

# Place for Art

Roscommon  
County Council  
Arts Plan 2023 - 2028



**ROS  
COM  
MON**

Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council

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# Foreword

As Cathaoirleach of Roscommon County Council, I welcome the publication of the Arts Plan 2023 - 2028 which strengthens and reinforces Roscommon County Council's commitment to the arts. It identifies our strategic approach to supporting, developing and promoting the arts and our artists in our county. A greater understanding, awareness and appreciation of the arts contributes to our county identity, our sense of place and our wellbeing, thus enhancing the quality of life for people of all ages in County Roscommon.

I would like to compliment the outstanding work of the Arts Office which is making the arts and culture more accessible to all in County Roscommon. I look forward to building on these achievements over the lifetime of this strategy.

.....  
**Cllr. John Keogh, Cathaoirleach**

*John D Keogh*  
.....

I believe that artistic, creative and cultural activity will bring communities together to strengthen our economy and promote our sense of identity, preserve our culture and celebrate our diversity.

Roscommon County Council's Arts Plan 2023 - 2028 will work to support artists of all disciplines; enhance creativity in the lives of all participants and audiences; enrich public engagement with the arts in all its forms; and promote continued strategic and sustainable investment in arts and cultural infrastructure.

I welcome the strategy, which will maximise the potential of the arts to contribute to key areas of local development across Culture, Community, Climate and Economy so as to enrich the quality of the lives of the people of County Roscommon.

.....  
**Shane Tiernan, Chief Executive**

*Shane Tiernan*  
.....

I am very happy to publish our new Arts Plan 2023 - 2028 - based on many years of arts development and investment, and informed by successive arts plans, review and consultation. Working in partnership with artists, communities, creatives, agencies and organisations, this Plan will ensure a Place for Art in our lives putting arts development and public engagement to the fore in County Roscommon.

.....  
**Rhona McGrath, Arts Officer**

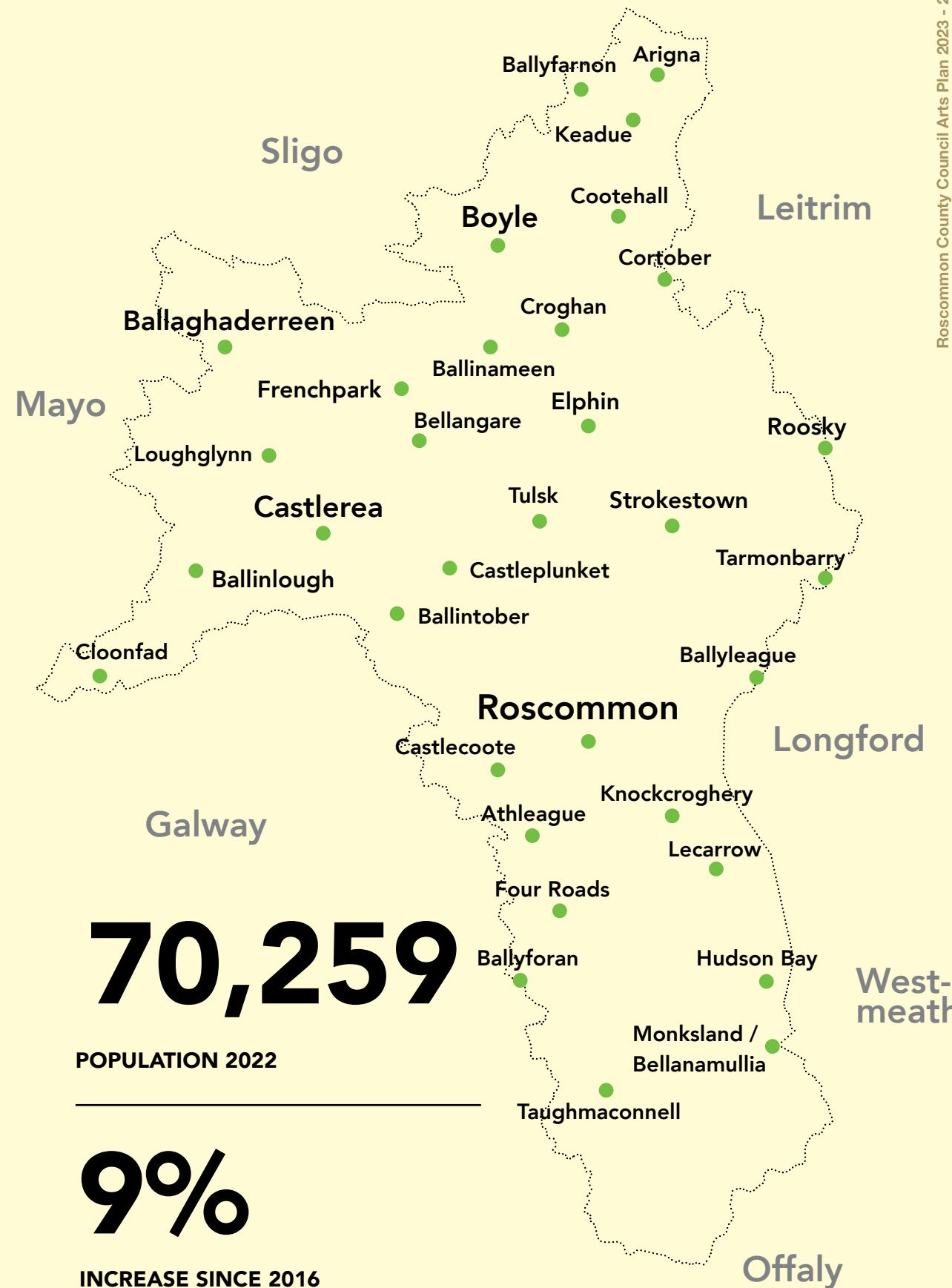
*Rhona McGrath*  
.....

