETU Waterford (previously WIT). Calmast's programme includes all areas of STEM with a particular emphasis on sustainability and with extensive experience working at the STEM/art/culture intersection. Activities are delivered for all ages, with a particular effort to include underserved groups, engaging 50,000 each year. Eoin has over 25 years' experience in developing and delivering STEM and STEAM activities. He is also coordinator of Maths Week Ireland, which is a partnership across the island of Ireland and takes place every October reaching around 500,000 people. An environmental engineer by profession, he has broad knowledge of sustainability and climate action.

NOLLAIG HEALY - PROJECT MANAGER, CALMAST SETU

Nollaig Healy is a cultural project manager with over 18 years' experience working across arts, culture and public engagement. She is currently Project Manager with Calmast at South East Technological University (SETU), where she develops and delivers creative programmes that connect science, creativity and climate action with diverse public audiences.

Nollaig has worked extensively with leading arts festivals including Kilkenny Arts Festival, Clonmel Junction Festival, Dublin Fringe Festival and TradFest, and with a wide range of cultural and theatre organisations such as the Gate Theatre, Pavilion Theatre, VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art and Broken Crow Theatre Company. Nollaig worked as Project Manager for ACT 1.

KATE TWOHIG – ONLINE COMMUNITY MANAGER

Kate has worked for festivals such as Kilkenny Arts Festival, Clonmel Junction Festival, Cúirt Literary Festival and new music festival When Next We Meet. She has led on all aspects such as marketing from branding development, website creation and management and social media management including content creation. With respect to social media, Kate aims to make social media feel personal to the target audience, and a place for engaged discussion. She uses social media as a platform to break down the barriers that can sometimes make the arts seem inaccessible to the wider public.

CONLETH TEEVAN - PUBLICITY

Conleth Teevan has worked in the entertainment industry, specifically in Arts PR since 2002. Working with a broad range of established clients managing international publicity campaigns for the RDS, St. Patrick's Festival, Irish National Opera, and Dublin Fringe Festival. Conleth has been running his own arts PR company for the past 17 years, working on a broad range of projects from dance, theatre, music, visual arts to multi-disciplinary festivals.

SINEAD BEGLEY –INDEPENDENT RESEARCH CONSULTANT

Sinéad Begley and Associates provides consultancy services in environment, STEM, arts, heritage and community-based initiatives for a range of clients. As Director Sinéad has gained extensive experience in strategy development, management, delivery and evaluation of a range of projects. The company has undertaken projects for many government departments and agencies, and for Local Authorities all over Ireland. Sinéad has also worked on strategic planning, research & evaluation in relation to environmental, heritage, STEM education, arts and community-based initiatives and has extensive experience of data gathering, analysis and report writing.

CREATIVE TEAM

JOANNE DONOHOE

Joanne is an artist, theatre director and set designer based in New Ross, Co. Wexford. She studied Fine Art at Dún Laoghaire College of Art, Design and Technology and at Carlow IT, and later trained in craft at Grennan Mill Craft School in Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny. Her theatre practice has been shaped through professional training with Youth Theatre Ireland alongside extensive hands-on experience.

Joanne has been Artistic Director and Set Designer with WACT Youth Theatre for over ten years, during which time she has worked on more than twenty productions featuring young people from across County Wexford. She is also an experienced arts educator and is currently teaching set design online as part of the JCT Play Create Perform initiative, in collaboration with Youth Theatre Ireland.

Joanne worked as a Creative Facilitator on ACT Phase 1, collaborating with communities on the Dunmore Road in Waterford City to explore the theme *"Taking the Bus for a Change."* This engagement used creative processes to encourage dialogue and reflection around sustainable transport and climate action at a local level.

In addition to her work on ACT, Joanne designs and delivers programmes focused specifically on sustainability for Science Week across counties Wexford, Waterford, Kilkenny, and Tipperary. She also develops and facilitates initiatives as part of the Bealtaine Living Earth Festival across the South East region, with a particular emphasis on engaging disadvantaged and underrepresented groups.

MOLLIE ANNA KING

Mollie's work has been supported by The Arts Council and Tipperary Arts Office. In 2022 she was awarded the Visual Arts Bursary Award and the Platform31 Award. Mollie has also received a Professional Development Award in 2020 and in 2016 she was a recipient of the Next Generation

Bursary Award. Mollie has been artist in residence at The Architectural Association in Hooke Park, Limerick School of Art & Design's Ceramic Department and has worked collaboratively with Turner Prize winning Assemble Architects. Facilitation is part of her practice and has worked with Callan Workhouse Union, Youth Ecology Art at Butler Gallery and Common Knowledge, Clare. Mollie is currently doing a residency in Visual Carlow.

SPRAOI

Founded in 1993 Waterford Spraoi is a leader in Irish street arts and spectacle. For over thirty-years the company has delivered events of excellence throughout Ireland including: opening ceremony

European Capital of Culture (Cork), Bram Stoker Festival (Dublin), opening ceremony World Fire and Police Games (Belfast). Operating from Ireland's only purpose-built street arts studios complex, in Waterford City, Spraoi provides clients with one-stop-shop solutions to an array of inspirational spectacle events. Spraoi provides partners with creative design and event planning services incorporating liaison with stakeholders including artists, technicians, local communities, Gardai, local authorities and private sector business. Spraoi produces an annual international street arts festival in Waterford that showcases Irish artists to international markets

and premieres work from around the world to Irish audiences. Spraoi has successfully created events with cross-sectoral partners including: SETU science promotion unit CALMAST, Waterford Council Economic Development unit, Tipperary County Council arts department and Cork City Council events unit. Spraoi Studios are used as a creation centre by artists throughout Ireland. The studios are managed, staffed and equipped to plan and deliver major creative projects.

SEAN CORCORAN

Sean Corcoran is an Irish visual artist renowned for his work in stained glass, mosaics, wooden sculpture, and large-scale sand art. He has an extensive portfolio and has worked with clients including RTÉ, TV3, the BBC, and ITV. He is particularly known for his striking beach murals, often created along the Copper Coast Geopark, and most recently gained widespread media attention for his sand portrait of Colin Farrell on Keel Beach, Achill, created ahead of the Oscars.

Sean began working in stained glass at the age of 16 and later expanded into mosaic and mixed-media practice. He previously co-ran The Salvage Shop with his father, producing distinctive art, furniture, and interiors from recycled materials. Photography and film are central to his practice, alongside daily drawing, map-making, publishing, and regular short film releases. He also facilitates environmental art projects on beaches with school groups.

ACT 2 PROJECTS

TAKE THE BUS FOR A CHANGE – JOANNE DONOHOE

During Year 1, Joanne worked with communities previously engaged in ACT 1 in Ballybeg, Ballybricken and the Dunmore Road, while extending engagement to communities across Waterford City, including students from the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) and the Men's Shed. Through partnerships with organisations such as libraries, Waterford City and County Council, University Hospital Waterford and local industrial estates, the project raised awareness of sustainable transport options and encouraged participants to examine their own travel behaviours. Participants explored walking and cycling routes, car-pooling, and the use of bus and train services, with a strong emphasis on practical, achievable action.

In Year 2, the project engaged participants interested in creating an art exhibition on sustainable transport. The project delivered a series of participatory workshops, including the popular Dolce Far Niente (“The Sweetness of Doing Nothing”) workshops first developed in 2022, alongside novelty bike rides and inner-city urban wildlife walks. These activities provided accessible and enjoyable entry points for engagement, enabling the artist to listen to and learn from participants. Through workshops, storytelling and theatre-making, the project highlighted the importance of sustainable transport and demonstrated how small, everyday changes can make a meaningful difference.

BETWEEN LAND AND SEA - SPRAOI

Spraoi’s approach aligned closely with the overall aims of the Creative Climate Action (Ignite) initiative: to harness both professional and voluntary creatives to inspire public awareness, behavioural change, and positive climate actions among participants and wider audiences. From the outset, SETU and Spraoi agreed that the project would be inspired by, and grounded in, Waterford’s coastal environment, with a particular focus on promoting positive public engagement with coastal ecosystems. An agricultural dimension was initially considered; however, early stakeholder consultations indicated that an overly broad thematic focus could dilute the project’s clarity and impact. As a result, the project was refined to ensure a clear, accessible narrative for audiences.

By early 2024, the project had developed a working title, Between Land and Sea, referencing Ireland’s coastal tidal zone and its rich but vulnerable biodiversity. Project partners identified Dungarvan and Waterford City as key locations where the project could have meaningful impact, with Portlaoise later included as an additional site. Popular festivals in Dungarvan and Waterford City were identified as important platforms for reaching large and diverse audiences, offering opportunities to raise climate awareness and encourage positive environmental actions through creative engagement.

Alongside public-facing activity, a strong community involvement dimension was embedded in the project design. This aimed to create deeper engagement, dialogue and ownership by actively involving people in the creation of project content, in line with the broader Creative Climate Action goals of participation, collaboration and behaviour change.

CLIMATE ACTION IN THE COMERAGHS - MOLLIE ANNA KING

How to Place-Based Insulate is a research-led, community-engaged project exploring Irish sheep’s wool as a low-carbon, locally rooted material within climate action, heritage, and sustainable building contexts. Based in the Comeragh Mountains, the project combines material experimentation, farmer engagement, and public learning to revalue wool as a viable environmental and cultural resource.

The project began in early 2024 as a place-based inquiry into the landscapes, communities, and material cultures of the Comeraghs. Its original intention was to explore the history of shared rural structures—particularly booley huts, botháns, and cluster villages—and to consider how these vernacular forms of communal living might inform more sustainable futures for rural Ireland. This inquiry was rooted in longer-term research developed prior to 2024, including interests in wellness spaces, off-grid living, and community care structures.

A key historical lens for the project was the practice of seasonal transhumance, whereby people—often young women—relocated to upland grazing areas during the summer months. These practices offered insights into shared labour, land stewardship, and collective resilience, and provided a framework for considering how communities historically adapted to environmental conditions in the Comeraghs.

Initially, the project sought to identify a vernacular structure within the Comeraghs that could be worked on collaboratively with the local community, using hands-on making as a means of sharing knowledge and building connection. However, through repeated attempts to embed within the locality, it became clear that without existing relationships or access to a building, this approach was not feasible. In the current economic and cultural climate, land and building ownership are highly sensitive and contested issues.

In response, the project was reframed as an artist-led research process that prioritised listening, relationship-building, and responsiveness to place over predetermined outcomes. This shift allowed the research to remain grounded while adapting ethically and practically to local realities.

SHEEP'S WOOL AND WOOL PRODUCTION IN COUNTY WATERFORD: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

From medieval times onwards, sheep's wool played a significant role in the economy of Waterford and its hinterland. As one of Ireland's principal ports, Waterford facilitated the export of agricultural products—including wool, hides, and textiles—into European trade networks. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Irish woollen cloaks were exported globally from Waterford, while upland wool from areas such as the Comeraghs fed into wider regional markets.

From the nineteenth century onwards, County Waterford developed a documented industrial relationship with wool, including the establishment of woollen mills in Kilmacthomas in 1840 and associated textile infrastructure across the county. This legacy continued into the twentieth century through carpet and rug manufacturing, most notably with the establishment of Waterford Carpets Ltd. in 1968, alongside longer-standing local rug-making traditions. Together, these industries reflect the deep cultural and economic presence of wool in the region.

Over the past two decades, however, the economic importance of sheep's wool has declined sharply. The widespread availability of synthetic alternatives, combined with rising shearing costs and falling fleece prices, has resulted in wool being treated increasingly as a low-value or waste by-

product of sheep farming. This represents a significant rupture in Waterford's historical relationship with wool production and processing.

How to Place- Based Insulate situates itself within this context, re-examining sheep's wool not as waste, but as a locally abundant, renewable material with untapped potential. By reconnecting material research, farming knowledge, and place-based cultural history, the project seeks to contribute to climate action through sustainable building discourse, while honouring the lived landscapes and practices of the Comeragh Mountains.

DONATE A PLATE (CROCKERY MOUNTAIN) - SEAN CORCORAN

Crockery Mountain is a large-scale community mosaic, made from donated crockery, which consists of individual panels created by members of the community. Seán Corcoran, the creative practitioner that delivered the project is a visual and environmental artist, with two decades of experience and a background in repurposing architectural salvage and second-hand items. He is also known for creating beach sand art and has undertaken several community mosaic projects.

The project concept originated from a crockery mosaic the artist made (years previously) using old plates on the external wall of their studio. This formed the seed of an idea for a large mosaic using donated crockery to explore consumerism and prompt the question "Why do people have so much stuff?". From the perspective of climate change the artist noticed that while there is extensive research on fast fashion and single-use plastics, there is not the same degree of mainstream analysis of the impacts of crockery e.g., the carbon embodied in a cup, or the lifecycle analysis from the materials used, through production, use and disposal.

"...So, there is plenty of conversations being had about different environmental things, about surplus and consumerism, but there is no conversation publicly in a consumable kind of way, pardon the pun, about crockery... visually, aesthetically, I loved the idea - imagine a big, massive wall made up of ceramics and plates and cups and saucers and all things brought back to life..."

When the artist was approached by the ACT Project Coordinator at SETU regarding a potential creative climate action project, the concept of developing a community mosaic using donated items was proposed. The artist considers the project to be unique and believes there is no comparable initiative globally that utilises donated crockery at this scale.

The project began with a callout through social media inviting the community to donate crockery at six drop off locations around the county for use in making the mosaic. A series of mosaic workshops were delivered between November 2024 and March 2025 in the artist's studio with approximately 120 people taking part. WhatsApp groups were set up by the artist to communicate and share updates and photos of the evolving mosaic with the participants.

The final artwork was installed on the external wall of the cinema at the shopping centre in Dungarvan in August 2025, with the project culminating in a community celebration when the artwork was unveiled by Duncan Stewart, environmentalist and TV personality.

GOALS

TAKE THE BUS FOR A CHANGE – JOANNE DONOHOE

1. To deepen public engagement with sustainable transport through creative practice

To use participatory arts activity in real transport and community settings to prompt reflection on bus use, public transport and personal travel behaviours, reframing everyday journeys as opportunities for climate awareness.

2. To connect climate action to lived experience

To make climate issues tangible and locally relevant by linking environmental awareness to daily routines, how people move, wait, share space and make transport choices, rather than relying solely on abstract or technical messaging.

3. To centre inclusion, accessibility and underrepresented voices in climate dialogue

To ensure that people experiencing mobility and access barriers, particularly members of the Irish Wheelchair Association were actively represented, positioning dignity, independence and equitable transport access as core climate justice issues.

4. To support wellbeing, confidence and social connection through creative participation

To support mental wellbeing, peer connection and a sense of belonging across diverse participant groups (including commuters, Men's Sheds and community organisations) through collaborative making and shared reflection.

5. To build legacy through skills development and public exhibition

To develop transferable creative skills within community groups while producing a public-facing exhibition outcome that sustains visibility, learning and climate conversation beyond the project's delivery phase.

BETWEEN LAND AND SEA - SPRAOI

1. To raise awareness of coastal climate issues

To highlight both the beauty and vulnerability of coastal and tidal ecosystems, with particular reference to Waterford's shoreline, Dungarvan Bay and local marine biodiversity.

2. To develop a creative public call to action supporting marine resilience

To devise an engaging, public-facing mechanism encouraging positive environmental action particularly in relation to plastic pollution including simple, achievable behaviours such as removing plastic waste from shorelines.

3. To engage diverse public audiences in climate action through creative practice

To use festivals, performances and public-space interventions to reach a broad audience employing creativity and spectacle as an accessible entry point to climate conversation.

4. To expand climate engagement to new and underrepresented groups

To work intentionally with audiences not previously involved in climate action including Youthreach participants ensuring wider inclusion and avoiding “preaching to the converted.”

5. To create a lasting legacy and learning framework

To extend impact beyond live performances through the development and exhibition of *The Cube* in libraries and public spaces (2026), while capturing learning to inform and evolve future creative climate action initiatives.

CLIMATE ACTION IN THE COMERAGHS - MOLLIE ANNA KING

The project sought to generate knowledge across three interconnected research areas:

1. **To explore attitudes within land-owning and farming communities in the Comeragh Mountains toward vacant rural buildings**, and to consider their potential role in Ireland’s climate and housing transitions, particularly in relation to shifts from traditional to transitional uses.
2. **To investigate natural, low-carbon building materials**, with a specific focus on sheep’s wool, as viable alternatives to petrochemical insulation in both traditional and contemporary building contexts.
3. **To examine historic practices of shared labour, seasonal movement, and local material use**, including meitheal and transhumance, in order to understand how these practices might inform contemporary, place-based approaches to climate action.

Rather than advancing a single prescriptive solution, the project aimed to **support collective imagining and learning** through participatory methods including making, walking, conversation, material experimentation, and knowledge sharing.

DONATE A PLATE (CROCKERY MOUNTAIN) – SEAN CORCORAN

1. **To engage the community in climate action through participatory public art**
To involve members of the public directly in the creation of a large-scale artwork, using hands-on making as an inclusive entry point to climate reflection, dialogue and shared environmental responsibility.
2. **To demonstrate environmental action through material reuse**
To repurpose donated crockery that would otherwise be discarded, highlighting reuse and material revaluation while drawing attention to the environmental and lifecycle impacts of everyday domestic objects.
3. **To prompt reflection on consumerism and material culture**
To encourage participants and audiences to question patterns of consumption and accumulation *"Why do people have so much stuff?"* and to reconsider relationships with material goods.
4. **To make climate issues approachable through creativity and aesthetics**
To use the visual impact and scale of the mosaic to communicate environmental ideas in an engaging, non-didactic way that invited curiosity and conversation rather than judgement.
5. **To create a lasting public legacy that sustains climate dialogue**
To install the completed mosaic on a prominent public building, ensuring long-term visibility, collective ownership and continued engagement with the project's environmental themes beyond the active delivery phase.

PRE PLANNING

JULY – DEC 2023

PROJECT PRE-PLANNING

Project pre-planning commenced following confirmation of funding in July. On 12 July, formal notification was received confirming that the ACT 2 application had been successful. During August, September and October, availability checks were carried out with the artists outlined in the original proposal in order to align creative input with the revised project timelines. Contracts and detailed timelines were subsequently agreed with all participating creatives.

In **October**, a Service Level Agreement was formally signed with Creative Ireland, confirming delivery parameters and reporting requirements. Planning for project documentation and visibility also began at this stage, including the scheduling of a project photocall.

A series of preparatory meetings were held to support effective project delivery and evaluation. These included a meeting with Sinéad Begley, Independent Research Consultant, to outline the overall ACT 2 programme and to agree how evaluation and research would be embedded across the project. A meeting with Conleth Teevan was held to discuss the public announcement of ACT 2.

Creative and technical planning meetings were also undertaken, including a meeting with Seán Corcoran to outline project plans and discuss potential dates for a photographic shoot on a Waterford beach, and a meeting with Colin Shanahan, videographer, to discuss the capture of drone footage during project events.

A date for the official project photocall was confirmed for 10 January.