Image: King House Piano Commission 2023 - Peter Regan, pianist.

# Profile & Context

Roscommon is rich in culture and heritage, a county of castles and kings, of stately homes, spectacular landscapes and natural beauty. The county is the location of the geographical centre of Ireland, the birthplace of Halloween, and the longest shoreline of the River Shannon, inspiring an abundance of water and mythically themed arts projects. Census 2022 shows the population of County Roscommon as 70,259, largely rural, which is a 9% increase since 2016 (64,436). The population is ageing at a higher rate than the national average, and the county is becoming increasingly multicultural in line with the whole of Ireland.

Image: Resonator, Martin Heron, Boyle Sculpture Trail



## Roscommon Arts

Culture in Roscommon crosses traditional and contemporary forms, offering a range of platforms for connecting people and creativity at high quality professional arts events. Our heritage, landscape and location inspire and inform the practise of many professional artists who were born in, live in and work throughout Roscommon and in our neighbouring counties. Multiple creative opportunities are embraced in smaller scale, community-run festivals, events and projects in towns and villages across the county, drawing on the collective imagination and creativity of the county.

The role of the Arts Office is to provide opportunities for participation in the arts; to enhance the lives of our people through the arts; to support artists working in all art forms at all stages of their career and in a wide range of contexts to create high-quality work; and to ensure continued support and the strategic development of the arts and cultural infrastructure in the county.

Roscommon Arts Centre is a vibrant, purpose-built arts venue, committed to presenting a dynamic and ambitious multi-disciplinary programme of events that creates and develops audiences for the arts and contributes to local arts development in County Roscommon. The centre recognises and supports the artist's role as being central to the artistic process, developing supports for artists at all stages of their careers through increased opportunities at the centre. The Arts are also central to the Council's other main cultural buildings King House, the Douglas Hyde Centre and the Exhibition Space at An Ríoga as well as the Outdoor Performance Space at Somers Park Castlereagh. Roscommon Arts Office also supports arts activities at a number of cultural venues including Trinity Arts Centre, Strokestown Park House & Famine Museum, McGahern Barracks, Anam Gallery.

Image:  
Roscommon Arts Centre,  
2022, *An Animate Land*,  
Laura Fitzgerald, Miriam  
O'Connor, Marian Balfe.



## Arts Act 2003

The Arts Act 2003 requires each local authority to prepare and implement plans for the development of the arts within its functional area, taking account of policies of government in relation to the arts.