PROJECT EVOLUTION

JOANNE DONOHOE – TAKE THE BUS FOR A CHANGE

Project Report April/May/June 2024

PREMISE OF THE PROJECT:

Following the introduction of the levy on plastic bottles, the artist observed a growing sense of weariness among the public regarding actions framed as efforts to protect the environment. The initiative was widely perceived as lacking public sensitivity. The cost of drinks increased as a result of the levy, adding to price rises that had already been noticeable over the previous two years. Without prior public consultation, the scheme required individuals to recycle plastic bottles through a new and more inconvenient process. This necessitated additional household storage, despite the fact that most households were already paying for recycling bins.

Many people were living in limited domestic spaces and expressed a reluctance to have recycling materials visibly present in their homes. However, the return scheme required bottles to be kept in sight as a reminder to return them. This expectation was introduced at a time when many individuals were already experiencing high levels of work-related pressure and limited free time. A prevailing sense of scepticism emerged, with climate action increasingly viewed as a commercial enterprise driven by financial motives. The public were aware that they were funding the scheme, while drinks manufacturers were perceived as the primary financial beneficiaries. As a result, questions were raised regarding the effectiveness of the existing recycling system and whether plastic bottles had previously been recycled adequately.

The artist concluded that the scheme had not contributed positively to public engagement with climate action. Instead, it highlighted the importance of recognising and valuing the small, everyday actions that individuals were already taking. The project therefore sought to acknowledge these

efforts, emphasising that ordinary actions mattered and positioning the public as “Average Ordinary Everyday Superhero.” This perspective informed the broader project aim, which focused on encouraging individuals to leave their cars at home and consider more climate-friendly modes of transport. Lessons drawn from the bottle return scheme underscored the need for approaches that were realistic, transparent, and human-centred.

As the project was designed to culminate in a street performance as part of SPRAOI 2025, several core elements were identified as essential: inspiration, motivation, sound, spectacle and an appropriate narrative.

In terms of inspiration, the concept of heroism was explored. The cloak was identified as a recognisable symbol of heroism. Consequently, canvas cloaks were selected as the primary artistic medium and visible creative element of the project.

The motivational aim of the performance was to encourage the public to reflect more consciously on how they moved through the world.

Sound design was informed by environmental research. According to Climate Change: Regional Climate Model Predictions for Ireland (Community Climate Change Consortium for Ireland, 2001), Ireland’s climate was projected to become wetter, stormier, and drier, with the most significant changes occurring in December and June. Rain sticks were therefore selected to provide an auditory reminder of the tangible effects of climate change, alongside spoken word elements.

Spectacle was achieved through the use of superhero cloaks as moving canvases within the performance. These elements contributed to the theatrical and narrative dimensions of the work and could also be displayed in advance to build public engagement in the lead-up to SPRAOI.

The narrative structure of the performance was organised around the themes of past, present and future. The past examined historical documents and letters describing the use of public transport in everyday life, with attention given to pace and quality of life. The present focused on contemporary movement patterns, exploring how speed, cost-efficiency and productivity shaped daily decisions. The future considered models such as Luxembourg’s free public transport system and extended to speculative imaginings of future modes of travel not yet realised.

January 2024

The first prototype of the rain stick was produced, alongside initial design work and material research for the capes. The cape design was intentionally kept simple while retaining a sense of movement and dynamism.

Participants from ACT 1 were contacted and informed that the second strand of ACT Waterford was underway.

In February, contact was made with a dressmaker, and design concepts were submitted for appraisal. Confirmation was received that a pattern incorporating wire—allowing the cape to be moulded and shaped—was feasible. Two meetings were held with the dressmaker to discuss construction and practical considerations.

A second prototype of the rain stick was developed during this period. Efforts were made to source bamboo of sufficient size within Ireland in order to produce biodegradable instruments. However, this proved challenging, as suitable bamboo was not available locally. Alternative approaches were explored, including the use of thinner bamboo, although this process was found to be time-consuming and technically complex.



The second rain stick prototype was constructed using eight recycled curtain rings and wooden skewers assembled within thin bamboo. The rings were tied together using cotton thread, and the instrument was gradually assembled by hand. While the gaps between the bamboo sections did not allow the stones to move as freely as intended, the rain stick nonetheless produced an effective and interesting sound with a more erratic and unpredictable quality.

CREATIVE IRELAND WORKSHOP FOR CREATIVE CLIMATE ACTION FACILITATORS

Joanne attended the Creative Ireland workshop for Creative Climate Action facilitators, which took place at the Matheson Creativity Hub in the main building of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham. The workshop brought together representatives from 19 Creative Climate Action projects, providing an opportunity to share learning, challenges, and approaches to public engagement.

Several projects resonated strongly with Joanne's own practice, in particular *We Built the City on Rock and Coal*, *Tern the Tide*, and *Divergently Together*, represented at the workshop by Alan James Burns.

Divergently Together – Alan James Burns

Alan James Burns was identified as a particularly relevant contact due to the shared conceptual focus of both projects on moving more consciously through the world. *Divergently Together* explored the contribution that neurodivergent and disabled people could make to addressing climate change, despite often being overlooked as valuable contributors. The project highlighted that people with lived experience of disability possess essential skill sets for responding to the climate emergency, including resilience, resourcefulness, and specialist knowledge gained through navigating a world of barriers. It also emphasised that neurodivergent thinking, characterised by creative and non-linear exploratory patterns, could significantly support climate mitigation solutions, yet remained largely excluded from mainstream climate action.

As part of this exchange, Alan James Burns shared a photograph of a location in Waterford where metal poles were installed near a busy pedestrian area. When wet, these poles created glare that caused blind spots for visually impaired people, making the area difficult and potentially dangerous to navigate. Alan had completed his work in Waterford and proposed the issue as a possible element for Joanne's project. This highlighted an opportunity to collaborate with visually impaired participants, which was identified as a potentially valuable and meaningful direction for future development.

It was noted that when the poles were temporarily covered with cardboard for an event, the issue was resolved. This example reinforced the value of co-design and workshop-based approaches with visually impaired communities and prompted reflection on the importance of greater inclusivity within the project's forthcoming summer programme of events.

We Built the City on Rock and Coal

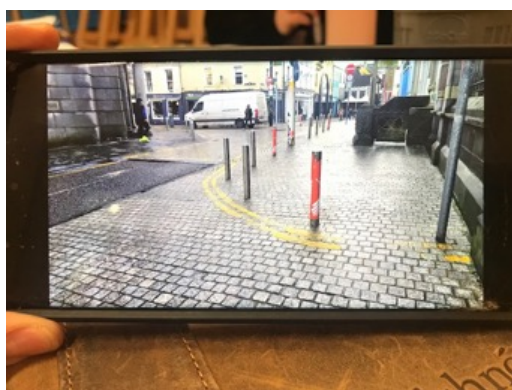
This project was of particular interest due to its theatrical format and strong emphasis on audience interaction. Joanne engaged with **Jessamyn Fairfield**, the project's representative, and planned a follow-up online meeting to discuss the project's outcomes and processes in more detail. The project brought together scientists and theatre makers to deliver an interactive performance driven by research, comedy, music, and community concerns, demonstrating an engaging and accessible approach to climate action that offered valuable inspiration for Joanne's own work.

Tern the Tide

Tern the Tide was notable for its approach to public engagement, particularly its focus on commuters. The project integrated artworks into everyday commuting environments, positioning them in locations visible to commuters and passers-by. The workshop series fed into a culminating artwork installed on Irish Rail-owned premises along the Dublin–Rosslare train route, encouraging engagement from both train passengers and local communities.

Overall, the day at IMMA was experienced as constructive and supportive, promoted relationship-building among Creative Climate Action artists. It also provided a forum for discussing shared challenges related to public engagement, project visibility and sustaining climate-focused creative work.

Joanne was documented at the event with an early prototype of the rain stick, reflecting the ongoing material development of the project.



Imma Creative Climate Action Artists Day.



Joanne at the event with a rainstick prototype.

MEN'S SHED

Due to illness, the construction of the rain sticks and the planned collaboration with the Men's Shed in Waterford was temporarily put on hold and was scheduled to resume on Friday, 7 June. Despite this delay, a number of productive meetings had taken place, during which various ideas were tested through a process of trial and error. These discussions resulted in a clear plan and the sourcing of appropriate materials. The workshops were scheduled to run over a four-week period, with the aim of producing 12 rain sticks in time for 5 July. A break in the workshop schedule was planned for 15 June.



CAPES

Following several meetings with Ann Welsh, a local dress designer, the decision was made to abandon the use of canvas dust sheets for the capes, as this approach proved to be excessively wasteful. Instead, it was agreed that the capes would be constructed from calico fabric and lined for durability and comfort. The project placed an emphasis on participant involvement in the design process, with participants invited to design and hand-dye their capes using a batik technique developed during Stage One of the Take the Bus for a Change project. This approach enabled participants to build upon and apply skills they had already acquired.

Multiple meetings with Ann Welsh were required to coordinate the production process, as the fabric needed to be dyed prior to garment construction. Once dyed, Ann Welsh would complete the finishing of the capes to ensure they were suitable for performance use. These workshops were scheduled to take place on Saturdays over a four-week period in July, hosted at Grow HQ on the Dunmore Road. It was anticipated that afternoon sessions could be introduced to accommodate two participant groups.

CYCLE IRELAND RIDE LEADER TRAINING.

On 6 June, Joanne completed a Ride Leader Training Course. As she had not cycled for several years and intended to bring the capes onto the Greenway, with the option of involving her SETU group on the Waterford Greenway, the training was identified as an important step in building cycling confidence and ensuring safe participation in future project activities.



SPRAOI WORKSHOP WITH CD COVERS

Joanne facilitated workshops over the Spraoi Bank Holiday weekend, working one-to-one with members of the public. She chatted with participants about CO₂ emissions and their impact on the environment. Prior to the workshops, Joanne sought Information on CO₂ emissions from experts within the Active Travel Unit of Waterford City and County Council. These conversations then shaped the artistic output, with participants drawing their reflections and responses directly onto the CD covers.



TAKE THE BUS FOR A CHANGE WITH SCHOOLS – AVERAGE ORDINARY EVERYDAY SUPERHERO

With funding from Creative Ireland Waterford, Joanne ran a series of 6 workshops in 3 schools on the Dunmore Road, the original location for 'Take the Bus for a Change' project to coincide with the ACT Project. The idea underpinning this was students would create a superhero cape from canvas using techniques such as painting, batik and collage based on the theme of sustainable living. Not only will cape represent the student's artistic expression; it also symbolised their commitment to sustainable living and conscientious decision-making. The concept of the "Average Ordinary Everyday Superhero" cape resonated with the students as it highlighted the notion that every action, no matter how small, has the potential to make a difference.

Earlier in the Creative Ireland project, the participants learnt about emissions through a team game and create collaborative drawings to process and chat about what they learned.

The participants chose their own subject to research. Everything from Komodo Dragons to Reefs to football to Make up. They researched how their subject contributed positively and negatively to climate change. Discussed their part in it and what they could do to help and then made Zines from the research as a way to inform others.

Finally each school made a canvas (one was thrifted from a charity shop) and placed their trees they drew in the first workshop so that it became a unique forest. It was a collaborative piece and after the tree drawings were added the students coloured in the trees. The final message was that every mark you make matters in the World.



SALVAGE CHRISTMAS CARD WORKSHOPS FOR MEN'S SHEDS

The final workshop with the Men's Shed group was the *Salvage Christmas* card workshop, which focused on reuse and creative upcycling. Building on skills developed in earlier phases, the facilitator introduced a collage technique using salvaged and easily sourced materials. This technique was designed to be transferable, allowing participants to apply it to future woodwork projects and to donated materials within the shed. The workshop was highly successful and aligned closely with the Men's Shed's existing culture of repair, reuse and waste reduction. Surplus materials from the workshop were donated for use in a future community youth project in New Ross.

Beekeeping activities at the Men's Shed formed an important strand of sustainable practice and community enterprise. The group maintains four active hives, producing honey, beeswax, and propolis. Income generated from the sale of these products supports the ongoing running of the shed and contributes to a local circular economy. Beeswax is reused to make sandwich wrappers, while propolis is sold to a local producer for use in natural skincare products.

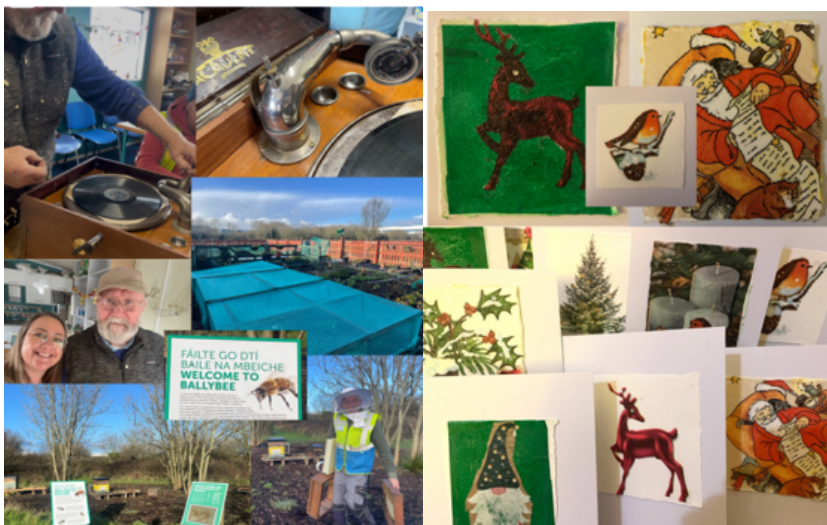
Discussions with participants highlighted strong engagement with climate action themes. While challenges were noted around local public transport reliability, the group demonstrated a clear commitment to reducing environmental impact through everyday practices. These included reusing discarded pallets for kindling, constructing furniture from recycled materials, and prioritising repair over replacement.

The project also supported the development of a dedicated creative space within the Men's Shed. New and existing members contributed artwork, resulting in the evolution of the space from a shared table into a fully functioning art room that continues to support creative activity beyond the project.

The final visit coincided with a reflective closing moment for the group, reinforcing one of the project's key themes: the value of slowing down, shared experience and wellbeing alongside productivity. Participants expressed strong interest in engaging further with the project outcomes, including visiting the associated exhibition.



Men's Shed Shadow Paintings/Stories



Men's Shed, Earth friendly practice.

Men's shed Recycled Christmas Cards.

ONGOING WORK WITH THE MEN'S SHEDS

The Men's Shed completed their contribution to the construction of the rain sticks, after which the instruments required painting. Joanne made contact with IWA Waterford, who expressed interest in collaborating again following previous work together during *Science Week*. This phase of work was scheduled to commence on Friday, 31 January, following a visit to the Men's Shed on the same date. During this visit, Joanne collected approximately 150 wooden panels prepared by the Men's Shed. These panels were salvaged from recently decommissioned wooden ballot boxes, which had been replaced by plastic alternatives. Additional materials were sourced from donated wood supplied by the local community, reinforcing the Men's Shed's role as leaders in material reuse and landfill diversion. Joanne also salvaged additional cardboard tubing from a fabric outlet in Newbridge to facilitate the construction of further rain sticks.

At this stage, a venue for the end-of-project exhibition had not yet been confirmed. However, The New Municipal Gallery was suggested as a potential location. While reviewing the gallery's website, Joanne encountered an image from its first exhibition and was particularly drawn to the eco-friendly presentation of drawings. Although it might not have been feasible to alter the planned presentation of the collected journey drawings displayed on the wooden panels, this approach remained an important reference point.

Discussions also took place with fellow ACT Waterford artist Molly King regarding the possibility of a joint exhibition that would bring together findings from their respective ACT Waterford projects. Additional collaborative elements were considered, including a wall-based work by Seán or sand art leading toward his completed mural, creating a cohesive exhibition narrative aligned with ACT Waterford objectives. It was further proposed that SPRAOI could open the exhibition with an outdoor performance. These ideas were identified for discussion at the full ACT Waterford group meeting scheduled for 7 February.



THIS IS SO SKETCHY

The next phase of the project focused on the development of the *Sketchy Bus* initiative, an idea that had been in long-term incubation. This phase centred on engaging bus passengers through informal, participatory drawing sessions conducted on local bus routes. Interactions took place on a one-to-

one basis or in small groups, including families and couples, and combined drawing with conversation.

Participants were encouraged to engage in unconscious drawing, doodling, and observational sketching inspired by views from the bus, such as surrounding landscapes and streetscapes. These creative activities provided a relaxed entry point for discussion around the carbon cycle, personal experiences of public transport, and the wider impact of transport-related emissions. The approach also explored the creative and reflective potential of travel time, drawing on the concept of *dolce far niente*, or the art of doing nothing, by reframing waiting, delays, or routine journeys as opportunities for wellbeing and reflection.

At the conclusion of each session, participants were invited to complete a short survey, provide contact details, consent to photography for social media where appropriate, and receive invitations to the end-of-project exhibition. Drawings created during the sessions were retained for display, with the intention of including short anecdotes from the journeys either directly on the artworks or as accompanying interpretive text.

As part of the SPRAOI festival, ACT Waterford artist Joanne Donohoe planned and delivered this public engagement activity as a Creative Climate Action intervention. During the festival weekend, she spent time travelling on local bus routes, offering free, one-to-one speed sketching sessions to members of the public using public transport. These encounters were framed as “average, ordinary, everyday” interactions, combining drawing with informal conversations about climate change, weather patterns, and transport choices.

By situating the activity within the everyday setting of the bus, the project aimed to meet people where they already were, recognising and valuing their decision to use public transport while creating space for reflection on climate-friendly travel behaviours. The sessions took place over several hours across Friday and Saturday during the SPRAOI weekend, allowing for flexibility and sustained engagement with a wide range of participants.

IRISH WHEELCHAIR ASSOCIATION

The Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) Adult and Young Adult groups engaged in a series of accessible creative workshops that used drawing as a tool to explore climate action through lived experience. Activities such as unconscious and collaborative drawing removed barriers to participation and created space for reflection, wellbeing and discussion.

Climate conversations were grounded in what participants identified as personally important in nature and how climate change may impact these values. Participants shared travel experiences and challenges related to public transport, mobility, and independence, contributing first-hand perspectives on inclusive climate action. These discussions informed the creation of artworks and shadow pieces that centred disabled voices within the final exhibition.

The project supported increased confidence and awareness around climate-friendly travel, including engagement with the TFI Independent Travel Support Scheme. For several participants, this marked a shift toward greater independence and reduced reliance on private car travel.

Accessibility was embedded throughout the project. Participant-led contributions, including the production of Braille text for the exhibition, ensured inclusive communication of climate themes and demonstrated how climate action initiatives can meaningfully include disabled people as contributors rather than recipients.

By situating climate action within everyday experiences — such as travel, access, and choice — the project highlighted the importance of inclusive systems in enabling sustainable behaviour. Hosting the exhibition in Carraigpheirish Library, a space regularly used by both groups, reinforced the project's commitment to visibility, access and community-based climate engagement.



Irish Wheelchair Adult Group

END OF PROJECT EXHIBITION (NOV 2025 – JAN 2026)

The artist visited Carraigpheirish Library in September 2025 and was given a tour of the available exhibition spaces. Following this visit, the artist selected the space closest to the main library area due to its high level of footfall. This location provided easy access for visiting patrons and was fully wheelchair accessible. One main wall was identified as suitable for hanging the paintings, and this became the focal point of the exhibition. The work was clearly visible upon entering the library.

Once the exhibition was installed, the artist facilitated four workshops on the carbon cycle for two adjoining schools, Educate Together and the Gaelscoil. The library liaised with the schools and managed the booking of the workshops.

The workshops took place within the exhibition space. Students were given the opportunity to view the artwork, ask questions about the exhibition, and participate in an hour-long workshop. Activities included playing the carbon cycle game, which explained why climate change occurs, and creating collaborative drawings to reflect on what they had learned about the carbon cycle.

Informal discussions also took place around how students travel to school. One student spoke about taking the bus and the difficulty of waiting at a bus stop without shelter. This led to a wider discussion about the limitations of shelter provision when it is not available at the stop a person uses. Another student shared that he cycled to school every day and used rain gear in wet weather. When asked if he would choose to travel by car instead, he said he enjoyed cycling and would not change it.

A total of four classes took part, with an average of eighteen students per workshop, drawn from second class and fourth class. Only one student cycled to school, while an average of two students per class travelled by bus. Waiting for the bus caused anxiety for several students, with one student noting that buses were often late, resulting in him arriving late to school and feeling stressed. Approximately twelve students walked to school occasionally when the weather was favourable.

The group discussed the benefits of having time between leaving home and arriving at school. Walking and cycling were identified as ways to incorporate exercise, increase blood flow and oxygen levels, and allow time to mentally prepare for the day ahead.

The workshops also included a game called *Hurricane*, a teamwork-based activity that introduced ideas about humans' place on Earth, the need for shelter and family, and exposure to the elements. The sessions concluded with students using rain sticks and thunder boards, which proved to be an engaging and popular activity. The sounds created were particularly suited to the library environment, as they were natural and meditative. Working together, the students created the sounds of light and heavy rainstorms and collectively recreated the sound of the sea.

The exhibition was open to all participating groups and to the general public. It ran until the end of January, with late opening on Thursdays. Promotion took place through social media, with the library and participating groups also sharing posts. Images displayed within the exhibition guided viewers through the key ideas and concepts explored throughout the project, with interactive elements encouraging participation, including sharing bus stories, building stone formations, and experimenting with the rain sticks.

(For full project report, see Appendix 1)

Take the Bus For a Change

A Multisensory Exhibition of work, ideas, findings and experiences by participants of the project facilitated by ACT Waterford Artist Joanne Donohoe.

Carraigpheirish Library,
Gracedieu Road, Co. Waterford.

All welcome during library opening hours
Mon-Wed 10am-5pm
Thurs 10am-8pm
Fri 10am-5pm
closed Saturday & Sunday.

Exhibition runs from December through January 2026



Welcome to the Exhibition

“Take the Bus For A Change”

an option for everyone regardless of ability
This is an ACT Waterford Creative Climate Action project that has resulted in paintings, travel stories and engaging art by members of the Deise Men's Shed, members of the Irish Wheelchair Association and members of the public. How you move matters to our World, let's move with the planet in mind.



Just Draw!



The Marks
that you make
on this World
matter ♡

All of the creative workshops from Take The Bus For A Change involve doodling and guided drawing exercises. Fun, creative and a simple way to connect to your surroundings. Anyone can draw. It's a great way to relax. Start by drawing on paper you are going to recycle, it takes the pressure off!



Artist Joanne Donohoe
from ACT Waterford

Creative Climate Action

Welcomes your school to take part in a informative and fun workshop to learn all about Carbon emissions and the effect that this has on our Climate.
How we move through our World matters!

Teambuilding games

Collaborative learning

Drawing activities

Create a Rainstorm of Sound

Mindful Art activities

Tour of the Exhibition

Dec 4th 10am - 1pm

Dec 5th 10am - 1pm

Carraigpheirish Library



Workshops run for 1hr and 20mins



SPRAOI



SETU partnered with Waterford Spraoi to create artworks and public participation opportunities that align with goals and ambitions outlined by Creative Ireland's Creative Climate Action Project initiative. Spraoi initiated several biodiversity led conversations, Spraoi artists suggested focusing emerging ideas around shoreline. A working title: Between Land and Sea was adopted and Dungarvan Bay was selected as the prime location for biodiversity research and artistic inspiration. In summary:

South East Technological University is partnering Spraoi to harness artistic, community, scientific and media resources to heighten awareness of the 'in between' coastal zone bridging landscape and

sea, the Cunnigar in Dungarvan. This artistic project aims to stimulate public conversations that alters perceptions of and human actions towards this often forgotten zone of biodiversity.

INITIAL 2024 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The project's research and development phase began in April 2024 with a site visit to Dungarvan Bay. Spraoi artists, biodiversity specialists, and community stakeholders undertook an exploratory walk along the Gaeltacht na Rinne coastline, guided by Marie Power (The Sea Gardener) and oyster farmers Michael Burke and Cliona Mhic Giolla Chuda of Meitheal Trá na Rinne. This visit provided artists and contributors with first-hand experience of the coastal environment, its plant life, marine ecosystems, and sustainable local enterprises. The visit also served as an important source of inspiration, generating ideas that would inform the creative direction of the project. Participants included representatives from Spraoi, SETU, Waterford City and County Council, and local business and community organisations. Insights gathered during the visit directly informed the development of the project's themes and artistic concepts.

In May 2024, a follow-up brainstorming session was held at Spraoi Studios, bringing together Spraoi's artistic team and Waterford City and County Council's Biodiversity Officer. This session explored key artistic and scientific themes, including biodiversity loss, habitat degradation, rising sea levels, and the impacts of climate change on marine species such as seaweed. The group discussed the importance of communication strategies that avoid overly negative messaging, identifying humour, storytelling, memory, and nostalgia as effective tools for engaging audiences emotionally. Cultural references, folklore, contemporary artists, and potential partnerships with environmental organisations were also explored as ways to enrich the project's narrative and reach.

Further research and development activity took place throughout 2024. In June, core artists were reconvened to refine responses to the project brief. In September, Spraoi engaged with a range of community groups in Dungarvan and Waterford City to explore potential participation and ensure alignment with Creative Climate Action objectives. These included schools, Men's and Women's Sheds, libraries, festival organisers, heritage groups, and chambers of commerce. From October onwards, individual artists were commissioned, and by November 2024 a programme of activities for 2025 was agreed with key stakeholders.

Together, these stages laid a strong foundation for a creative, place-based climate action project that connects artistic practice, scientific knowledge, and community participation to inspire awareness, dialogue, and positive environmental action along Waterford's coast.



Artistic and scientific themes explored included.

- Loss of habitat is the biggest threat to biodiversity.
- Loss of species due to raised sea levels, plus rising water temperatures will impact other species. For example, we saw how different sea weeds thrive at particular tidal levels/areas, this will be disrupted.
- Comedy may be an effective medium communicate with people, because members of the public can be jaded to environmental doom messaging.
- Salmon of knowledge was well known in folklore. The tale may have potential.
- Groups like Fair Seas do good work in this area, could they be a partner?
- Good work is being done tracking migrating birds. There has been a Killarney project tracking cuckoos to and from Africa. Is there inspiration potential?
- Memory and nostalgia really work in communicating with people. Personal memories and experiences make emotional connections with people.
- Creating a biodiversity inspired public participation game was explored.
- Participants said this project should be ambitious, its message outcomes and performance capable of dissemination through national/international events.

ONGOING 2024 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS:

June: Reconvene core artists and biodiversity specialists' group to create an focused activity plan to commence Dungarvan public engagement in September.

September: Meet representative groups such as schools and outline involvement plan.

October: Commission artists and environmentalists to work within the community.

November: Further community engagement to facilitate post-Christmas actions.

January/February: Commence artists' engagement workshops with schools and community groups. Elements of this work will continue through to April.

February/March/April: Create core elements of the presentation/performance.

April: Premiere presentation during West Waterford Food Festival.

August: Present Between Land and Sea at Spraoi International Street Arts Festival.



PROJECT PROGRESS JANUARY 2025

In early 2025 Spraoi artists re-commenced conversations to determine how to create an artwork that engaged the public and motivated positive biodiversity actions. To capture and portray the importance of seaweeds on shorelines Spraoi's team opted to create a large-scale art installation. This seemed like a particularly symbiotic option as it had always been planned to premiere the work at Waterford Festival of Food 2025.

The team envisaged an installation piece illustrating the grades of seaweed and various sea levels along the shoreline. The event was now being planned as an immersive installation with atmospheric lighting, unique soundscape, and decorative elements. One Spraoi team member scouted Dungarvan, measuring and photographing various sites. The artistic team decided Dungarvan Castle was the most atmospheric location. The Castle Grounds would provide a quiet controlled environment to transform into an immersive 'under the sea' experience. Public access could be managed comfortably.

Practicalities of presenting at Dungarvan Castle quickly emerged. As this project is to be presented at both Waterford Festival of Food (Dungarvan) and Spraoi International Street Arts Festival (Waterford City), a complimentary/comparative location would be required for both venues. It is envisaged to be an outdoor experience where weather and differing times of year raised issues, e.g. darkness in April is at 8.00 p.m. approx. and 9.30 p.m. approx. in August. The team also recognised that clearly communicating Creative Climate Action messaging was vital. They had concerns that the installation format risked being too subtle for audiences to absorb during their visit.

This prompted revisions of stylistic approaches and delivery options. Further team discussions were undertaken relating the project's creative content and alternative approached to performance locations. Additionally, further issues arose in terms of access to Dungarvan Castle as it emerged the food festival planned some events there. Consequently, Spraoi's artistic and planning teams yet again reorientated their thinking.

During 2024 discussions Waterford City and County Council Biodiversity Officer and Spraoi artists had identified the potential of humour to communicate important and otherwise hard to digest concepts and messages. This idea was re-visited. Meetings were held with Spraoi artists and independent arts practitioners. A new performance content and approach was visioned. It aimed to be more accessible to audiences of varying ages and backgrounds, particularly in varied festival environments. This new plan embraced live performance to engage with the audience. A street performance encounter styled as a 'game show' was brain-stormed, where participating audiences actively took part in an informal education game. Questions, games, and gags with an environmental theme would inform content. This format would 'sit' better within the environs of the festival environment of both the Waterford Festival of Food and Spraoi international Street Arts Festival. If successful in Dungarvan and Waterford the team hopes this format has touring potential to other festivals and events nationally.

This approach is an active way of communicating concepts around climate, biodiversity, habitats, and environment. It is informed by concerns expressed that 'doom and gloom' messaging around climate change make people switch off from this vital message. Communities experience feelings of helplessness, creating beliefs that their own efforts make no difference. This project aims to try and communicate climate messages with humour so that critical awareness leading to positive local climate action is achieved.

2025 PROJECT ACTIVITIES ROLL OUT:

February/March: Design and construction of the 'Seaweed Girl' character commenced at Spraoi Studios. Liaison with Waterford Festival of Food team also intensified. Information relating to the project was circulated to Waterford/Dungarvan newspapers, local radio, and via online outlets.

April: 'Seaweed Girl' performances premiered over two days during Waterford Festival of Food in Dungarvan. Good weather ensured she interacted with thousands of spectators and workshopped with children. These intimate encounters with children and parents aimed to cultivate an affinity with

sea creatures under threat from warming seas and other hazards. Seaweed Girl stayed in character throughout. She also offered an array of authentic seaweed and shells for families to handle and learn about. These conversations provided genuine informal learning space for children and parents. The Waterford Festival of Food performances over two days generated additional awareness raising added-value as a result of substantial spin-off coverage in print, radio, and online media.



August: ‘Seaweed Girl’ returned for performances over two days during Spraoi International Street Arts Festival. Again she attracted awareness from thousands of spectators and generated significant social media. Her performances at Spraoi also integrated with on-street presentations by SETU science promotion team CALMAST, which included environmental dimensions to their displays and demonstrations at Spraoi Festival.

NOVEMBER:



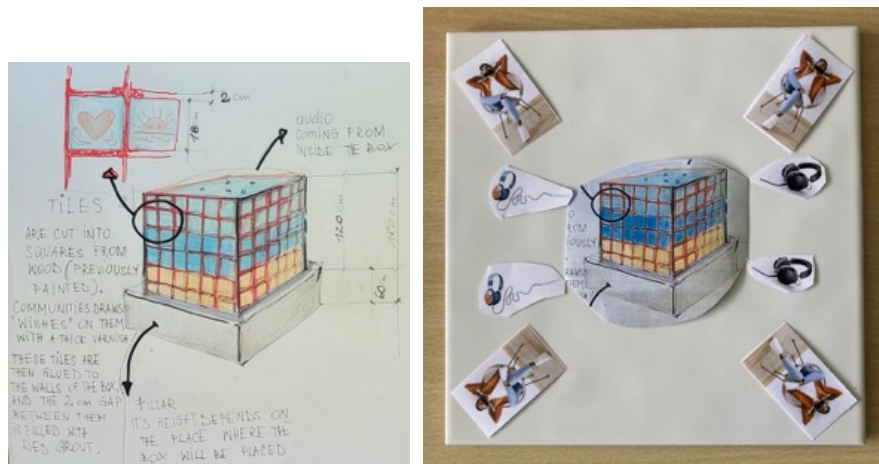
In November 'Seaweed Girl' returned for seasonal visits to Christmas festivals in Waterford and Dungarvan. These provided opportunities to reinforce her climate action messages, e.g. minimise gift wrapping and packaging and bring home a piece of plastic if strolling by the sea.



Also in November Spraoi artists commenced workshops with young adults at Waterford Youth Reach. Together they produced a collection of marine themed etched tiles. These were later added to 'The Cube' artwork.

THE CUBE

As referenced earlier, during the course of project development Spraoi's artistic team identified value in working with young adults who had not previously been engaged in climate discussions or activism. Artists felt it would be valuable to open such opportunities because new perceptions, insights, and responses might emerge from such young people. Spraoi then began to identify such a group, or collection of individuals. The team also grappled to identify an artistic idea for such a group to engage with and create an additional dimension to this Creative Climate Action project.



The artistic team conceived a one metre cube on plinth. Each side would house thirty-six tiles, each etched with climate related marine images. These would be created by young adults, following some days of climate awareness raising exercises and discussions. Waterford Youth Reach agreed to participate and its students created the tiles. Later at Spraoi Studios they added their individual tiles to 'The Cube's' framework.

An accompanying soundtrack is being composed. It will reference the project's marine and climate themes. This soundtrack will be fitted within 'The Cube' and will be accessible to listeners via headphones as they sit and contemplate the artwork's images. This aspect of 'Between Land and Sea' aims to provide a quieter, more reflective, set of messages that urge people of all ages to act in their own small ways to protect shorelines.



Families Encounter in 'Seaweed Girl's Cave', Waterford.



Youth Reach Students and Tutors at Spraoi Studios.

(Full report see Appendix 2)

REFLECTING THE PAST, IMAGING THE FUTURE (CLIMATE ACTION IN THE COMERAGHS) - MOLLIE ANNA KING

JANUARY - JUNE 2004

Over this period, Mollie conducted research in the area of Bleantasour Mountain and Milk Hill near Ballymacarbry. According to the heritage data maps, there was a Booley Hut on this land. Mollie drove to the base of the mountain in early March to climb and photographed the remains of the hut, but upon arrival, learned there is a farm at the beginning of the walk. She was unsure whether this land is private and intended on asking locals.

She has met with Eugene Costollo, an academic based in UCC who has written extensively on the Booley Hut phenomenon. They had a conversation about the history of these places, how and when they were occupied as well as their use and construction. She hoped to use the information she gathered, to connect with farmers in the area as well as women's groups, who may be interested in fixing up or building a hut which can be used recreationally.

She has also contacted the farmers group behind the 2021 Uplands Project, and they are looking at sharing their experiences and knowledge of the area, in relation to the folklore of the area, the local plants and potential usage of sheep's wool as a structural material.

She visited Hooke Park in Dorset, to learn more about their building work with local materials. The campus cuts its own trees, turns it to lumber whilst the students design and build a structure with these materials each year. Mollie taught a ceramics workshop on-site for several days and watched how the students came together to work on their newest project. She found the whole experience inspirational and considered designing a weeklong Meitheal or workshop in which people gather together to learn traditional building skills as they work together on an architectural structure that would function in the community.

In late May, Mollie attended a Hemp Building Course, run by Steve Allin in Westmeath. Together, herself and twelve others learned to plaster, build and pour hemp lime in various ratios. Using these methods, they worked on an old stone house and insulated roofs, plastered walls, poured floors and built walls. It was a fascinating process and I was reminded of the capacity to learn from one another and create something wonderful with a group of people.

Going forward, Mollie is going to connect with those in Ballymacarbry and surrounding areas to learn more about the landscape and see whether there are interesting spaces that can be utilised and to find out whether there would be any interest in forming a Meitheal group to work on a cabin together.

Commented [EG1]: "I" can this be changed to "Mollie"



JULY 2024

Over the past several weeks, the artist visited Ballymacarbry and the surrounding areas to gather information on how people historically lived and worked in the area. During this research, she heard a number of personal and locally held stories, particularly from residents of Gleannanore. She met with Kevin and Betty, the only people currently living there, and learned about the remoteness of the place and how access would have been even more challenging during Kevin's childhood. Kevin shared several family photographs, including images of former residents, Billy and Peter, which provided valuable insight into the social history of the area.

Through these conversations, the artist became increasingly aware of the strong family ties and personal connections associated with Gleannanore. While the place was experienced as visually striking and evocative, it also felt deeply private, raising questions about the appropriateness of developing a project in a location with such personal significance. The artist also noted that many of the ruined houses are divided into locally held plots, and that land ownership and access would need to be carefully considered. During these visits, she photographed several structures, including a barn supported by a tree trunk, which prompted reflections on themes of support structures, ageing, inventiveness, craft, and resourcefulness.

The artist also met with Liam, who runs Nire Valley Glamping. During their conversation, Liam mentioned having spare sheep's wool, which the artist intends to follow up on through further visits and interviews with him and his partner.

Kevin and Betty directed the artist to the house of Mary Niblett. By chance, the artist encountered Mary in her garden while she was counting butterflies and took the opportunity to stop and speak with her. Mary shared memories of her youth growing up in Gleannanore and explained how the original inhabitants settled the area by crossing the mountain before gradually moving downwards, rather than populating the village from the lower slopes upward.

Mary also spoke about a previous local project in Ballymacarbry that involved gathering stories and historical information from residents, resulting in a published booklet about the area's history. The artist continues to review this material, reflecting on how the images, stories, and articles might inform future project development. Together, they reviewed the Gleannanore Commonage Report, part of the wider *Comeragh Upland Communities* project, which outlines local farmers' visions for the area and provides context for ongoing uplands initiatives.

Further research included conversations with local historian Michael Desmond, who recommended several relevant texts, including *Peasant Openfield Farming and its Territorial Organisation in County Tipperary*, which, while not directly related to the Comeragh Mountains, offers useful insight into how commonages functioned in a regional context. The artist also revisited *Meitheal: A Study of Co-operative Labour in Rural Ireland*, alongside additional reading on dwelling construction, thermal needs, the use of local materials in ceramics, community-based textile production, and cultural interpretations of trees.