The arts are defined in the Act as:

*Any creative or interpretive expression (whether traditional or contemporary) in whatever form, and including, visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus and architecture, and including any medium when used for these purposes.*

## Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Core Policy Goal:

*To enhance access to and to recognise the social and economic role of the arts, culture and film sectors in Ireland by promoting and encouraging artistic expression, cultural awareness and participation, through an appropriate policy, legislative and resource framework. To provide a capital infrastructure for the National Cultural Institutions.*

Image: Winner of Roscommon New Writing Award 2021 at McGahern Barracks, Culture Night. Louise G Cole, Rhona McGrath, Neil Tully, Gerry Boland. Photographer Brian Farrell



## The Arts Council of Ireland

The Arts Council /An Comhairle Ealaíon is the national agency for developing, promoting and funding the arts in Ireland. The Council's core functions under the Arts Act 2003 are to stimulate public interest in the arts; to promote knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts; to assist in improving standards in the arts; and, to advise the Minister and other public bodies on the arts. The Arts Council has two policy priorities: the Artist and Public Engagement. Its investment and other actions to support the arts are guided by two primary goals: (i) that artists are supported to make excellent work which is enjoyed and valued and (ii) that more people will enjoy high quality arts experiences.

The Arts Council's ten-year strategy, Making Great Art Work 2016 to 2025 sets out how it will lead the development of the arts in Ireland over that period.

## Roscommon Framework Agreement with the Arts Council 2020 - 2027

This is an agreement reached between the Arts Council and Roscommon County Council. Its purpose is to highlight the shared strategic priorities for arts development in Roscommon over the period of this agreement; setting out a vision and goals for what can be achieved together. It has been developed through a collaborative process between both organisations, under the overarching national agreement, A Framework for Collaboration between the Arts Council and the County and City Management Association.

This national agreement reaffirms the centrality of a strategic partnership which has been in existence since 1985 and outlines a shared vision for a new era of arts development, striving for equality of access to and engagement in the arts by all those living in Ireland.

## Creative Ireland

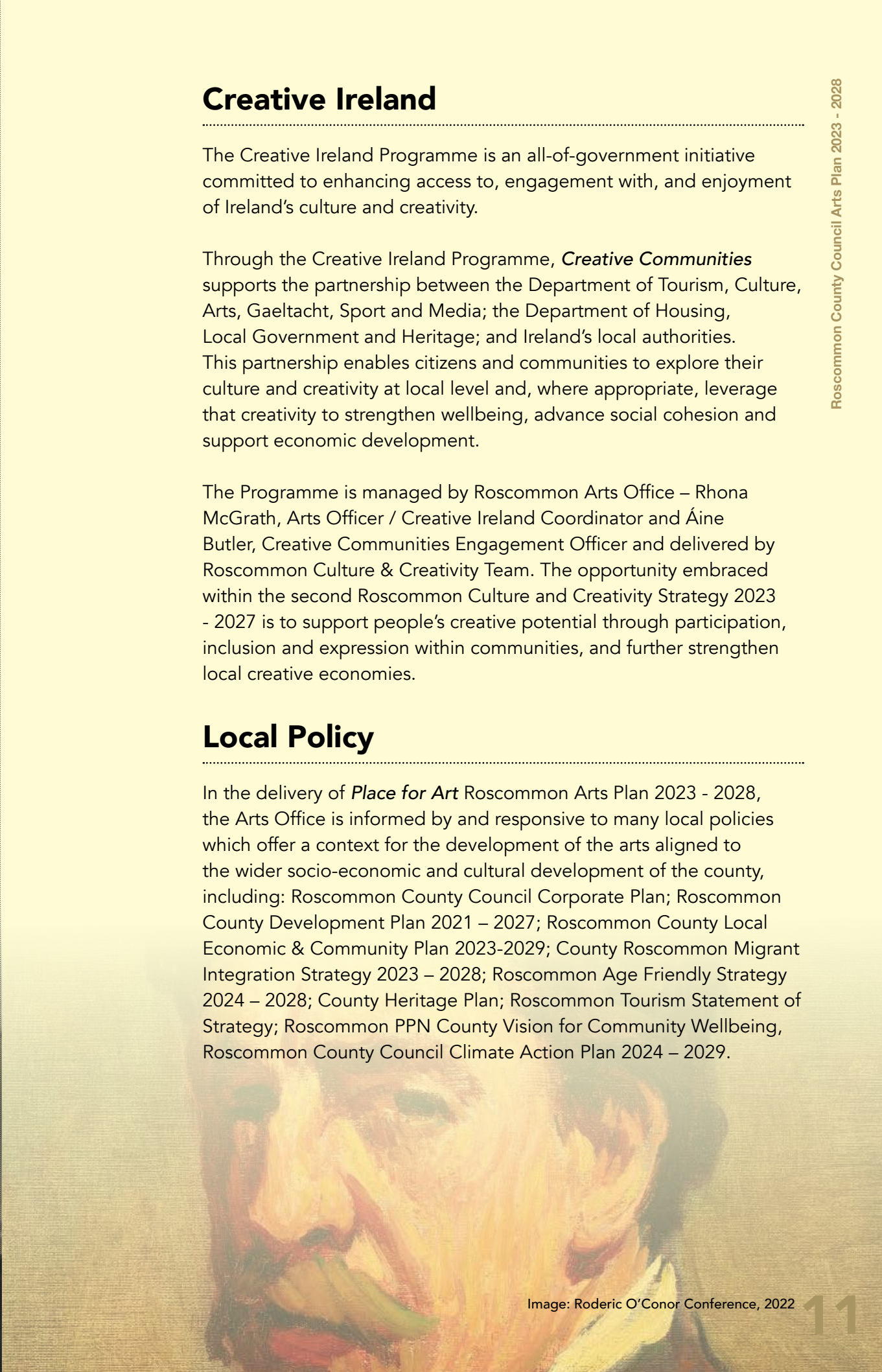
The Creative Ireland Programme is an all-of-government initiative committed to enhancing access to, engagement with, and enjoyment of Ireland's culture and creativity.

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

The Programme is managed by Roscommon Arts Office – Rhona McGrath, Arts Officer / Creative Ireland Coordinator and Áine Butler, Creative Communities Engagement Officer and delivered by Roscommon Culture & Creativity Team. The opportunity embraced within the second Roscommon Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023 - 2027 is to support people's creative potential through participation, inclusion and expression within communities, and further strengthen local creative economies.

## Local Policy

In the delivery of *Place for Art* Roscommon Arts Plan 2023 - 2028, the Arts Office is informed by and responsive to many local policies which offer a context for the development of the arts aligned to the wider socio-economic and cultural development of the county, including: Roscommon County Council Corporate Plan; Roscommon County Development Plan 2021 – 2027; Roscommon County Local Economic & Community Plan 2023-2029; County Roscommon Migrant Integration Strategy 2023 – 2028; Roscommon Age Friendly Strategy 2024 – 2028; County Heritage Plan; Roscommon Tourism Statement of Strategy; Roscommon PPN County Vision for Community Wellbeing, Roscommon County Council Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029.





# AT THE CASTLE

DANCE, MUSIC, FILM, LIGHTING  
SPECTACLE & PROJECTIONS

Image: At the Castle, Culture Night 2021, Local Live Performance Programming Scheme

# Vision, Mission, Priorities & Values

## Our Vision

### Roscommon: Place for Art : Art for All

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We will maximise the potential of the arts to contribute to key areas of local development across Culture, Community, Climate and Economy so as to enrich the quality of the lives of the people of County Roscommon.

Roscommon Arts Plan aligns with the vision of the Creative Ireland Strategy (*A Creative Place : A Creative People*), and with the Council's priorities in the Roscommon Corporate Plan 2019-2024: Quality of life and well-being for all; Economic and community development; Quality service to our people.

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# Our Mission

## ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL ARTS OFFICE WILL:

- Support, encourage and nurture the arts through diverse programmes and partnerships;
- Work collaboratively and inclusively locally, regionally and nationally with artists, venues, departments, agencies and communities;
- Facilitate and support opportunities to enhance the environment in which art is made, engaged with and received.

# Our Priorities

- **THE ARTIST:**  
Support artists and arts professionals to make great work that can be enjoyed and valued.
- **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**  
Provide a broad range of opportunities for people in Roscommon to engage with the Arts.
- **CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE:**  
Enrich the lives of children and young people through the arts.
- **ARTS INFRASTRUCTURE:**  
Provide for captivating, challenging, culturally diverse, high quality arts experiences in public spaces.

# Our Values

## ACROSS EACH PRIORITY AND IN OUR ACTIONS WE WILL ASPIRE TO:

- Encourage and promote high quality artistic standards.
- Ensure processes and practices which are accountable, transparent, fair and value for money.
- Explore practices which promote environmental sustainability and positive climate action (aligning with Roscommon Climate Action Plan).
- Nurture equality, diversity, inclusion, integrity, well-being and access to the arts for everyone.