As part of skills development, the artist completed a natural dyeing course with Malú Colorín and is exploring the potential use of sheep's wool in its raw and dyed forms for thermal wall coverings and hangings. She contacted Aisling at Sheep's Wool Insulation in Wicklow to learn more about wool insulation production in Ireland. Alongside this research, the artist became interested in the story of Lackendara, a Waterford man who lived in a cave in the Comeragh Mountains after returning from war. While its relevance to the project remains uncertain, the story continues to inform the artist's thinking.

The artist is currently sourcing maps of commonage areas in the Comeragh Mountains and expects to gain further insight into uplands-related projects in the coming weeks.



AUG 2024

The artist met with Dr Owen Carton to discuss the Uplands Project and the farmers involved. Owen was a formerly Teagasc's Chief Environmental Scientist. The meeting was described as highly informative and inspiring. During the discussion, the artist shared ideas around slow tourism and the potential for making traditional booley huts available as accommodation across the Comeragh Mountains. Owen referenced, without naming, a farmer currently working with Waterford City & County Council on the development of a new walkway on their land. The artist requested to be put in contact with this farmer, and Owen agreed to make enquiries. He also mentioned Cathriona Foley, a local advisor, and the artist expressed interest in being introduced to her.

The artist also met with researcher Niamh Butler, who has a particular interest in commonage. Niamh indicated her willingness to give a public talk, which prompted the artist to consider developing a series of community engagement events inspired by the "Tuesday Tea Talk" format previously used during the Uplands Project to engage local farmers. The artist proposed expanding this format to include the wider local community, creating opportunities for discussion, knowledge-sharing and connection.

Potential contributors identified included Eugene Costollo, who could speak on booley huts and transhumance in the uplands, as well as a practitioner working with sheep's wool, to explore its

traditional and contemporary uses. The artist proposed contributing by preparing food and refreshments for these events and facilitating informal conversations with participants.

In addition, the artist expressed interest in delivering practical workshops, such as tapestry making or sheep's wool felting, to demonstrate creative and functional uses of wool, including its potential as aesthetic insulation for small spaces. Initial steps would include contacting local sheep farmers to source raw wool, with the processes of washing, carding, and dyeing potentially forming part of the workshop activity itself. The artist noted the need to explore whether funding opportunities may be available to support the development of these activities.

SEPTEMBER 2024



As part of ongoing research and relationship-building, the artist explored opportunities to collaborate with practitioners working in regenerative and bioregional contexts. This included the potential involvement of a Commonland colleague, Pieter, who lives with his family on a smallholding in the Knockmealdown Mountains. While connected to the electricity grid, his household operates regeneratively in other respects, including the use of locally sourced sheep's wool for mulching. This practice aligns closely with the artist's interest in regenerative wool markets

and their potential role within the wider bioregion, an area also being explored through the Bioregional Weaving Lab portfolio of concepts.

Connections were also made to broader discussions around cluster villages and community-led development, which were identified as relevant to the project's evolving focus. The artist was invited to attend a related event at Dunhill Ecopark, exploring villages in the Comeragh region and the potential for linking social enterprises.

In developing the project plan, Mollie had ongoing conversations with Marina Mulligan, Biodiversity Officer from Waterford City and County Council, to ensure the project aligned with local biodiversity plans.

OCTOBER 2024

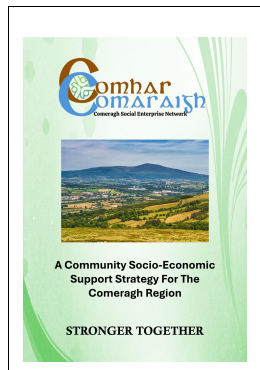
In October 2024, the artist attended the Comhar Comaraigh Official Launch and Social Enterprise Seminar, held at the Dunhill Rural Enterprise Centre. The event brought together representatives from 22 villages and 30 social enterprises and was launched by Minister Mary Butler, with facilitation by Professor Felicity Kelliher of SETU. The seminar provided valuable insight into pilot research initiatives focused on rural development, social enterprise, and community collaboration in the Comeragh region.

At the seminar, the artist met Sarah Prosser, Bioregional Weaving Network, South East Ireland CEO with whom she discussed the availability of natural materials in the Comeragh Mountains, biodiversity, and hiking routes. Sarah also identified a contact in Youghal who works with felted sheep's wool, which the artist intends to follow up on as part of ongoing material research. The artist also met Aoife, who runs the Ballymacarbry Community Centre, and learned about plans to install solar panels at the centre. This initiative was noted as strongly aligned with the project's climate action focus, and the artist intends to meet with Aoife to explore this further and understand how the solar energy will be utilised.

To strengthen engagement with the local community, the artist has continued to seek guidance and introductions from key local contacts, including Sarah Prosser and Owen Carton. The artist identified the importance of building relationships within the community before initiating workshops or public engagement activities.

Looking ahead, the artist outlined a proposed approach to community engagement centred on small-scale, hands-on workshops focused on the creation of structural felted panels using sheep's wool. These panels would be coloured with natural dyes and assembled within wooden frames to form wall structures. The proposed process prioritises learning through practice, beginning with conversations with local farmers, sourcing raw wool, and experimenting with processing techniques. The artist anticipates developing an initial installation as a research outcome, which

could be displayed at the Ballymacarbry Community Centre, before inviting community members to take part in a day-long workshop to learn and adapt the techniques themselves



MARCH 2025

In March 2025, the artist took part in a Tuesday Tea meeting with upland farmers in the Comeragh Mountains. This informal knowledge-sharing gathering focused on current challenges in upland farming and land management. Alongside invited contributors, including Owen Carton and Catriona from Teagasc, as well as researchers discussing glaciation and landscape formation, the artist engaged in discussions with farmers about her research into sheep's wool as an undervalued and underutilised material.

Farmers spoke openly about the economic pressures facing sheep farming, noting that the market value of wool fleece often falls well below the cost of shearing. Wider discussions addressed the visible impacts of climate change in Ireland's uplands, including increased weather volatility, biodiversity loss, and the widespread encroachment of bracken. Bracken expansion — often linked to reduced grazing pressure, changing land use, and warming conditions — was identified as a clear indicator of ecological imbalance within the upland environment.

These conversations reinforced the interconnected nature of climate change, biodiversity decline, and the economic challenges faced by upland farming communities. They highlighted the importance of grounding material-led climate action initiatives in the lived experience and knowledge of those who actively manage and farm these landscapes.



JULY 2025

In July 2025, as part of the Clonmel Junction Arts Festival, the artist participated in a public discussion titled *We Need Some New Material* at The Snug, a participatory design space focused on conversation, connection, and cultural infrastructure in contemporary Ireland. The event was organised in collaboration with TYPE Magazine and brought together artists, architects, and cultural practitioners to explore encounters with land, language, and local knowledge within building processes.



The artist's contribution drew directly on ongoing research into natural insulation materials, particularly sheep's wool and lime-based systems, and their relevance to older and traditional buildings. Preparation for the discussion involved sharing research images, material samples, and vernacular terminology linked to on-site making and communal labour (*meitheal*), enabling the artist to articulate emerging ideas from the Comeragh project within a public and interdisciplinary context.

This event marked a key moment of knowledge exchange during the active research phase of the project. Presenting the work publicly allowed the artist to test, clarify, and contextualise research findings, while engaging a broader audience in conversations around material sustainability, heritage skills, and climate-conscious building practices. The discussion reinforced the importance of material literacy and locally embedded knowledge as essential components of meaningful and place-based climate action.

OUTCOMES: CONTINUATION & ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

While this report reflects the formal project period beginning in early 2024, the artist intends to continue developing the work independently. A public presentation is planned for late March at Ballymacarbry Community Centre, timed to coincide with European Wool Day in Tralee.

The exhibition will be open to the local community, with particular consideration given to farmers in the Comeragh area. As this period coincides with lambing season, the exhibition is intentionally conceived as an open and informal space, allowing visitors to engage in their own time.

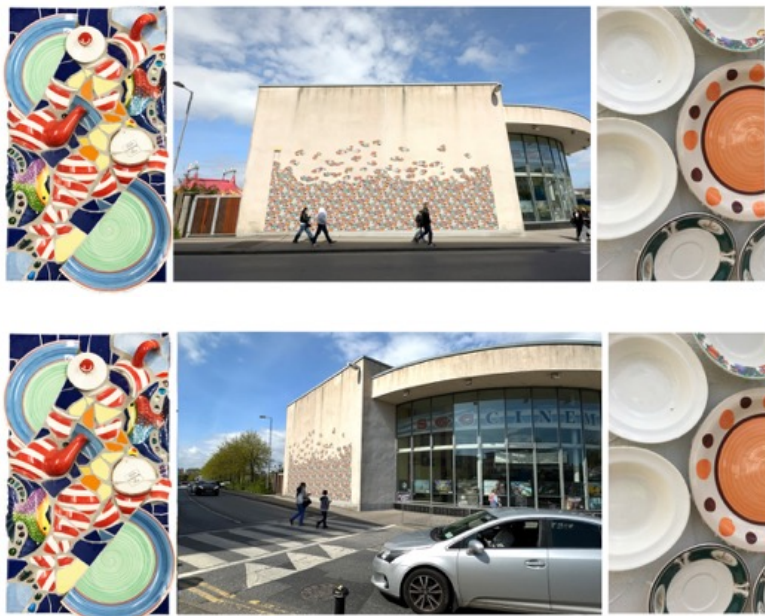
Rather than operating as a fixed programme, the exhibition will function as a space of availability, presenting panels, interviews, diagrams and contextual learning gathered over the past two years. This approach supports quiet engagement and reflection, aligning with the project's emphasis on care, accessibility and place-based climate action.



Four samples of wool insulation, 2024–2026, showing (from left to right) commercially produced wool insulation, felted wool, commercially woven wool, and locally woven wool.

(For full project report, see Appendix 3)

SEAN CORCORAN – DONATE A PLATE (CROCKERY MOUNTAIN)



INITIAL TIMELINE

Soft Launch @Calmast Event during Spraoi...August 2nd or 3rd or 4th August 2024

Release Interview, Videos and Stills from Launch...August 5th to 18th, 2024

Agree drop off locations for Crockery in Dungarvan, Waterford and Tramore

Find a **pop up workshop space/s** in Dungarvan

Share **poster graphics online**...5th to 18th August 2024

Compile and circulate a **Call to Action letter**

Visit all restaurants and cafes in Dungarvan

Drop off and Collection of donated crockery from October 1st 2024

Video demos, timelapses and prototypes revealed...from December 1st, 2024

Wake up callouts for more crockery and announce workshop dates...from January 3rd 2025

Mosaic Making Workshops at various locations...February 1st to March 9th, 2025

Grouting Workshops at various locations...March 15th to April 20th, 2025

Installation of Mosaic...April 21st to 26th, 2025

Unveiling during Festival of Food on Sunday 12 noon, April 27th, 2025

REVISED TIMELINE

Soft Launch @Calmast Event during Spraoi...August 2nd or 3rd or 4th August 2024

Release Spraoi Interview, Videos and Stills from Launch...August 5th to 18th, 2024

Release 2nd Spraoi video 3rd or 4th September

Walkabout Dungarvan and make a selfie video announcing wall...Thursday 5th September

Meet other Act teams and other collaborations, press engagements

Agree drop off locations for Crockery in Dungarvan, Waterford and Tramore and Kilmacthomas

Find a **pop up workshop space/s** in Dungarvan

Compile and circulate a **Call to Action letter**

Visit all restaurants and cafes in Dungarvan

Create and Share **poster graphics online on October 1st**

Drop off and Collection of donated crockery from October 1st 2024

Prepare materials and workshop spaces at The Art Hand and Dungarvan and another.

Video Updates, timelapses of prototypes revealed...from December 1st, 2024

Wake up callouts for more crockery and announce workshop dates...from January 3rd 2025

Mosaic Making Workshops at various locations...February 1st to March 9th, 2025, 6 weekends

Grouting Workshops at The Art Hand...March 15th to April 13th, 2025, 5 weekends

Move Mosaics to a location in Dungarvan...April 17th and 18th

Installation of Mosaic...April 21st to 25th, 2025

Tidy and Cover Mosaic...April 26th

Unveiling during Festival of Food on Sunday 12 noon, April 27th, 2025

POP UP AT SPRAOI - AN ARTISTIC EXPLORATION OF WASTE AND AWARENESS

Sean Corcoran took part in the Spraoi Festival, Waterford's annual three-day celebration of international street theatre and world music. Based in the CALMAST STEM Street, an area focused on science, technology, engineering and maths, Sean created a hands-on installation using broken plates, cups, saucers and other discarded crockery.

The display immediately caught people's attention and became a natural conversation starter. Using the shattered ceramics, Sean invited festival-goers, families, children and people of all ages to chat about the everyday objects we use without really thinking about them.

He often began with a simple question:

"How many plates or cups do you own?"

From there, the conversation deepened:

"How many do you actually use?"

"What do you do with them when they break?"

These informal exchanges encouraged people to reflect on their own habits what they buy, what they keep, and what they throw away. The broken crockery became a useful visual prompt, highlighting waste, overconsumption and the environmental impact of ordinary household items.

By turning discarded materials into an artwork, Sean used creativity as a gentle way to open up climate and sustainability conversations. The installation blended art, environmental awareness and public participation, fitting naturally within Spraoi's spirit of creativity and collaboration.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuiVz9C1Kr0>



LOCATION REVEAL

On the 5 September 2024, the project team confirmed the prominent public location for its largest collaborative mosaic to date, “Donate a Plate.” The installation will be situated in the heart of Dungarvan Town on a 48-foot-wide wall along the front façade of the local cinema, providing high visibility and daily public engagement.

The project team acknowledged the support and partnership of Dungarvan Shopping Centre, Movies at Dungarvan, ACT Waterford, CALMAST, South East Technological University, Creative Waterford, Creative Ireland, and Waterford City and County Council in enabling the delivery and siting of the work in all messaging.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuiVz9C1Kr0>

LAUNCH

Within a few weeks of launching the “Donate a Plate” project there was an exceptionally strong public response. Social media promotion reached thousands of people, with over 300 individuals signing up via the project’s event page. The team received a high volume of enquiries and messages from individuals and organisations expressing interest in participating.

Crockery donations began arriving immediately at The Art Hand studio (X42 PY92). In addition, six official countywide drop-off locations were secured and scheduled for announcement. The project team also undertook outreach visits to a range of food businesses and charity shops across the county, generating very positive feedback and support while gathering useful insights into the lifecycle and disposal of crockery.

The first in a series of mosaic prototypes was developed at the studio, forming the basis for planned pop-up demonstrations delivered around the county in subsequent weeks and months. The scale of the undertaking was significant, culminating in the creation of a large-scale artwork designed for installation on a 45-foot-wide wall on the front façade of the cinema in Dungarvan

WORKSHOPS

28 October 2024

At this stage, workshops were taking place in the studio while a larger space in Dungarvan was being explored. Interest was strong, with almost 40 people signing up to help with construction during the workshops. By this point, 25 panels had been completed, representing roughly 20% of the overall wall.

January 2025 Update

By 6 January 2025, participation had increased significantly. Around 40 people were actively involved in making panels at workshops, while a further 120 people contributed by donating plates, with donations coming in several times each week.

Seven drop-off points were established to make participation easy. These included charity shops, Tramore Library, McCarthy's Hardware in Tramore, Old Market House Gallery, Dunnes Stores in Dungarvan, Trash to Treasure in Dungarvan and locations in Kilmacthomas. This approach supported wide community involvement, particularly across West Waterford.

Short interviews were carried out with contributors as they donated plates, capturing personal stories and connections to the project. By early January, 120 panels had been completed, meaning more than half of the wall was finished.

An additional 55 people signed up for upcoming workshops. Engagement also extended to education settings, including two schools, a Youthreach group in Dungarvan, and a PLC course in Dungarvan College involving five mature students.

An outreach day held in Dungarvan reached an estimated 500 people, highlighting strong public interest. Overall, the workshops ran over a ten-week period, with sessions typically taking place between 10am and 3pm, supported by a token system to keep participation accessible.



Video of Wall

<https://youtu.be/n6xQWXZ0xII>

INSTALLATION OF WALL

Following seven months of development in the workshop, the installation of *Crockery Mountain* took place over an eleven-day period. The work involved attaching 244 individual panels to the wall.

The installation was carried out by Sean, James, and Laura, supported by a team of trained volunteers. A Mobile Elevated Working Platform (MEWP) was used to safely access and install panels in the higher sections of the wall.

The complexity and scale of the installation are documented in a 90-second timelapse video, which captures the full eleven-day installation process.

[Youtube Link](#)

UNVEILING OF WALL

Over 10,000 donated bowls, cups, plates and mugs were used in the permanent artwork, now titled *Crockery Mountain*. The mosaic wall measures almost 45 feet wide and approximately 14 feet high.

Crockery Mountain was officially presented to the public on Sunday 17 August at Movies at Dungarvan, located in Dungarvan Shopping Centre. The unveiling ceremony took place at 11am and was hosted by TV personality, architect and environmentalist Duncan Stewart.



FURTHER ENGAGEMENT & LEGACY

WLR AUDIO DOCUMENTARY

As part of the project's extended engagement, WLR, Ireland's IMRO Local Station of the Year, committed to producing a one-hour radio documentary exploring *Crockery Mountain*. The programme focused on the artists and creators behind the work while also examining how creative interventions can enable people to engage with climate issues on an emotional and human level. With a daily listenership of approximately 70,000 across Waterford, WLR brought significant reach and expertise, producing three to four documentaries of this scale annually and having received multiple national awards for climate, sustainability, news, and current affairs programming.

The documentary further extended the life and impact of *Crockery Mountain*. Following broadcast, the programme was made permanently available on the WLR website, which receives approximately 1.8 million page impressions per month, and was also hosted on both the ACT Waterford and Waterford City and County Council websites. Supported by WLR's social media following of over 100,000, the story of *Crockery Mountain* reached audiences well beyond the physical site, deepening engagement and amplifying the project's environmental message.

DIGITISATION OF CROCKERY MOUNTAIN

To extend the reach and long-term impact of *Crockery Mountain*, plans were developed to digitise the project through the Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI). Supported by the Luke Wadding Library at SETU Waterford, a member of the DRI, the project built on existing experience with successful community-based digital collections. Digitisation would preserve both the artwork and the individual stories behind the donated pieces, ensuring public access through a trusted national archive. In parallel, the use of the International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF) was explored as a future-facing option, offering a more visually engaging and internationally interoperable way to present the work online.

ACADEMIC PAPER

Research was initiated towards developing and publishing a science-based/academic paper examining the carbon footprint of crockery. This work aimed to provide clear facts and figures on the life cycle impacts of crockery and to assess its environmental performance in comparison with disposable cups and plates, supporting more informed discussion around consumption and waste. This work is in progress.