Image left:

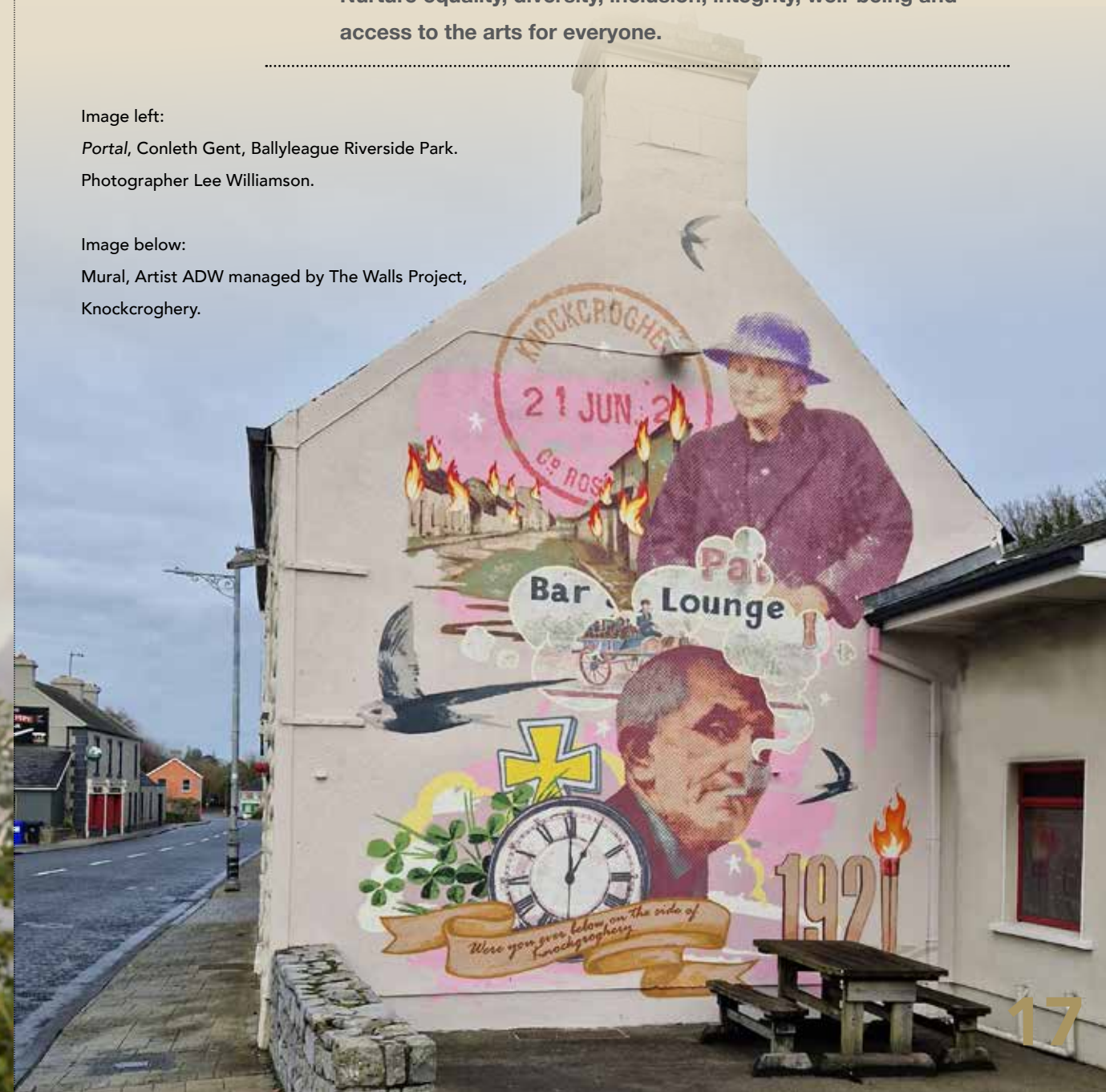
Portal, Conleth Gent, Ballyleague Riverside Park.

Photographer Lee Williamson.

Image below:

Mural, Artist ADW managed by The Walls Project,

Knockcroghery.





# Priority One: The Artist

Image: Malachy Costello at McGahern Barracks, Culture Night 2022.

Photographer Brian Farrell



*Support artists and arts professionals to make great work that can be enjoyed and valued.*

Artists are central to the development of a vibrant cultural environment, contributing to the long term development of the arts and culture in the county.