SCHOOLS OUTREACH

An outreach programme is being developed with local primary schools to engage young audiences with the artwork and its themes. A quiz is being designed by Sean Corcoran with input from CALMAST staff, and will be circulated to encourage school visits to Crockery Mountain, featuring simple, fun questions about elements within the artwork alongside reflective prompts about the crockery used in pupils' own homes.

EVALUATION

METHODOLOGY

Sinéad Begley and Associates were contracted in July 2024 by Calmast (SETU) to evaluate ACT 2 Waterford, which ran over a two-year period from January 2024 to December 2025.

Evaluation of the first phase of ACT Waterford demonstrated that to sustain momentum and extend reach during creative community climate action projects, the artists needed to continuously review their approach to community engagement and adapt to the target audiences' availability and willingness to engage.

During phase two of ACT the approach to evaluation was reviewed and developed over the course of the project to respond to the fluid nature of community engagement and reflect the evolving nature of each initiative. The evaluator liaised with each of the four lead artists on the individual projects (Crockery Mountain, From Land to Sea, Reflecting the Past, Imagining the Future (Comeraghs), and Take the Bus for a Change) on an ongoing basis to maintain a clear picture of the evolving plans for community engagement and ensure that key opportunities for gathering participant feedback were optimised.

Consideration was also given to the most appropriate data gathering instruments for specific cohorts of participants and the contexts where they engaged e.g., at creative workshops in the artist's studio, through community groups and organisations working with people with disabilities, or in education settings.

In total 59 project participants and four creative practitioners provided feedback as follows:

- Towards the end of the projects, artists were interviewed by the evaluator to describe their project and give feedback on the process, successes, challenges, and the impacts of the experience on their practice. They were also invited to share learnings to inform future community climate action projects.

A range of methods including an online survey, interviews and reflection templates were used to explore participants' motivation for taking part, previous participation in climate action projects, and views on the creative and the climate action aspects of the experience. Changes in views and behaviour in relation to the environment and climate change were also explored.

- An online survey for adults taking part in projects (35 responses from participants in Crockery Mountain).
- Phone interviews with participants (Interviews conducted with 9 participants in Crockery Mountain).
- Young people taking part in a three-day community engagement workshop as part of From Land to Sea were invited to complete a reflection template to share their individual views and insights about their experience. This approach was agreed in advance of the workshop, in consultation with the arts educator that works with the group to allow time to reflect on the experience (8 participants provided written reflections using the template and the arts educator provided feedback in an interview).
- Written feedback was provided by a community group involved in Take the Bus for a Change in response to reflection questions, provided by the artist (6 group members).

The interviews were recorded and transcribed using Otter AI and a thematic analysis of all data gathered was conducted.

DATA GATHERING ACROSS PROJECTS

The amount of participant feedback and level of engagement in the evaluation varied across the four projects for a variety of reasons. The numbers of participants varied from project to project, and some engagements are still pending. There were practical constraints in terms of collecting participant feedback relating to the format or location of some events e.g. pop-up drawing workshops on public transport. The approach to evaluation used for the Crockery Mountain project through an online survey and interviews provided the most participant feedback. The artist introduced the evaluator to the project participants via the project WhatsApp group, and they were invited to take part in interviews or to complete the survey through a hyperlink.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

This section provides an overview of feedback from participants in the community engagement aspects of ACT 2 Waterford gathered from 59 participants, primarily through the online survey, interviews and written reflections. Written feedback was received from one of the community groups involved.

Crockery Mountain

All participants that took part in the online survey or interviews were involved in the Crockery Mountain project (See Appendix 2 for full survey report).

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with nine participants in the ACT Crockery Mountain project to explore how they heard about the project, their motivation for taking part and views on the creative and climate action aspects of the experience. They were also asked if the experience would change how they think or do things, what they enjoyed most and if they would suggest any changes.

Interviewee profile

Most interviewees heard about the project through the artist's Facebook page. Some had worked with the lead artist previously in a professional capacity (through schools or childcare services). Others were aware of the artist's sand art, had taken part in his workshops before (e.g., stained glass) or had volunteered with the artist on school mosaic projects. In some cases, the connection with the artist spanned a number of years. Some participants heard about the project through Facebook, having no previous knowledge of the artist.

Several interviewees described being concerned about climate change, waste and over consumption and conscious of trying to live in a sustainable manner prior to taking part in the ACT project. Examples of this included walking and cycling, recycling, buying secondhand clothes, volunteering, or shopping in charity shops, upcycling furniture, growing food or promoting sustainability through the Green Flag programme in their role as a primary school teacher.

"I would definitely be into reuse, recycling, the whole sort of side of reusing things that are normally just sort of dumped. I'd be very keen on making best use of anything like that."

"I would have always been a great one for the charity shops... bringing stuff and buying stuff. I worked in a charity shop for a year as a volunteer, and so, yeah, I would have been aware of that anyway."

"I took up mosaic, and it was basically to be able to recycle things as opposed to buying things... The whole circular economy has to be brought forward. And I don't think there's enough education out there for that be honest... there's a beauty in bringing something old back to life."

"This is beautiful, this is perfect. I recover old furniture and painting and make decorations for my house, because I don't like to buy something new if I don't really need to. So, use old stuff and give them new life. It's wonderful."

"... as a primary school teacher, we would always have focused on, you know, recycling and all of that in our school as well."

"My parents taught us from when we were little, compost bins, you never throw anything away. You can reuse everything... I've only ever bought secondhand, not for being mean, it's just I cannot do this business of buying stuff and throwing it away... we grow loads of our

own food, recycle everything. We've only got one car between us; the whole environmental aspect would be extremely important."

"It's really devastating, isn't it? What's happening? And I suppose the excess is like... I think of my parents, my grandparents... everything was kind of minded and reused, and there was always, respect for stuff... now, everything is kind of fast and furious but the repercussions of it are very evident, things are rapidly changing."

While most participants hadn't taken part in climate action projects before, others had experience of sustainability related initiatives e.g., promoting waste reduction, reuse and recycling in their role as a primary school teacher, sustainable food related initiatives (foraging and growing) or other sustainable art projects led by the same artist.

"And in school, we would have had a big drive on, always on Green Flags and stuff like that, and trying to get the children to reuse, and simple things like, they don't need a new pencil case every single year, every single September."

"... on a smaller scale, I've done some foraging workshops and, you know, gardening and all that kind of stuff. I mean, Grow Your Own ..."

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVITY

Interviewees described a range of motivations for taking part in the project, with several expressing an interest in art or creative activities.

"...personally, I really want to get involved in a lot more creative things. But also, I'm a very practical person, so the idea of making a mosaic, a permanent piece of art, is something that would appeal to me..."

"It was really good to sort of exercise that creative bit of your brain... It's like going for a run or a swim or anything else, you need to exercise that bit of your brain I think, so that whole creative push was wonderful."

Some participants described being interested in mosaic making specifically and valued having access to in-person instruction on materials and techniques suitable for use in the Irish climate. The opportunity to develop skills for use in community or personal projects attracted these participants to take part. They described varying degrees of training, skills and previous experience of mosaic making e.g., some had taken courses and worked on mosaics in Ireland and abroad, others were teaching themselves mosaic techniques using YouTube tutorials or planning ornamental mosaic projects in their own gardens or for Tidy Towns.

"It was brilliant to be able to sort of see the different range of stuff that he's done and some of the larger projects and the different types of materials he was using... And these were

sort of big pieces, you know, it was sort of quite challenging in some ways, but {Artist} was really good at explaining stuff.”

“I have a project in mind for my back garden wall, to learn about the local materials was invaluable, because all the YouTube are American and stuff, and they have a different climate.”

Several interviewees mentioned being interested in a range of other arts and crafts and creative pursuits such as stitching, felting, garden design, decoupage, quilting, needlework, and embroidery. Participants commented on enjoying hands-on creative work, and one described enjoying the freedom and playful aspect.

“I loved even sort of getting mucky. That's good fun as well, because we grow up, you know, it's fun when you're a kid to throw a load of slop onto something and, you know, push it around with your fingers, but you don't get a chance to do that when you're older. It's not something that's approved of, and I loved the freedom of it.”

A number of participants reflected on joining the project because they have spare time or would like to meet new people. The fact that the project was happening locally and didn't require travelling into the city was also appealing.

“We retired here five years ago and haven't really gotten to know an awful lot of people in the community, so I thought this might be a way of getting to know people, which it has been, great.”

“I just like the sense of that it was to do with recycling materials, and I do like craft, and I suppose I felt as well it was a nice way, an informal way, to get to know different people.”

THE CENTRAL ROLE OF THE ARTISTS

A number of participants were motivated to take part in the project by their existing relationship or previous positive experience of working with the artist, who they trust to deliver a well-executed experience. Others knew of the artist by reputation.

“It just sounded like something different. Yeah, something very different. And I knew that if {Artist} is doing it, it'll be done well, and you'd come out of it having felt that you'd have achieved something.”

“There's a number of reasons. Number one, it gives you a great opportunity to learn from {Artist}.”

“I've been working with {Artist} for probably 10 years since they set up with lots of different projects. So, I always keep an eye out for what they're doing because they're just so creative... I haven't had anything that {Artist} did that I wasn't hugely interested in, and that I didn't get a huge amount out of so as soon as I heard that, I was keen to find out.”

"I don't know {Artist} personally, but I know of his work, and I sort of felt that he would be, you know, a very good teacher."

Participants frequently described enjoying having the expert guidance of the artist and the knowledge acquisition (e.g., materials, baseboards, grout, safety considerations with sharp pieces on public display, 3D mosaic, learning new skills such using an angle grinder). This helped build confidence.

"You get expert guidance, even though {Artist} is very good... he facilitates more than, you know 'Oh, put that there and that there'... at the same time, you're learning a new skill."

"So, I've learned a lot that way... the first kind of workshop, I didn't really know what I was doing, but by the third one, I think it kind of clicked with me. I remembered everything, and I thought, yeah, I could do this myself... and we're more confident now definitely."

"...The imagination, suddenly everybody's thinking more laterally. You go in with one idea of what a mosaic is, and then {Artist} sort of says, well what if you do it this way, and you can see it just seems to come together better. I mean guidance, obviously, and he's mentoring us there, but it gives people more confidence to do a bit more on their own."

"I remember going the very first time... I had a very dim view of my own capability at that time. I kept coming back and have learned so much about your own capability, inner resilience, strength when it comes to creating is so important. And he's very good as a teacher to do that."

An interviewee noted that working in a professional studio, arranging materials and cleaning up afterwards modeled good practice for participants.

A number of participants remarked on the inclusive, encouraging, and pleasant atmosphere created by the artists. The small numbers at workshops were also noted as a positive aspect of the learning experience.

"I think {Artist} is doing it in a very holistic way, and by having just the two or three people there, gives you that sense that you are contributing, you're getting the workshop, you actually are learning. I think if it was in a bigger group, you might get, like, a bit lost in it."

"It was {Artist} who did our afternoon and it was just really pleasant, and everybody worked in a very focused way. Then we had the chat and a laugh as well... the atmosphere over there is lovely, all the colour. We had a cup of tea in the middle, and it was just really, really lovely."

"It's a great sense of you know, agency... I've done this. I've made this. As a teacher, he is very easy to learn from, and very encouraging."

"Some of the people who turned up would never have done anything like this before and wouldn't claim to have any creativity, but {Artist} brings out the best in them. And you know, nobody is ever told 'Oh, that's not right, or you shouldn't have put that there' or 'that's not great,' he's so positive, encouraging for people. And I think that's a wonderful gift to be able

to give to the people who are on this project, that no matter what your level is, that you know that you've contributed, you've made an important part of this whole mosaic."

There was also acknowledgement that facilitating the process to deliver the final artwork requires skill on the part of the creative practitioner.

"It's not easy to coordinate a whole group of people who have different levels of experience, or maybe not at all, and somehow, you know, jolly them along and encourage them to actually create and complete something."

The value of having artists who are consistently working locally with the community was highlighted by some interviewees. The natural beauty of the coastal setting of the studio was also something participants enjoyed.

"I think what {Artist} is just a really precious resource for us as local people, you know, he creates these kind of projects, and the festival, which he did for the last two years with sand and environmental art... it just really opens your eyes to not just the natural beauty around us, how much enjoyment you can have in just the process of creating this kind of transient art that's not there for anyone else to see, except the people who are making it. I just think he's a wonderful resource."

"... {Artists} are real assets to the community over there."

"I just thought the setting was beautiful. You know, just over there by the seaside... really uplifting... as we left in the evening, it was just beautiful driving back down the coastline towards {Location} as the light was just beginning to fade."

Others raised the point that participants are not artists, but a group of local people interested in taking part and praised the work.

"You're looking at, say, a brown plate, and suddenly they've turned it into something so creative, and I'm just amazed at the ordinary people here in Dungarvan and around who aren't artists in that they just do their own stuff at home. And you know, they've turned all these little bits of China into fantastic pieces."

BUILDING COMMUNITY AND CONNECTION

The process of working collaboratively on a project that results in a highly visible and permanent or enduring public, community artwork to share with their families and friends, locals, and visitors to Dungarvan was described as a positive, enjoyable, and motivating factor by various interviewees.

"The community side of it, then having something on the wall... my family are from Dungarvan... my grandparents, all my aunts and uncles, would have lived there and had a very strong connection. So, to have some of their plates up on the wall in the town, you know, it's just a lovely thing... we still have very strong family ties here. So, family from all over the world come back here every couple of years for reunions, and they're coming next summer. There's about ninety of them coming, and just to be able to show them on the wall... these are our family heritage plates, you know, it's just a fabulous, beautiful idea."

"It's fantastic to be involved in something that will actually have historical impact on Dungarvan, when you're talking about creativity, that is going to be fun, wonderful to think that my kids, or my kids, kids will be able to say 'Look at that, Nana was involved in that', I think that that's absolutely brilliant."

"Being involved in something that's collective appeals to me and being involved in something that's going to be sustainable, left there, art wise...it was really appealing because I've seen things like this done in other countries and community kind of things, but to have it in Waterford is great."

"I reached out to several friends of mine, so that straight away, creates a connection, and everyone is searching around, including myself... This is going to be made into something beautiful... a friend of mine, I met her during the week, and she's following {Artist} on Facebook, and she said, Oh, I recognise my plates, so immediately, there's a sense of achievement, It's a sense of contributing something ..."

"I'm actually kind of proud; my little plate is up on the wall there in Dungarvan for as long as the cinema is there. That's kind of a buzz, and my family are all sort of following it."

".. When that mural is finished in Dungarvan, it will be beautiful. So even if people look at it deeply, or just look at it superficially, it will certainly add to the community... some people will just fly by and get a lift from the colour, and then possibly some people will look at it more deeply... But whatever way people perceive it, it's something really positive."

"I think when the mosaic is installed, more people will know the purpose behind it and the reason behind it. It wasn't just one individual created a piece of art and went 'There you go Dungarvan.' It's much bigger than that... It'll have a very special place in people's hearts because they have some connection..."

"Lots of the days when I'm there, we're literally just cleaning up other people's work or tidying or grouting. So, you're not really creating your own masterpiece, or anything like that. It's so much that you're part of this as a group project... And finishing off what somebody else might have started is actually really nice as well...The process is enjoyable, as opposed to just the outcome."

The fact that the end goal was clearly communicated from the outset was seen as a positive.

"We knew it was big. We knew where it was going. I think those things were important...For the fact that this is a community effort, and it's going to be a community piece of art. And the end point of it was very obvious from the very get go to me. That was an important piece of communication, and people understood straight away what it was..."

Sharing the project through a WhatsApp group chat (set up by the artist) helped to connect participants and build a sense of collective endeavour and community among the wider group. It also allowed sharing of different approaches and styles of mosaic, and of the stories behind the crockery. Photos posted regularly by the artist provided an insight into what smaller groups at workshops were producing and how the mosaic was developing.

"We all look forward to half by or six o'clock every evening because our phones start to ping. Yeah, because {Artist} is putting up the photos from that day's work, and then everybody's commenting on everybody else's work and all that kind of thing. And that's lovely."

"There's loads of people on that WhatsApp group that I've never met, but I've seen their photographs, and I've seen the work that they've done... people are so positive, it's creating a group of individuals that under normal circumstances probably would never have met or never have come together."

"We have a WhatsApp group, where people are adding their own other stories. Obviously, you're not going to meet everybody. There's only four or five or whatever in each workshop. I love hearing all the stories and all about the family China and amazing stories."

An interviewee noted that as the project developed people saw the mosaic unfolding on social media and began donating more precious items for inclusion.

"Initially people were donating, you know, the old plates and things that... But as more stories come out, and the more feedback on Facebook, people are donating more precious stuff. So, we're getting really beautiful stuff in there."

Meeting new people and the social aspect of the process appealed to several interviewees. Participants described connecting with new people including neighbours, people they may not have met otherwise, and people with similar creative interests.

"I was over there three times, and I met several people that I would never have been moving in the same circles with at all. And you're working together, if you're busy with your hands... the conversation just flows, no block at all. It just facilitates bonding and cohesion and socialising..."

"The camaraderie and the fun have been absolutely terrific. And every time I go, there's someone different. It just happens that I've met two neighbours, one who lives on the road with me, and one not that far away, so that's been good. So, yeah, it's been great fun."

"Meeting the other people that were on the workshop, there was usually just two of us, so it's really kind of an intimate time, in a way. You really get to know somebody. You're with them for three or four or five hours and chatting about everything. So, it's a very nice social event."

"What I really love, is the chat down there. Everybody brings their own story. And it isn't necessarily always about the china, but to spark a story about "Where do you come from, and have you done any sort of crafting before?"

Participants reflected on enjoying the mindful or meditative nature of the process, or the opportunity for slow looking offered by the mosaic panels.

"I enjoyed everything about them (workshops), even the washing up, because it just gives you a space to express yourself... just being in the moment, being mindful is the thing that everyone wants these days... you come out feeling on a high from it... this is a different kind

of being productive... and it's just taught me to take a step outside of what you'd be doing... to take that time for yourself and go to the workshop."

"I think just the downtime, you know, of having time to spend doing something really creative in a lovely environment..."

"This was definitely a project for slow looking because you could look at it from a distance and say, 'Oh, that looks kind of pretty,' but the closer you get, the more you'll see. And that's a really nice meditative thing for anybody to do."

REDUCING WASTE

The environmental aspect of the project was a motivator for some interviewees:

"It worked on so many levels for me. I mean, the environmental aspect of using waste material and making something beautiful of it..."

"We live in such a throwaway society now that it's lovely to see that stuff is being reused."

"I suppose because I'm creative, because I am an artist, I am very into reusing I would use a lot of found objects, as they call them, in the work that I do... And so, there's one thing that does stand out in terms of what {Artists} both do, they have for years been reusing, they reused jewelry in another previous community mosaic project... I love it, it actually matters to me what is being used... I love the idea of something that would otherwise be just thrown out, discarded."

SOCIAL HISTORY, STORY, AND MEMORIES

During interviews participants described collecting crockery for reuse from family and friends. The process prompted reflection on the origin of some of the donated items and the associated stories and connections, which serves as a poignant reminder of the memories and social history embedded in everyday household items like crockery.