Roscommon Arts Office will further develop our supports to artists and arts professionals in line with available financial and human resources, in order to meet our ambition to engage with and enable artists to make high-quality work.

## **Actions:**

### **OVER THE COURSE OF THIS ARTS PLAN:**

- A greater number and diversity of artists of all disciplines will have been supported through bursaries, awards, commissions, mentoring, residencies, professional development opportunities and networking events, locally, regionally and nationally.
- A greater number of artists of all disciplines will have been supported to produce and present work in arts venues and spaces throughout the county, in particular the local authority venues Roscommon Arts Centre, King House, Douglas Hyde Centre, An Ríoga Exhibition Space and Libraries.
- Artists will have gained the capacity and skills to achieve a higher percentage of supports and opportunities nationally and internationally including Arts Council funding.
- Work opportunities will continue to be provided through Arts Office Programmes.
- We will have expanded the range and disciplines of artists working in the arts participation programme.
- The Arts Office will advocate for the arts and artists in the development of Council infrastructural and public realm projects.

# Priority Two: Public Engagement

*Provide a broad range of opportunities for people in Roscommon to engage with the Arts.*

Roscommon Arts Office will continue to prioritise public engagement in order for more people to enjoy high quality arts experiences with professional artists. We also acknowledge and support voluntary and non-professional arts provision by individuals and groups – as performers, participants and organisers.

Planning, training, programming and funding for Inclusion in the Arts will continue to be a focus including the development of the C.A.R.E Programme – Creative Ageing in Roscommon – in partnership with the HSE; and Cultural Companions day-time events in partnership with Roscommon Volunteer Centre, Roscommon Arts Centre and venues. People aged over 65 account for 18.5% of the population, higher than the national average.

Image: Music Network - Roscommon Teaching Residency with Cathy Jordan, Seamie O'Dowd & Rick Epping, King House. Photographer Brian Farrell.



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## Actions:

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### OVER THE COURSE OF THIS ARTS PLAN:

- We will further develop and enhance public programmes such as Culture Night, Bealtaine Festival and the Literary Development Programme, which have strong engagement between the county's artists, venues, cultural organisations and communities.
- We will have identified barriers to access, reached more people and developed initiatives that centre on the needs of targeted groups to promote equality, diversity and inclusion for children and young people, older people, people with disabilities, new and underrepresented communities.
- We will have advanced and enhanced public engagement experiences through partnership programmes with local authority departments, the Creative Ireland Programme, key arts & cultural venues, and resource organisations locally, regionally and nationally such as Brothers of Charity and Age & Opportunity.
- Through our programmes we will have provided opportunities for individuals and groups to collaborate with a panel of experienced artists and creative practitioners to make and interpret art through mutually beneficial two-way engagement, which nurtures and values the different ideas, experiences and skills of all involved.
- Through funding and in-kind resources, we will have supported key arts festivals in their critical role of broadening public access to the arts and the unique opportunities they provide for presenting and experiencing art.
- We will deliver and review a number of Arts Council funded projects including Creative Places Ballaghaderreen and POP - Planning for Outdoor Performance. We will identify and apply for project funding from the Arts Council and other agencies, in line with this strategy.

# Priority Three: Children and Young

Image: Romeo & Juliet, Roscommon County Youth Theatre, Roscommon Castle.  
Photographer Brian Farrell.



*Enrich the lives of children and young people through the arts.*

Roscommon Arts Office understands the value of encouraging young people and children to create, experience and participate in the arts, and in ensuring that the voices of young people remain at the core of on-going planning and implementation of arts programmes. 20% of the county's population is under the age of 16.

## **Actions:**

### **OVER THE COURSE OF THIS ARTS PLAN:**

- We will continue to invest in and develop high quality programmes, including intergenerational projects, with our venues and local partners Music Generation Roscommon, Galway Roscommon ETB, Schools, Education Centres, with our Library and with Creative Ireland / Cruinniú na nÓg, Ireland's national day of free creativity.
- The artistic ambitions of Roscommon County Youth Theatre members and artistic personnel will have been met with sufficient funding and supports from the Arts Office.
- We will explore youth mentoring initiatives to nurture and support young people age 18 – 24 with ambitious plans for pursuing arts opportunities.
- We will explore partnerships and collaborations with local and national resource organisations including Youth Theatre Ireland, Hub na nÓg, National Youth Council of Ireland, Foróige and Comhairle na nÓg to develop arts programmes and best practice in giving children and young people a meaningful voice in decision-making.

# Priority Four: Arts Infrastructure

*People who live in and visit Roscommon will experience captivating, challenging, culturally diverse, high quality arts experiences in public spaces.*



Continued strategic and sustainable investment in the development of arts infrastructure – indoor and outdoor – permanent, temporary and short-term - is necessary to ensure that the public can enjoy a wide range of quality arts experiences and artists have access to quality spaces to develop and present their work.

The Arts Office will continue commissioning artworks and exploring place making initiatives with the local authority and government departments, in particular Regeneration & Economic Development, applying for funding under Town & Village Renewal Scheme, Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, Failte Ireland Destination Town, Rural and Urban Regeneration Development Funding and other schemes which have led to developments such as the Outdoor Public & Performance Space at Somers Park Castlerea.

## Actions:

### OVER THE COURSE OF THIS ARTS PLAN:

- We will advocate for investment in arts venues and spaces throughout the county, in particular the local authority venues Roscommon Arts Centre, King House, Douglas Hyde Centre and An Ríoga Exhibition Space, so as to ensure sustainable and ambitious provision for the arts and engagement with the public.
- We will have enhanced supports to artists and to communities to develop viable venues, spaces and events for making great art work.
- The Arts Office will develop a Public Art Plan that draws on our commissioning experience to date, that is ambitious and innovative and is aligned with best public art practice guidelines nationally.
- Public Art Commissions will provide increased opportunities for artist employment, public engagement and will contribute positively to place making.
- We will consider regional and national partnerships, schemes and funding options to incentivise investment in Roscommon in the screen, gaming, animation, virtual production and digital sectors including Creative Heartlands, SLR Film Project, An Bealach, Western Region AudioVisual Producers Fund (WRAP) and Creative Enterprise West (CREW).

Image: Emmet Louis/Motion Chapel, Cruinniú na nÓg 2023, Somers Park Castlerea





Image: Roscommon County Youth Orchestra, Music Generation Roscommon at Roscommon Arts Centre

# Implementation

Roscommon Arts Office sets out these strategic priorities based on many years of arts development and investment locally, which has been informed by successive arts plans, review and consultation. Strategic actions will be implemented that will have the most impact on arts development and public engagement in the county over the period of the plan.

Roscommon County Council Arts Office will prepare Annual Operational Plans for delivery, in the context of Roscommon County Council's Annual Adopted Budgets and Annual Service Delivery Plans. And in the context of annual applications and agreements with our key national funders, the Arts Council of Ireland; the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media; and Creative Ireland.

## Arts and Culture Team (2023)

A/Director of Services - Housing, Culture and

International Protection: Fiona Ní Chuinn

Arts Officer: Rhona McGrath

Public Art & Engagement Officer: Mary Smyth

Creative Communities Engagement Officer: Áine Butler

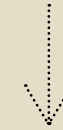
Clerical Officer - Culture



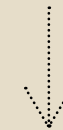
# Development of Roscommon Arts Plan

Image: Film still from *You Are Gone From Me*,  
Decade of Centenaries 2023: artist commission in  
response to "Douglas Hyde Cultural Influencer"  
by Padraig Cunningham.

Review of Arts Plan 2017 – 2021



**SEPTEMBER 2022**  
Artist Consultation – Artist Café, Roscommon  
Arts Centre



**NOVEMBER 2023**  
Online and In Person Surveys



**DECEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup> 2023**  
Presentation to SPC for Economic Development  
& Enterprise Support (including Tourism, Culture  
& Libraries)



**DECEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup> 2023**  
Presentation to meeting of Roscommon County  
Council for approval

# Acknowledgments

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John O'Brien, Artist Consultation.

Staff & Elected Representatives of Roscommon County Council.

Key Arts Programme Stakeholders:

The Arts Council of Ireland; HSE; Creative Ireland; Catherine Sheridan/Roscommon County Youth Theatre; Roscommon Artist Panel; Roscommon Arts Centre; King House; GRETB Local Creative Youth Partnership; Music Generation Roscommon.

Front cover: Ruth Cunningham (Juliet) & Holly Connaughton (Nurse) in Romeo & Juliet, Roscommon County Youth Theatre, directed by Catherine Sheridan. Photographer Brian Farrell.

Design: Pure Designs

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