"I put a thing into my family WhatsApp as well... you know, my sisters and that, if they had any plates and stuff. And I went to my dad's house, he's 97 and I picked up some, you know, plates and stuff that were there."

"As we do this, we must remember all the chats that have been had over these plates and cups and everything as well. And I think that's a lovely thing to remember, that people have donated all that stuff. It's excess in their homes, but there's been discussions and laughter, positive and maybe negative things that have happened over those plates and cups and things, and that's important, that all those things are honored as well."

Others felt that the artwork provided a safe resting place for some of the crockery pieces which were family heirlooms received from relatives or valued gifts, which were no longer in use. The finished piece will be a way of remembering loved ones and neighbours and keeping a connection to the past.

"It was a vase that one of the aunties had given me when I bought my first house... and I was really fond of her. And if it got chipped over the years... I thought, you know, this would be a nice final place for it, to end up on something like that."

"The other thing I brought in was my grandmother's plate. There was a plate that used to hang in my mother's kitchen always... it hadn't been out on display anywhere, and in the process of tidying up the garage and unboxing a few things I came across the plate, so I brought that in and used it as the main piece in the panel I created. That's lovely that she's going to be on the wall forever..."

"She brought cups and saucers from a neighbor who had died... it was a nice tribute."

"I got rid of so much stuff that would have been, you know, family heirlooms almost, because I didn't have room for them. And there is that sense of losing the connection with the past. So, a project like this really allows you to kind of celebrate it and let it be part of your community going forward."

"...and their stories connected to all those plates and cups and everything, you know, good, bad and indifferent stories..."

One participant surprised a friend with a panel made with family crockery they had donated and described her response.

"I didn't say anything to her until I had the panel made, and we included everything that she'd given us, and I sent her pictures, and she was just overwhelmed, you know, that this piece of their family history is now going to be part of this wall, and that they could point to it and say, that's ours... There's huge, huge connection to the past and that's really important for people to have a sense of connection to this art. You know that it's not just a bunch of somebody's plates, but actually some of my family's histories up there too."

A participants described receiving a donation of items that originated in Tunisia and had hand drawn patterns, while another used a Russian tea set to add interest to the piece (it came from a relative in the UK, who got it from Russian friends).

"This would be perfect, because, you know, it's going into something that, again, is long term, and it's from a different country, and lends something to it..."

While working on the mosaic the selection of items collected for Crockery Mountain prompted feelings of nostalgia and reflection on what a similar project would look like in the future. As the

practice of passing treasured crockery from generation to generation is dying out, the project will have a role in preserving the diverse designs of the past.

"...People don't sit down to dinner these days, they don't have the same granny stuff as we had... I was associating different patterns with different families or different times. And I thought, God, I wonder what this project would look like in 100 years, to do the same because... we've kind of gone so bland in some ways... very beige and gray... these thoughts you'd have while you'd be working on the pieces, you know, it's a lovely project in the fact that it will preserve all these designs as well."

TAKING CLIMATE ACTION

During interviews participants spoke about the positive environmental or climate related aspects of the project such as diverting crockery from landfill, reusing materials and the element of a community effort that everyone can get involved in by donating items. Others spoke of the project as a wakeup call, highlighting how we all have excess crockery and don't need to replace it when a new trend or style emerges. Some described contributing materials to the project and appreciating the environmental benefits of reuse, while others sourced the materials for their panels from charity shops.

"...it is something that everyone can get involved in... even if somebody wasn't interested in becoming doing part of the mosaic, they can easily have a little search in their cupboards and donate the plate, they're part of the project on that small but important level..."

"Isn't it fantastic to be telling people you don't have to be dumping your plate into landfill, or you don't need as much as you think you do. Six plates is probably enough for all of us, whereas we all have press loads of plates... no reason for us to be continually buying them because this year's color is gray or this year's color is black."

"And having an art project like this and a community driven art project just really reminds us how much waste, what a wasteful world we live in, and how much we should be doing and could be doing to improve the environment. So, I think on that level, it's kind of a wakeup call."

The sheer volume of crockery donated was an eye opener for one interviewee, who hadn't given the environmental aspect of the initiative much thought but felt they learned from the artist in this regard.

"I did go in looking at, okay, we'll just reuse these plates and hadn't really thought in depth about where {Artist} was coming from. But talking to him and reading his contributions to Facebook... it's an eye opener. I can't believe the amount of China he has down there... crockery and stuff. It is literally a mountain... as one of the points he brought up, do you really need another cup? Do you need another plate? You have to stop, stop buying stuff... but it's {Artist}, he's educating you as you're there. It's very serious for him the

environmental message that he's trying to put forward. So, he is educating you as he's talking about all of the stuff."

Interviewees welcomed the opportunity to collaborate and form a community with other like-minded people to make even a small difference.

"If everyone does some little thing... we're not going to reverse climate change by doing the community mosaic, but it's a positive thing where, you know, we're feeling better about that small little action. Every little step, it makes you more encouraged about other, maybe bigger things that we can do. We're forming a community... of these individuals."

"It's lovely to see a community come together, and to see people from all aspects of life, and some people are travelling a distance now, to do this, and it's just lovely to feel that your views are being honoured, and that {Artists} have a similar mindset."

CHANGES IN ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR

A number of interviewees gave examples of the small changes they've made to take a more conscious approach to avoiding disposing of items or considering potential reuse e.g., saving broken items of crockery for use in mosaic instead of disposing of them, and using old crockery instead of buying plastic alternatives.

"... my husband broke two of my Christmas mugs the other day, rather than throwing them in the bin, I have a little box on the go... people are still giving me plates and bits and pieces, so straight away those two Christmas mugs went into the box to drop over to {Artist} tomorrow. So that's an immediate change, a very small thing... before I would have lobbed that straight into the bin, now I have a value on those items..."

"I think I would definitely be more conscious of dumping stuff out of the house ... I think about it twice now, before I get rid of it, before I even take it to the charity shop, I might even think twice about that. Why am I buying plastic stuff to put under my plant pot? I could use those old saucers."

Some participants described having a heightened awareness of waste and disposal of materials in a broader sense and are planning to take action in this regard.

"As far as the environment goes, it's kind of awakened in me lots of other ideas for projects that maybe I could get involved in that would involve reusing and remaking things, rather than just constantly throwing things away. So, it's brought an awareness to me, for sure, about the throwaway world that we live in that makes me just a bit more conscious."

"I was emptying out the shredder the other day, which makes an awful mess... next time I'm going to put all that stuff into a bag, put a bit of water on it and dampen all the paper and put it on my compost heap rather than putting it in the recycling."

Another felt that working collaboratively enhances awareness of the importance of working with sustainable materials.

"I suppose it's brought, what I already believe to be important to a new level. Because most of the time, I'm doing this on my own, doing it in groups I think that elevates people's awareness of the importance of doing that. And I would love to see more people, you know, value our natural resources, like our beaches and our beautiful places that we have in the county by coming together more to add more beauty to them by creating with sustainable materials."

An interviewee noted the potential impact in terms of increased awareness on the eighty project participants, while another commented on the additional potential reach to participants families.

"So I think that's eighty people who are going to be way more aware of these issues going forward, and I know, for me, it's a reminder aside from, using up things that would have been previously just dumped and making something beautiful of them... there's beauty in everything you know, even broken crockery, can make something beautiful."

"He started off with forty to fifty people. All those people went home, and they brought that buzz home. So, that's another forty to fifty families who kind of had an experience."

FUTURE ACTION

All participants are interested in taking part in similar projects in the future and the majority couldn't think of anything they didn't enjoy about the experience. Several had very positive comments about the artists and an interviewee expressed concern about the amount of work involved for them.

Some participants were inspired by connecting to like-minded people and will consider developing more community-based mosaic projects. There were also positive comments on grants being available to enable this sort of initiative.

"I suppose it's the fact that there's so many different people involved in this has kind of opened up my eyes, the fact that there is likeminded people out there, and that if they are given the opportunity to be in a project like this, they will take it... I'm hoping to maybe make some connections from it that maybe we start to get a little mosaicing class together in the community centre or something ... to know that there's those grants out there for this type of thing as well. It's amazing that {Artist} got it."

"I think it's great that this grant funding, has come through, because funding really is the essence of anybody that's employed in the arts... you need funding and acknowledgement to be able to create these community projects."

SUGGESTIONS

While the majority of interviewees had no suggestions for how the project could be improved, one raised concern about the carbon footprint of concrete based adhesives and grouts and wondered if this was offset by reusing crockery (they acknowledge that the project was a balance between reusing the crockery and using necessary materials). Another participant suggested having a better

idea of what to expect before starting the project with clearer communication about the number and content of workshops at the outset of the process.

- *Targeted workshops for men only might help increase their involvement (Men's Sheds would be a potential avenue to explore).*
- *A number of participants would be keen to ensure the project is recorded and archived in some way, e.g., the range of participants and the social history and story of the crockery, using a combination of written records and visual documentation, a book or display in the Museum. The City and County Archivist could be consulted and asked to advise in this regard.*
- *Ensure Creative Ireland projects are effectively promoted, there may be other projects of interest locally for participants. Some participants expressed interest in having more information on the other ACT projects.*

FROM LAND TO SEA

Young people who participated in a three-day community engagement workshop with artists from Spraai were invited to give written reflections on their experience and provided with a template for this purpose. This allowed participants to provide their individual views and insights into their experience and gave them time to reflect before giving feedback. The approach to evaluation was agreed in advance of the workshops, in consultation with the arts educator that works with the group, who was also interviewed as part of the evaluation. In total eight participants out of the group of twelve involved in the workshops provided feedback.

Overall experience

When asked to describe the project in one word a range of positive terms were used including caring, inspiring, cool, good, unique, peaceful, and fun. For half of the group (4) this was their first time taking part in a project about the environment. Some participants described taking part in Tidy Towns, or projects on fast fashion and pollution previously.

In additional open-ended comments about the project participants elaborated on how they enjoyed the workshops or had fun and how working with the artists, having creative freedom, and playing games was a positive experience. Some commented on enjoying doing something different and others remarked on the peaceful nature of the activity.

"The project was a peaceful activity and fun. The people that came in to help us were very kind and patient. They gave us great ideas. The more {artwork} I did, the more excited I am to see the finished product."

"The project was really good. I had a good time doing, the artists that came in were so nice to me and everyone."

"I enjoyed the project very much. We had a lot of freedom to come up with our designs, and the small games were fun too."

"I think the project was very good."

"I thought the project was fun and something different than what we usually do."

"... drawing on things like tiles rather than paper is something that I enjoy more."

Two participants referred to the environment or climate aspect of the project, with one indicating they felt the project was thoughtful and helpful in this regard and the other indicating they are not concerned about the issue of global warming.

"I thought the project was very thoughtful of the environment and helpful."

"I think it was awesome. Although I am not very concerned with global warming."

Some participants were surprised by aspects of the experience, from the materials used, to how creative and relaxing the workshops were.

“The whole project, it was creative.”

“It was quite relaxing when you get into the flow of things.”

“The tile part really surprised me. I wasn't expecting it to be that.”

Learning and skills development

Almost all participants that took part in the evaluation (7) felt they had learned something new and described developing a skill or learning to do something they hadn't done before e.g., design, carving, drawing, etching. One participant is using the new skills acquired on projects at home, because they found it enjoyable.

“A lot of design ideas.”

“The carving, I've never done that, I thought it was very cool.”

“I learned how to etch a pattern or drawing into a tile, and I learned how to draw animals, which I'd never done before.”

“I learned that any mistake can be fixed and made into art.”

“I learned how etching works.”

“I never scratched art into a tile before. It was unique and very different.”

“... I have started to do it back home, because of how fun it is.”

Some participants reflected on learning about the marine environment and the impact of climate change.

“I learned that the sea has so many good things.”

“The importance of the beach and how climate change and pollution is affecting them.”

“I learned about different art styles and a lot about the sea and pollution.”

Some participants were reminded of their love for the sea and for art, and others reflected on how art opens the mind.

"I've remembered how I really liked art and the ocean..."

"That I love the ocean and art more than I thought..."

"I learned that I could open my mind more from just doing art."

ATTITUDES TO THE ENVIRONMENT /CLIMATE CHANGE

Some participants that felt the project changed the way they think about the environment (3), described impacts in terms of their awareness of the effects of marine pollution. One participant reflected on how they came to see the potential of art a way to remind people about pollution.

"I've always hated how people don't care about the pollution, but this changed my thinking. Because I think sometimes people need a reminder, and this is a very smart way of doing so."

"I realised there's more pollution than I expected."

"It's made me realise and remember about the animals in the sea that get hurt because of the rubbish we leave on the beach."

One participant felt the project hadn't changed the way they think as they are already concerned about the environment and try to do their part.

"No, because (I) think about the ocean and do try do my part."

INTEREST IN FUTURE PROJECTS

Over half of participants (5) would like to do more of this sort of project work (3 were unsure). They reiterated their enjoyment of using their creative side, making things, working with new materials and the relaxing nature of the experience. One participant enjoyed the workshop but found it was too long and suggested more breaks.

"These kinds of projects, they bring out my thinking, creative side."

"I would like more tile projects. It was fun."

"I enjoyed making things."

"Definitely in the future."

"I loved having a project like that might be relaxing."

TAKE THE BUS FOR A CHANGE

The artist delivered a series of workshops over the course of the project with a community group and with adults and young people with disabilities, hosted by an organisation that provides support. The artist found that spending time with the same groups over a prolonged period allowed the project direction and outcomes to evolve and develop. There was time to learn about the group's needs e.g., places in Waterford that are not accessible for wheelchair users and the barriers they face. It allowed time for conversation (for example when working on shadow wall drawing), to become immersed in the groups and to get to see participants perspectives on life, their talents and the challenges they face.

The community group that took part in the project provided a summary of written feedback from six of its members, in response to a series of questions provided by the artist. The group's reflection on the main takeaways from the experience related mainly to learning, developing, applying, and showcasing or displaying new skills including drawing, painting, pyrography, and photography. The experience helped to build confidence and motivated some of the group members to continue to develop their creativity. The comradery and connections fostered by working together were a positive aspect of the experience.

"It was nice to learn new skills. It was nice sharing my own art with (Artist) and we are planning an exhibition in the future to showcase my drawing that I have really just kept to myself until now. I am happy if my drawing encourages others to draw, especially kids. If they were inspired because of me that would be great. I don't really see myself as an artist. Having a plan for my drawings for the future would encourage me to make more art. Having a goal."

"It was great to do something different. It will be nice to have the art back that we made and get it up on the walls."

"Practicing the pyrography was brilliant. I wasn't that confident at first but I really got into it and encouraged the {group} to complete their pieces so that they would be ready for the show...it was great to see the skill being applied and the confidence that the {group} are now able to apply."

"The comradery with which everyone had a go, no matter what their skill level."

"Just learning to do new things keeps the mind active. I am looking forward to seeing how the paintings turn out."

“Just spending time with the other members and the good feeling in the group this promoted was great.”

When reflecting on the group’s contribution to the community and environment, members noted the positive impact of the materials they use for local projects (e.g., benches, planters, sensory games, gardening, and beekeeping), which are salvaged or upcycled. The group uses their skills to help with projects for the community and other local organisations including the hospital, a women’s refuge, and schools. Members reflected on the benefits for wellbeing, and the sense of purpose and opportunities for social connection that joining the organisation provides.

“We had a lot of conversations about how the work in the {group} benefits the environment. We don’t start out with this in mind. It’s just the nature of how we work here I suppose. We are a good example of how to make the most of the materials that can be salvaged and upcycled and given a new life.”

“We do a lot of community projects.”

“We have made things from raised planters for the Hospital and garden benches for the women’s refuge.”

“Making things from wood which would generally be thrown out. Projects like the garden, we grow a lot of vegetables and we keep bees. Helping other organisations too like making sensory games for yards in schools.”

“We have all skills and are always happy to help. Projects from making scenery for schools to benches for the women’s refuge and lots in between... The {organisation} provides a great place where discussion over a cup of tea and being made to feel useful raises the spirit and helps with mental health.”

“We bring together people from all walks of life and give them a purpose.”

In response to the artists question “After spending time with the project are you concerned about the climate? Has it inspired any ideas of how governments or ordinary people could ensure a more environmentally friendly future,” two thirds of those that provided feedback (4) say they are concerned about the climate and had ideas in this regard. These included growing your own food, buying less, using what we have, government investment in renewable and alternative energy sources, reduction of food miles, imports, and shipping of fast fashion.

“Yes, BEE more kind to the environment! Anything you can do like not using

pesticides. Grow your own food. Grow wildflowers or leave a bit of the garden alone.”

“Sure, I’m worried more for future generations, government overseas aid should be for projects like stopping de-forestation.”

“Very, future generations will be suffering. Governments should invest more in renewable energy. The wind off our coast should supply 90% of our needs.”

“Yes, my generation is often blamed for global warming, but we were the generation who recycled the most. Everything from washable milk bottles to my school uniform and clothes were recycled all being worn by my brother first. Government should invest in nuclear energy as a way forward and stop the import of potatoes, Kiwi fruit and other things that are not required. So much shipping is unnecessary. Clothing from child labour from places like {retailer} are at a great cost to the environment. Ships contribute more to global warming gasses than the whole of Germany.”

One participant reflected on the importance of using what’s available for creativity instead of buying more.

“Not really. I draw on wallpaper lining. I have been drawing on the same roll since I started it. It will continue to last me for years. Using what you have and not buying a lot of stuff I feel is contributing positively to the environment. You can keep things very simple and be creative. It doesn’t have to cost much.”

While the artist was interested in positive or negative experiences with taking the bus, most of the participants didn’t use the bus and those that did found the service good, with occasional exceptions.

REFLECTING THE PAST, IMAGINING THE FUTURE

In the earlier stages of the project, the artist and the ACT project coordinator visited the Glen na nÓr clochán with a local historian. The artist also spent time with residents and found it to be a very

meaningful experience, noting their kindness and willingness to engage. However, using the settlement itself as a case study could potentially have brought unwanted attention and visitors into a private, lived environment so the focus of the project shifted.

The evolution of the project was then shaped by the artists engagement with local farmers, and other stakeholders including the Biodiversity Officer for Waterford County Council, and a Teagasc adviser. These connections helped build an understanding of the longer history of sheep on the mountain, land use change, and current environmental challenges.

Through ongoing contact with local farmers (attending meetings, visiting farms, and having informal conversations) the artist built an understanding of how dependent farmers are on sheep, how wool has become surplus, and how environmental pressures are increasing. One farmer showed the artist over a tonne bag of wool sitting unused in a shed and explained that this was common across the farming community. At this point the artist began exploring the idea of sheep's wool insulation panels.

Community engagement is ongoing as the initial plan for a two-day workshop with farmers proved too costly, and the artist wasn't sure there would be sufficient uptake. An exhibition will take place in the local library in late February or early March 2026, open to the public and the groups and individuals that have been engaged through the project.

KEY THEMES IN PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

CROCKERY MOUNTAIN

Overall experience

For the 29% (of 120) project participants in Crockery Mountain that completed the evaluation survey, the project appears to have been a very positive and enjoyable experience. Survey respondents described the project as inspiring, fantastic, brilliant, rewarding, stimulating, therapeutic, thought-provoking, transformative, and engaging. Interviewees also reflected on a myriad of reasons for enjoying the experience from the creative process and skills development to seeing the finished artwork emerge.

Highlights described by interviewees included the hands-on, playful, mindful, or meditative nature of the process and the opportunities for slow looking, downtime and self-expression afforded by the experience. Interviewees reflected on enjoying the learning and skills development and the skilled facilitation of both the process and the final output offered by the artists.

While most survey respondents (71%) had not taken part in a climate action project before they all agreed that creative events can inspire people to take positive environmental action. A large majority of survey respondents (91%) agreed that the creative aspect of the project made them feel more engaged with climate action and almost all respondents (97%) have made new connections in their community.

All interviewees are interested in more projects of a similar nature, and most could not think of anything they would change about the experience.

Participant motivation for taking part

Participants that responded to the survey were attracted to the project primarily to engage with the artistic or creative aspects (60%) or to take part in an interesting local event (40%). The project also appealed to interviewees for various reasons, primarily related to the creative element. Some interviewees had an interest in mosaic making specifically and were keen to have the expert guidance of the artist to develop their own knowledge, skills, and practice. Others were motivated to take part by an interest in arts, crafts, making or creativity in a more general sense. Some interviewees were motivated to take part by previous positive experiences with the artists, who they trust to deliver a rewarding experience.

The process of working collaboratively to share a highly visible, enduring, and permanent public community artwork (and the message and memories behind it) was described as a positive, enjoyable, or motivating factor during interviews. Participants reflected on their families and friends, locals, and visitors to Dungarvan (both now and in the future) seeing the finished mosaic in situ in Dungarvan.

The environmental aspect of the project was a motivator for some interviewees who described an interest in reuse of materials in creative ways, optimal use of materials and waste reduction.

Other reasons for taking part in the project included the convenience of having the opportunity available locally, the chance to meet new people, having spare time or being a retiree.

The central role of the artists

The artists leading the projects appear to have played a central role in both attracting and sustaining participation. The lead artist appears to have been a catalyst for engagement having built a community of people interested in creativity and was known to several interviewees personally or by reputation (most heard about the project from the artists Facebook page).

Interviewees praised the inclusive and encouraging atmosphere they experienced and witnessed while working as part of a small group in the studio, regardless of the varying skill level of the participants at the outset. Some reflected on the artist's ability and skill to gently guide the wider group towards the finished art piece while responding to individual participants in a way that built confidence. Others highlighted the valuable contribution of the artists who consistently engage the local community in creative endeavours.

Additional comments offered at the end of the survey also reflected the positive experience of being part of the project and working with skillful and committed artists.

Community and connection

The community and connection built by the process of working together on Crockery Mountain was highly valued by participants. Interviewees welcomed the opportunity for camaraderie, meeting people, connecting, bonding, socialising, and collaborative working. Sharing the project through a WhatsApp group further enhanced connection and built a sense of collective endeavour and community among the wider group, as they did not all encounter each other at the workshops.

As the wider community saw the mosaic unfold, panel by panel, on social media they began to donate more precious items for inclusion. Some interviewees noted the possibility of increased awareness of the need to reduce and reuse seeping into the families of those that took part. One interviewee, who was inspired by connecting to like-minded people, will consider developing more community-based mosaic projects. Others acknowledged the value of grants to support community-based initiatives of this nature.

As the project progressed the threads of memory, story and social history woven into the mosaic panels came into focus for participants, who reflected on the poignant interconnections between those working on the project, those collecting and donating crockery (from Ireland and abroad) and the original owners of some of the most treasured items that make up the final piece.

For those directly involved and for the wider community that donated items for inclusion, the community mosaic appears to have provided a safe resting place for some family heirlooms and a way to remember the generations and designs of the past. Some interviewees mentioned wanting to see the project recorded or archived in some way.

Some survey respondents also described learning about the value of individual and community action to make a difference in terms of tackling climate change and the role of creative projects in this regard.

Attitudes to climate change

The majority of survey respondents (71%) had not taken part in a climate action project before and agreed that they feel more informed about climate change. An even larger majority agreed they feel more empowered to take practical action on climate change/environmental issues (88%) after taking part.

While none of the 29% of participants that responded to the survey were motivated to take part in the project to find out about climate change, it was the most common theme running through responses relating to what they had learned. They reflected on learning about the scale of the waste issue and the number of items accumulated in households; the need for more conscious consumption and purchasing; and the importance of reducing, reusing, recycling, and supporting the circular economy.

While most interviewees also said they had not previously taken part in climate action projects several described being concerned about climate change, waste and over consumption and being conscious of trying to live in a sustainable manner prior to taking part in the ACT project. The project

seems to have provided a welcome opportunity or forum to connect with like-minded people in a creative way to do something positive, with a clear and tangible result.

Interviewees recognised the positive environmental or climate related aspects of the project e.g., diverting crockery from landfills, reusing materials, and the element of a community effort involving everyone that donated items. Others spoke of the project as a wakeup call, highlighting how we all have excess crockery which sits unused in cupboards, or of appreciating the environmental benefits of reuse or sourcing materials for artwork from charity shops.

Taking Climate Action

All survey respondents say they intend to take climate action over the next year, primarily through reducing consumption, buying less, and avoiding waste (food, energy, materials).

Two thirds of survey respondents reported having already taken climate action steps or changing their behaviour because of the project by reusing, repurposing, repairing, and recycling more household items (including for use in creative projects). Others have been buying less crockery, purchasing less in general, avoiding excess packaging, decluttering, and donating to charity. Some respondents described changes in awareness of the need for recycling and upcycling and in terms of sharing this message with others.

While many interviewees considered themselves environmentally conscious at the outset, a number described similar impacts on their day-to-day as survey respondents. Some are fine-tuning their application of the waste management hierarchy towards reusing and reducing consumption rather than recycling. Several are taking a more conscious approach to avoid disposing of items, being more aware of the importance of using sustainable materials and considering projects that reuse or repurpose items.

One of the volunteers has made a podcast about the project, interviewing the artist and writing a piece reflecting on the meaning, symbolism and impact in terms of behaviour change https://youtu.be/wapBvDZ_rOU

FROM LAND TO SEA

Overall taking part in a three-day community engagement workshop to create a multimedia installation with Spraoi artists was a positive experience for the participants that provided reflections. The majority are interested in being involved in similar projects again. Half of participants that provided feedback had not taken part in an environment related project before and all of them enjoyed the experience, describing it as caring, inspiring, cool, good, unique, peaceful, and fun.

Creativity and collaboration

Not surprisingly, the group of young people that took part, who have an interest in art, particularly enjoyed the creative process including working with new materials and techniques, collaborating

with the artists, and the relaxing nature of the experience. Individual participants reflected on the kindness and patience of the artists, having creative freedom and the interactive elements of the engagement. The project also offered a change from the normal routine. Some participants were surprised by how creative and relaxing the experience was and by the materials they got to use.

The arts educator working with the group at the host organisation felt the project aligned with the organisation's objectives, including promoting environmental awareness and personal effectiveness, as well as supporting learning in other areas. They also highlighted the value they place on working with trusted artists and organisations that they are familiar with and that have a track record. The artists engaged the participants effectively, built a rapport, fostered a sense of ownership of the project and gave participants a voice.

Having someone new to work with the group and having a diverse range of creative minds working together was beneficial, as was meeting a working artist, whose murals are visible in the area. The project provided the group, which is recently formed, with opportunities to strengthen bonds and friendships through collaborative art activities and shared project goals. The fact that the multimedia installation produced by the group would be seen by the public and that the project would provide participants with valuable experiences and memories was appealing.

Learning and skills development

Almost all participants who provided feedback described learning something new and developing new creative skills because of taking part in the workshop e.g., design, carving, drawing, etching. Almost half reflected on learning about the marine environment and the impact of climate change and pollution, and others were reminded of their love for the sea or for art.

Attitudes to climate change and environment

Almost half of participants who provided feedback felt the project changed the way they think about the environment and described increases in their awareness of the effects of marine pollution. While one participant described already doing their part in this regard, another reflected on how they came to see the potential of art a way to remind people about pollution.

The arts educator working with the group at host the organisation felt the project sparked more dialogue about environmental issues, both within the classroom and informally. It has inspired them to invite more guest facilitators and consider more environmental projects and connections with local initiatives around Waterford when possible.

TAKE THE BUS FOR A CHANGE

Creativity and connection

The community group that provided written feedback described the main takeaways from the experience as developing, applying, and showcasing or displaying new skills (drawing, painting, pyrography, photography). The engagement has built confidence and will inspire further creative engagement for some. The comradery provided by working together on the project was also a positive aspect of the experience - participants reflected on the benefits for wellbeing, the sense of purpose and opportunities for social connection that working together as part of the group provides.

Attitudes to climate change and environment

When reflecting on the group’s contribution to the community and environment, members noted the positive impact of the materials they use for local projects, which are salvaged or upcycled. Two thirds of those that provided feedback say that after spending time with the project they are concerned about the climate. They offered ideas in this regard including growing your own food, buying less, using what you have, government investment in renewable and alternative energy sources, reduction of food miles, imports, and shipping of fast fashion.

While the artist was interested in positive or negative experiences that participants had with taking the bus, most members of the community group that provided feedback don’t use the bus and those that do find the service good (with occasional exceptions). Artwork for the project exhibition included personal experience of using public transport from participants with disabilities and highlights the additional barriers they face in this regard.

POTENTIAL FOR ONGOING PROJECT IMPACT

CROCKERY MOUNTAIN

In October 2025, after the launch of the mosaic and the completion of the project, participants continued to use the WhatsApp group to stay in touch, share creative ideas and projects, and plan events such as beach picnics. In December 2025, a new WhatsApp group was set up independently by some of the group members to keep in touch and share creative ideas beyond the end of the project.

As part of an event for Science Week 2025, the artist started to use a new model of engagement, by making temporary, pop-up mosaics using a purpose-built table. Workshop attendees are invited to add recycled and surplus items, and the materials are not cemented but loosely arranged. The process is filmed using a camera mounted above to document the final artwork, which is then dismantled. The materials contributed will be gathered by the artist for use in future temporary community mosaic projects, forming “the treasury” an ongoing collection in the artist’s studio, which will be used for circular creativity.

The artist emphasised the need for continued collaboration between artists, academics, and community organisations to address environmental challenges. They feel that integrating creative

practices into STEM (STEAM) would be very beneficial as creatives are great trouble shooters and problem solvers.

Additional project outputs could include:

- A Crockery Mountain quiz for primary schools and field trips to see the mosaic.
- There is potential for work with SETU academics to calculate the carbon content of the mosaic (or ceramics in general) compared to disposable paper and plastic cups (is reuse always better?). This would delve into the complexities of variables that need to be considered in life cycle analysis, including the impact of materials, production methods, number of uses and end-of-life disposal.

TAKE THE BUS FOR A CHANGE

The artist is a facilitator in a youth project working with over eighty young people and has responsibility for programming. They have incorporated ideas for climate-related activities from their work with ACT 2 Waterford, as there is an appetite among the young people they work with for this sort of engagement. As a result of collaboration through this project the community group involved in ACT will provide salvaged materials to the youth group for upgrading an activity room, with an emphasis on upcycling and re-use.

FROM LAND TO SEA

Whilst Spraoi's ACT 'Between Land and Sea' project has formally concluded with its community workshops phase, additional aspects of reach and impact will continue. Participants will be actively involved in adding their individual artworks to the overall 'Between Land and Sea' cube multimedia installation. This will be displayed in public settings during 2026. Spraoi are consulting with potential exhibition partners, including national events such as Biodiversity Week and libraries in Waterford. As a result of the project one of the young people participating in the project has had the opportunity to undertake work experience with Spraoi.

With support from SETU and Creative Ireland, the 'Seaweed Girl' performance element of 'Between Land and Sea' promoted her 'Think Environment this Christmas' message by performing in Waterford City and Dungarvan in December. Spraoi utilised these performances to leverage social media and traditional media spin-off promotion of seasonal environmental actions 'Think Environment This Christmas' – Spraoi Website: <https://spraoi.com/>

REFLECTING THE PAST, IMAGINING THE FUTURE

Aspects of the community engagement of the Reflecting the Past, Imagining the Future project are pending and will include an exhibition and event for the community exploring the use of sheep's wool for insulation. The artist will also apply the new skills they developed in building with natural, sustainable materials to future community engagement and volunteering.

FEEDBACK FROM CREATIVE PRACTITIONERS

Towards the end of individual projects (or the overall project), artists were interviewed to gain their feedback on the process, the challenges faced, what worked well, and the impacts of the experience on their practice. They were also invited to share learnings to inform future community climate action projects.

SUCSESSES

The artists reflected on the aspect of the project that had gone well in terms of community engagement, building collaboration and connection with other artists, organisations, communities and community groups.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Having a clear call to action to “Donate a plate” for the Crockery Mountain project, which was promoted by the artist through social media generated a strong response from the community. Collection points closed after three weeks as they were at capacity, with enough donations remaining for several more community mosaics.
- Structuring community engagement to maintain interest and commitment can help to sustain participation beyond individual events and throughout a longer project. Scheduling volunteers in three terms of workshops over a seven-month period worked well for Crockery Mountain. Participants had to clearly commit to scheduled workshop and to recommit to the process each term to remain involved.

“When everything is just all on Facebook... that’s way too easy to not make a commitment. Whereas if you have to sign up to do a thing that ends up in a WhatsApp group with another set of people, it’s kind of like you’ve made a commitment.”

- Tailoring the engagement for each different audience worked well. The character of Seaweed Girl really connected well with young children aged 5-7 (the artist noted that this sort of illusion is not as appealing to older children).
- Having the opportunity to repeat creative performances at different festivals around Waterford throughout the year (e.g., Waterford Festival of Food in Dungarvan, Spraoi Festival in August and Christmas themed events) reinforced the Land to Sea project message and engaged a wider audience.
- Spending time with the same groups over a prolonged period worked well on Take the Bus for a Change and allowed the project direction and outcomes to evolve and develop over time. The artist had time to learn about the groups’ needs and to have conversation, which allowed them to become immersed and to see participants perspectives on life, their talents and the challenges they face.

COLLABORATION AND CONNECTION

- Having the support of the ACT project Coordinator to handle the bureaucracy and technical aspects of the installation of the Crockery Mountain mosaic project was very important to the artist. This support with liaising with the various stakeholders and ensuring smooth execution of the project

allowed the artist to focus on the creative aspects. The artist viewed this as valuable learning for future projects.

- Working with skilled staff from organisations hosting workshops brought additional skills to the project e.g., a staff member who had expertise in multimedia was able to record the creative process on video and to produce the audio aspects of the project. This worked well as the group taking part in the workshops were comfortable talking and being recorded, while explaining the message of their individual piece of art.
- Working with arts organisations Spraoi that has years of experience and strong connections in the arts and culture sectors in Waterford allowed collaboration between artists to develop and deliver the project. This facilitated reaching a wider audience, identifying a target community and bringing a range of skills to designing the approach to engagement. The arts educator working with young people that took part in the project, who is also an artist, was happy to work with a trusted artist and organisation when they heard about the project through a mutual contact.
- Talking directly to shops and businesses to ask for support for community-based projects proved to be highly effective. Six drop off locations for donations of crockery for the mosaic were provided by local businesses around the county (a hardware shop, gallery, the artist's studio, craft shop, and second-hand shop). The Cinema and shopping Centre in Dungarvan were very supportive of the project and facilitated the installation of the mosaic on an external wall.
- Working with a community group on Take the Bus for a Change gave access to additional skills to bring to the project. The group supported the project throughout by sourcing, salvaging and repurposing materials and understood the value of making things by hand. The group also assisted one of the other ACT artists, who was working with sheep's wool by making various traditional spinning and weaving tools which are no longer available commercially.
- Engaging with the farming community in the Comeragh's built the artists understanding of the project context and what it means to live within a generational profession that is deeply tied to land, but which has changed dramatically due to financial pressures and shifts in farming practices.
- A number of artists noted that talking to other artists involved in ACT was useful in terms of figuring out the outputs of the projects and taking inspiration from each other. Communication between artists helps to keep each other on track and was a source of ideas and crossovers between the projects, which expanded the opportunities for creativity.

ARTISTS' PRACTICE AND LEARNING

- One of the artists described gaining a vast amount of knowledge about sustainable building materials and the interconnected nature of land use, materials, economics, and ecology. They developed and applied new practical skills which they will carry forward into their practice e.g., designing an insulative lime-based render for walls and insulating a roof with sheep's wool. The two-year timeline gave space to explore materials and to connect and learn from groups outside of Waterford working with natural wool and textiles. This provided a strong grounding in wool as a material and helped situate the artist's work within a wider context. It has reinforced the artist's commitment to working in a place-based way and to focusing on materials and systems that are local and low-impact.
- Another artist described gaining greater awareness and knowledge of marine ecosystems by engaging with an expert in the field. They deepened their understanding of seaweed as a source of food and a habitat and learned how to share this with children and the public. The experience broadened the artist's awareness of environmental responsibility as did contact with organisations and individuals

with personal rituals for taking climate action e.g., picking up plastic on the beach or planting trees to offset carbon emissions for flights.

CHALLENGES

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Engaging with diverse cohorts of the public and managing engagement timing and seasonality required flexibility as circumstances changed. For example, certain activities like the Seaweed Girl performance were suited only to the summer month, requiring a pivot to working with different groups later in the year. Adaptation was achieved by reflecting on the project's progress, building on existing connections, reconsidering artistic objects, and always keeping the project's purpose at the forefront. Regular re-evaluation and openness to change allowed the team to align project activities and timing with the needs and interests of the communities involved, to ensure continued engagement.
- Climate change can feel quite nebulous for people and getting enough interest in a specific project, within a small, rural geographical area was challenging. While communities were very welcoming, the project topic that the artist had in mind wasn't a central focus for them at that time.

"I found the community engagement the most difficult part... I've always been interested in the area, and I found people open to what I was doing, but not necessarily open to engaging with it, because it is quite niche"

What ultimately worked was shifting the approach; rather than trying to define an audience first, the artist focused on their own material interests and found people who were already engaged in those areas, which made the engagement feel more natural and productive.

- One of the artists noted that people can be very absorbed by the creative aspect of the project, and it can be challenging to maintain focus on the climate action aspect.

"People can get caught up in the materials and want to, kind of, you know, make things... it can get a little off track... I have to kind of very consciously, maybe steer the conversation back... I found I had to consciously keep directing the work so that when I put everything in a room, it reflects what it's a supposed to reflect,"

TECHNICAL AND LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES

- The community mosaic project required significant logistical planning e.g., dealing with contracts, planning permission requirements, insurance, payment scheduling, equipment hire, accreditation and training to use equipment, and certification. This resulted in delays with installation and the artwork having to be transported and stored, with a risk of damage. This also affected scheduling and promotion of the launch, which had already begun. There were challenges with closing roads for the launch and the need for coordination with the Council and the Gardaí.
- Sourcing and using natural sustainable building materials presented a challenge the project in the Comeraghs. It became apparent that there were numerous practical barriers to developing sheep's

wool insulation panels in Ireland e.g., lack of infrastructure or processing facilities in Ireland; exporting wool for scouring and preparation would increase the carbon footprint of the panels and hand scouring in Ireland is not affordable on a small scale. The availability of sheep's wool is seasonal, which posed an additional challenge in sourcing it within the project timeframe. An additional materials budget for the project would have been very welcome. At the time the materials budget was available, the sheep's wool was not.

- Conducting workshops on the bus during the Spraoi festival presented challenges for the artist involved e.g., the unpredictability of weekend bus schedules and the practicalities of drawing while standing on a bus. There were less buses than the artist expected and road closures, which impacted engagement levels. A potential alternative approach could be photographing and interviewing people at bus stops.
- One of the artists noted that finding time to provide social media content to the ACT coordinator was a challenge.

FINDINGS

ENGAGEMENT WITH CLIMATE CHANGE THEMES

- ACT 2 Waterford successfully engaged new audiences in creative community climate action projects. Most participants that provided feedback had not taken part in climate action projects before and reported having a very positive experience.
- Creative engagements were an effective catalyst for sparking conversations about climate change, the marine environment, the circular economy, and greener travel, prompting people to consider these issues and their own attitudes and behaviour.
- The project encouraged and empowered participants to take climate action in relation to themes around waste and sustainable resource use in particular. The project supported the local circular economy and provided a forum for people, businesses, and community groups to come together and take positive steps for the climate and the local environment.
- The process of researching, planning, and delivering the projects has enhanced the knowledge and skills of the creative practitioners involved in the projects, which in turn increases capacity for delivery of future creative community climate action projects.

CREATIVITY AND WELLBEING

- Based on participant feedback the creative aspects of the project seem to drive participation to a greater degree than the climate action element. Opportunities for creativity, connection and taking part in interesting local events are appealing.
- Participants valued the experience of collaborating with artists during the creative process, developing, and applying new skills, and seeing the final artwork showcased and celebrated.
- Some projects participants reflected on the positive impacts on wellbeing provided by the opportunity for social connection, relaxation and reflection offered by creative experiences.

COMMUNITY AND CONNECTION

- Participants valued the collaboration, connection, and community that the ACT projects offered through meeting new people and working collaboratively towards a shared goal or working together within existing group settings (provided by organisations that hosted engagement workshops). In some cases, this resulted in ongoing connections, beyond the conclusion of the project, between participants who had not met prior to ACT, based around their shared creative interests.
- The stories and social history that emerged through the donation of crockery from the wider community for the Crockery Mountain mosaic added a rich, additional layer of connection to the ACT project. It reflects the poignant links between the original owners of treasured items that make up the mosaic, from Ireland and beyond, and the community that created or view the piece today. The finished mosaic acts not only as a prompt to consider sustainability, but as a way to remember loved ones and neighbours, preserve family heirlooms, and as an archive of patterns and designs.

THE KEY ROLE OF CREATIVE PRACTITIONERS

- The artists and arts organisations involved in the project play a crucial role in attracting and sustaining engagement by the community, which requires not just creative input but a skilled, flexible, and responsive approach to project planning and delivery.
- Creative leads successfully leveraged their reputations, relationships with the community organisations and businesses, and connections in the arts and culture community in Waterford to reach a diverse range of participants.
- Successfully engaging the community with both the creative and climate action themes in a way that is sustained, and results in measurable changes in attitudes or behaviour, presents the most

significant challenge in delivering projects. Learnings and suggestions from the creative practitioners involved in this regard should inform future projects.

LOOKING AHEAD

- The significant body of work created by the community and the creative practitioners involved in both phases of ACT Waterford could be showcased and leveraged to stimulate wider engagement with the project themes. An ACT Waterford Community Climate Action Trail could be developed using QR codes and a digital Story Map showcasing, projects, artwork, and creative collaborations.
- Project artwork produced by some participants highlights the additional barriers that people with disabilities face in taking climate action. Consideration should be given to consulting people with disabilities on how to provide better access to these opportunities.
- Collaboration with organisations working with the community to provide social, educational and disability services could increase opportunities for taking part in community climate action projects for people who are underserved in this regard, through cocreated, relevant projects.
- Consider models of support (e.g., access to a dedicated adviser) for creative practitioners on the climate change aspects of the project at the planning phase to help them identify the potential for meaningful, achievable, measurable climate action that can be realistically expected from the proposed project.
- Develop a community of practice for creative practitioners and project managers involved in working on the ground with the community on ACT and other Creative Climate Action projects to provide a forum for sharing experiences and best practice.
- Identify participating communities before projects start. Artists and the project coordinator could work together to maximise engagement and impact by identifying cohorts of the community that are interested and will commit to a sustained engagement. A call for expressions of interest could be issued to community groups through the Public Participation Network outlining the opportunities and requirements for participation.
- Clearly define the creative practitioner's role in supporting measurement of project impact on attitudes and behaviour, and data collection from participants, when inviting applications. Artists are the key point of contact with project participants, and the designers of engagements intended to deliver the desired impacts on participants' behaviour and attitudes and play a key role in evaluation.

ARTISTS' SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE CLIMATE ACTION PROJECTS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Ensure that volunteers are getting more out of the project than they put in (a free event, a new skill, an opportunity to meet people, and to take climate action) and that the motive for taking part aligns with the process and output of the project.

“You have to consider giving a volunteer who signs up to something more than they’re giving you, and that’s the trick. It’s like A) it’s free. B) it’s a new skill. C) it’s meeting new friends. D) feel like you’ve made a contribution environmentally... I know why I need them, but I try to go beyond that and think of the balance of why they need that in their life, right?”

- Begin the project already connected to a community that had expressed interest in engaging with an artist, rather than spending project time trying to find the right group independently. ACT Waterford could instigate initial connections, linking artists early on with communities who were already curious and willing to engage. Clear identification of who a project is for, along with sufficient time for relationships and trust to develop, is important.

“Community climate action works best when it is slow, embedded, and responsive, rather than trying to reach everyone at once. The two-year time frame is a help with this but finding an interested group is key.”

- Spending time with the same group(s) from the outset builds deeper connections and achieves more meaningful outcomes.

DIGITAL MEDIA AND ENGAGEMENT

- One of the artists highlighted the importance of having a "hook" for media to attract attention and maintain interest over the project's duration.
- Online platforms can play a key role in fostering community involvement. Social media can be a tool for communicating the project's message and engaging the public. Transparency and clear communication by creative practitioners in social media profiles is important to build trust and engagement. It's also important to separate the private profile and the professional profile of the artist for clarity and to keep the focus on professional practice rather than personal interests or views. Creative practitioners can decide on a chosen platform e.g., Facebook for public call outs and WhatsApp for private groups (which have a shelf life).

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

- Consider having two artists working together on a project to share ideas, inspire and support each other, share connections and showcase their work together.

- Having a base or dedicated space for the project would facilitate better organisation and more effective and sustainable community engagement. If the groups involved have a lot of free time they could be working on the project between artist visits. Moving materials, equipment and artwork around makes logistics more difficult.
- Phased payments over the course of the project (e.g., every 6 weeks) would be better for the artist.

KEY THEMES IN FEEDBACK FROM ARTISTS

Community engagement is a central aspect of the project, and the artists highlighted the success of a range of methods including having a clear call to action, intentionally structuring the engagement to maintain interest and commitment over a period of months, tailoring the approach to engage each different audience, repeating creative performances at different festivals throughout the year and spending time with the same participants over a prolonged period.

Most of the creative practitioners faced challenges in relation to community engagement, which highlights the need for a flexible, adaptable approach to identifying audiences and keeping them engaged with both the climate action and creative sides of the project.

The artists highlighted the benefits of collaboration and networking with the ACT project Coordinator at SETU, other ACT creative practitioners and arts organisations, staff at organisations that hosted ACT creative events, community groups, farmers and local businesses. These connections boosted engagement, brought additional understanding of project context, skills and capacity to deliver their community climate action projects.

Some of the artists found the experience of researching and implementing aspects of the project beneficial in terms of their own knowledge, skills, and practice e.g., marine ecology and environmental awareness, or traditional building skills using natural materials.

While some of the artists described technical and logistical challenges faced during the projects, these resulted in valuable learning, which they will apply in future community projects. Examples included the logistics of installation of a large community mosaic, the practical challenges of holding drawing workshops on the bus and the complexities of sourcing and working with local, natural, sustainable building materials such as sheep's wool.

The artists offered suggestions in relation to community engagement, project management and administration that should be considered.

(Full Evaluation Report, Appendix 4)

PR & MARKETING

PR & MEDIA ACTIVITY SUMMARY

Publicist

Conleth Teevan contracted as project publicist to manage press outreach and media relations.

Photocall

Photocall held 10 January 2024 to generate early media interest and secure preview coverage.

Press Release Distribution

Press release issued to media on Monday, 19 February.



Drone Still, Colin Shanahan, Tramore, January 2024. Artist Sean Corcoran, with members of the Calmast Team

MEDIA COVERAGE & FEATURES



Print & Online News

Coverage secured in Waterford News & Star:

"ACT Waterford will place creative focus on climate action and environmental awareness"

Local feature highlighting environmental and creative aims of the initiative.

Additional feature:

"Giant crockery art installation is unveiled in County Waterford" – project launch coverage.

Waterford Live:

"Waterford community project 'Crockery Mountain' to be officially unveiled this weekend"

The Irish Times:

"A creative way to dispose of chipped or unwanted crockery" – national lifestyle coverage.

Irish Examiner outdoor/lifestyle feature coverage.

Earlier build-phase coverage:

“Thousands of pieces of old crockery being used to create massive mosaic in Dungarvan” – Waterford News & Star.

Broadcast & Radio

Interview coverage on Beat 102 103:

Ours to Protect – Ep. 47: ACT Waterford featuring Orla Rapple.

Follow-up radio interview aired 24 April.

Additional regional radio coverage on WLR FM (listen-back segment).

Nationwide on RTE TV followed the project from the studio all the way to the unveiling and can be watched [HERE](#).

Mooney Goes Wild on RTE Radio 1 came to visit Crockery Mountain and a podcast of the episode is available [HERE](#).

Features & Cultural Commentary

My Cultural Life feature with Seán Corcoran (PressReader syndication), referencing seven-month mosaic creation process with volunteers for ACT Waterford.

Festival & Event Mentions

Project referenced within wider festival programming coverage:

Waterford Festival of Food listings and previews via:

Waterford City & County Council

Lovin.ie

ACT Waterford in the movies

A short film was produced with students from Nemeton, a film studio based in Ring, County Waterford, documenting the making of CROCKERY MOUNTAIN. The film captures the creative process behind the project, the workshops, installation and the launch.

The film, DONATE A PLATE, has been entered into the Waterford Film Festival and will be screened at SETU Chapel on Saturday, 15 November.

The film can be viewed online here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTG3qW2ykGE>

(Full Media Coverage, Appendix 5)

SOCIAL MEDIA

OVERVIEW OF ROLE

Kate Twohig was engaged to manage social media communications for ACT Waterford.

The core aims of the role were to:

- Document and promote the activities of four commissioned artists.
- Build momentum and visibility around ACT Waterford as a creative climate action initiative.
- Support the development of an online community of creative climate activists through consistent and engaging social media content.

The role involved content planning, creating posts and reels, reposting artist-led content, attending events, and liaising with artists to gather material for the central ACT Waterford social media channels.

ARTISTS ENGAGEMENT AND OUTCOMES

SEAN CORCORAN - DONATE A PLATE (CROCKERY MOUNTAIN)

Sean Corcoran's project involved the creation of a large-scale public mosaic in Dungarvan titled "Crockery Mountain", made from unwanted crockery. He hosted free workshops in his studio, training volunteers to create mosaic panels that would collectively form the final artwork.

What worked well:

- Exceptionally strong community engagement both online and offline
- High volunteer turnout, driven largely by Sean's established and active personal social media following

- Clear alignment with climate action values through reuse of waste materials.
- Attending the workshops in person to capture compelling content as a participant.
- Regular, engaging documentation on Sean's own channels, which I was able to repost

Challenges:

- Much of the audience engagement accrued to Sean's personal platform, with only some of this trickling down to the ACT Waterford accounts.
- In the beginning posts were not often directly linked back to ACT Waterford, making it challenging to redirect audiences or grow ACT's own followership.
- Reliance on reposting limited the ability to frame the project consistently under the ACT umbrella.

SPRAOI WATERFORD - SEAWEED GIRL

SPRAOI Waterford created "Seaweed Girl", a visually striking public performance and participatory artwork. A mermaid descended from a sea-like float and used wild seaweed to create art live with spectators, engaging the public with a striking spectacle while celebrating Waterford's coastline and marine ecology.

What worked well:

- Strong visual spectacle, ideal for video and reels.
- High public engagement during live events, utilising crowds already present for other festivals and events e.g. Waterford Festival of Food and Spraoi.
- Clear climate and environmental messaging delivered through performance.
- Opportunities to attend and capture high-quality video content and create original reels for ACT Waterford.
- National media coverage, which could be reshared and amplified through ACT channels.

Challenges:

- As with Sean's project, SPRAOI's own reputation and following directed audience attention primarily to SPRAOI not ACT Waterford.

- ACT Waterford functioned more as a secondary amplifier than a primary destination for engagement.

JOANNE DONOHOE - COMMUNITY-BASED WORKSHOPS

Joanne Donohoe's work focused on smaller-scale, community-based engagements, including workshops with groups such as Men's Sheds, *Irish Wheelchair Association* and activities on the bus routes in Waterford.

What worked well:

- Joanne shared images and updates directly with *Kate*, allowing for posting original content to the ACT Waterford channels.
- Content could therefore be shaped clearly into posts that reflected ACT Waterford's values.
- Strong depth of engagement with participants, even if numbers were small.

Challenges:

- Activities were intentionally small-scale, which limited reach and online engagement metrics.
- The intimate nature of the work did not translate easily into high-performing social media content, despite being impactful on a local level.

MOLLIE ANNA KING - RESEARCH-BASED PRACTICE

Mollie Anna King's project was primarily research-based and involved limited public-facing activity during the project period.

What worked well:

- A public talk at an arts festival provided an opportunity for in-person documentation.
- *Kate* attended the talk and produced a reel, ensuring at least one strong piece of content was captured.

Challenges:

- The nature of the work did not generate many opportunities for visual or activity based content.

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OVERALL SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS

What worked well:

- **Artist-led platforms:** Leveraging artists' existing audiences, particularly Sean Corcoran and Spraoi, helped spread climate action messages widely, even when ACT Waterford was not the primary destination.
- **Reels and video content:** Live events, performances and active participation translated well into short-form video and reels.
- **National media amplification:** Reposting features from national media significantly boosted credibility and reach.
- **Direct content requests:** A Christmas 2024 campaign, where artists were asked to share sustainability tips, worked particularly well. I feel this succeeded because:
 - It was a clear, time-bound request
 - It sat slightly outside each artists main project, reducing pressure
 - It aligned with a seasonal moment where audiences were receptive

What didn't work well:

- **Generalised requests for documentation:** Broad requests to share images or updates from the artists were largely ineffective. This is understandable given that artists were focused on delivery and not documentation, largely.
- **ACT Waterford's social media channel as a standalone community hub:** Attempts to position ACT Waterford's social media as the central community space were challenging. Audiences consistently gravitated towards individuals and established organisations rather than an umbrella project page.
- **Uneven content flow:** Differences in project type i.e. public spectacle vs research-based practice, resulted in inconsistent content opportunities across artists.

KEY LEARNINGS AND TAKEAWAYS

1. People follow people, not projects

Audiences naturally gravitate towards individual artists and well-known organisations. ACT Waterford functioned most effectively as an amplifier rather than a primary hub.

2. Clear, specific asks outperform open-ended requests

Structured, themed requests e.g. Christmas Sustainability Tips, generated far better return from the artists than ongoing, informal requests for updates.

3. Documentation support might be helpful if built into future project design

Requesting artists to document their work without dedicated time, tools or prompts may have led to missed opportunities for some of the projects. Future projects might benefit from the social media manager also:

- Scheduling documentation days with each artist
- Simple content templates for each artist
- Clear expectations and time bound deliveries set at the outset

4. Success should not be measured solely by follower growth

While ACT Waterford's own audience growth was limited, the project successfully spread climate awareness through large existing networks, public engagement and media coverage.

5. Different practices require different communication strategies

Research-based and small-community projects need alternative storytelling approaches compared to large-scale public artworks or performances.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the work on ACT Waterford, ACT 2 involved adapting social media strategy to each different artistic practice presented, balancing the realities of freelance artistic workflows with the goals of a funded public programme. While building ACT Waterford's own online community proved challenging, the project was highly successful in disseminating creative climate action messages through artists' networks, public engagement, strong PR and media exposure. The experience offers valuable insights for structuring communications support in future creative climate initiatives.

CONFERENCE CONTRIBUTIONS AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

ACT Waterford shared its work and learning through a series of national and international conferences, contributing to dialogue at the intersection of arts, science, and climate action.

Robert Boyle Winter School – RDS, January 2024

ACT Waterford participated in the Robert Boyle Winter School, which took place at the Royal Dublin Society on 20 January 2024. The event focused on Science and Art and provided a platform to explore interdisciplinary approaches to public engagement.

EUSEA Conference - Georgia, May 2024

ACT Waterford contributed to the European Science Engagement Association (EUSEA) conference held in Georgia in May 2024. Under the theme “Reaching Beyond Boundaries: Why, Who, Where and How?”, ACT Waterford presented a case study on its Creative Climate Action work, highlighting artists working within communities to address climate issues.

EUSEA Conference – Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, May 2025

ACT Waterford was represented at the EUSEA conference “Crossing Oceans – Raising Our Sails: Navigating Public Engagement in Turbulent Times”, held at the Elder Museum of Science and Technology. The Calmast Team presented a session titled “Public Engagement for Sustainability, Biodiversity and Climate Action: What’s the Value of Local Solutions in Addressing Global Challenges?”, focusing on the impact of community-led initiatives in responding to global challenges.



Wexford Science Café, June 2025

ACT Waterford took part in the Wexford Science Café on Tuesday 17 June 2025. The event explored communicating climate change through the arts and featured a conversation with artist Nina McGowan, Mary Colclough of Trinity College Dublin and Nollaig Healy, Project Manager for ACT Waterford's Creative Climate Action programme.



New European Bauhaus Forum - SETU, November 2025

Nollaig Healy represented ACT Waterford at the New European Bauhaus Forum in November 2025 through engagement with the SEALabHaus project. The forum focused on Professionalisation and Training, aligning with SEALabHaus's aim to promote New European Bauhaus values within coastal communities and blue tourism initiatives across the Atlantic Area.

APPENDICES

[Appendix 1a Joanne Donohoe Year One](#)

[Appendix 1b Joanne Donohoe Year Two](#)

[Appendix 2 Spraoi](#)

[Appendix 3 Mollie Anna King](#)

[Appendix 4 Evaluation](#)

[Appendix 5 PR](#)

[Appendix 6 Audience Numbers](#)

Appendix 7 Budget