

Cultúr: A Strategic Vision for Cultural Services 2016-2020

Donegal County Council



Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall
Donegal County Council



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Foreword

County Donegal's unique and varied culture is a source of immense pride. Our county and its culture have always been intertwined. This culture is an all encompassing, evolving force that helps us express and celebrate who we are as a diverse, traditional and modern people.

Through our arts, libraries, language and heritage, we showcase a county that strikes a unique cultural beat. We believe that this beat should be heard loudly, clearly and confidently across the mountains and lakes of Donegal, Ireland and the world.

To protect and promote our culture, language, arts, libraries and heritage in county Donegal and encourage existing and new cultural forms to flourish, we must think laterally, aim high and chart out a vision for the future.

Cultúr: A Strategic Vision for Cultural Services, Donegal County Council 2016-2020 sets out this vision clearly.

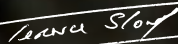
This year, 2016 is a special year in Ireland. It is a time to reflect on the motivation of those who sought to build a new Ireland 100 years ago. It is with a new economic optimism that we can look forward again to a cultural vision that seeks to build and move forward our cultural development for the coming years.

By 2020, we want Donegal's reputation as a leader in culture to be strengthened by our commitment to its development. Donegal County Council believes that to invest in arts, culture, heritage and language is a commitment to a healthier, more fulfilled, prosperous, successful county.

Chief Executive, Donegal County Council
Seamus Neely



Cathaoirleach, Donegal County Council
Terence Slowey



Limpets by Artist Grace Weir, Bundoran
(Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)

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Seamus Neely

Chief Executive Donegal County Council

Introduction

Every decade is marked by significant events and the last decade has been undeniably defined by the economic recession in Ireland and the subsequent impact across all walks of life in Ireland. No individual, group, business or institution was left unchanged by the economic crisis. However, hope springs eternal and there are quiet rumblings of optimism. It is in the context of this optimism that we present our new Cultural Services strategy.

The provision of Cultural Services is a key area of activity for Donegal County Council in contributing to the best possible quality of life for the community of Donegal and to the best possible experience for our visitors.

In responding to these changes, the Cultural Services Division will build on its record of service provision by enhancing and modifying its core services in response to developments in the sector, new opportunities and changes in demand. New programmes and services will also be developed. This strategy will provide a basis for all work plans within Cultural Services in Donegal County Council.

Donegal County Council believes that promoting and supporting arts, culture, heritage and language is good for our society, our economy and our national identity both at home and abroad. Donegal County Council also believes that this has always been and always will be one of our enduring strengths. Our culture helps engender a deepened sense of place, citizenship and pride of place.

Donegal County Council therefore believes that to invest in arts, culture, heritage and language is a commitment to a healthier, fulfilled, prosperous, successful county and it is in this context that we have thoughtfully compiled this strategy.

Over the next five years we will mark several achievements/ birthdays including the Regional Cultural Centre 10th Year, Donegal County Museum and Arts Office 30th in 2017 and Archives Services 20th Year in 2019.

After several difficult years in Ireland, there is now an atmosphere of possibility and progress again and it is within this context that we present this strategic map entitled Cultúr. There already exists an extensive and well developed cultural landscape in Donegal but the purpose of this strategy is to identify and implement actions to develop and strengthen this with Donegal County Council Cultural Services taking a lead role. The Strategy sets out:

- What Cultural Services does
- Reviews what we have achieved since 2009
- The policy and legislative context in which Cultural Services works
- Charts our vision for the next five years.

Much of the activity envisaged in the strategy is long term and visionary and is embedded within a very substantial and solid groundwork that has already commenced or been delivered by various cultural providers, either independently or working with Donegal County Council. Joined up, co-ordinated vision and action is imperative to harness and maximise the full potential of our cultural resources.

This strategy details the actions to be taken by the Cultural Services Division of Donegal County Council in maintaining and enhancing its ongoing service provision within the county and its continuing partnerships with other stakeholders under the six key headings or goals:

1. Public Participation

Cultural Services is inspired by the intrinsic value of culture and by the idea of a county where high quality cultural experiences are enjoyed by those who live and visit Donegal. We want to increase awareness of the range of services and experiences available in public libraries, the arts, and in heritage, and increase public participation.

2. Life Long learning and Social Inclusion

Cultural Services will continue its commitment to high quality collaborative, community focused actions and projects that have social change at the centre of the work. The essence of this is a commitment to Life Long Learning and Socially Engaged practice. Most events and supports are available free of charge.

3. Supporting the Arts & Arts Organisations

The work of artists and arts organisations inspire and reflect the rhythm of the everyday as well as the momentous events of public life. This important and distinctive creative power is an essential feature of our consciousness and we are committed to supporting and developing the work of artists and arts organisations.

4. Conserve and promote Cultural Inheritance

We work to protect and enhance Ireland's heritage for now and for future generations as we realise that if it is gone, it is a loss that can never be replaced or repaired. Cultural Services will continue its commitment to

maintaining and enhancing the quality of our natural, built and cultural heritage which includes the Irish Language.

5. Building relationships with stakeholders and partners

We are committed to the development of partnerships for delivery of shared cultural goals and to seeking new opportunities at local, regional, cross border, national and international level.

6. Sustainable, high quality Cultural Services

We want Donegal's reputation as a leader in culture to be strengthened by our commitment to its development. Donegal County Council believes that to invest in arts, culture, heritage and language is a commitment to a healthier, more fulfilled, prosperous, successful county.

The proposed capital programme & infrastructure plans are set out in Section 5.

Eileen Burgess

Eileen Burgess

County Librarian/Divisional Manager Cultural Services

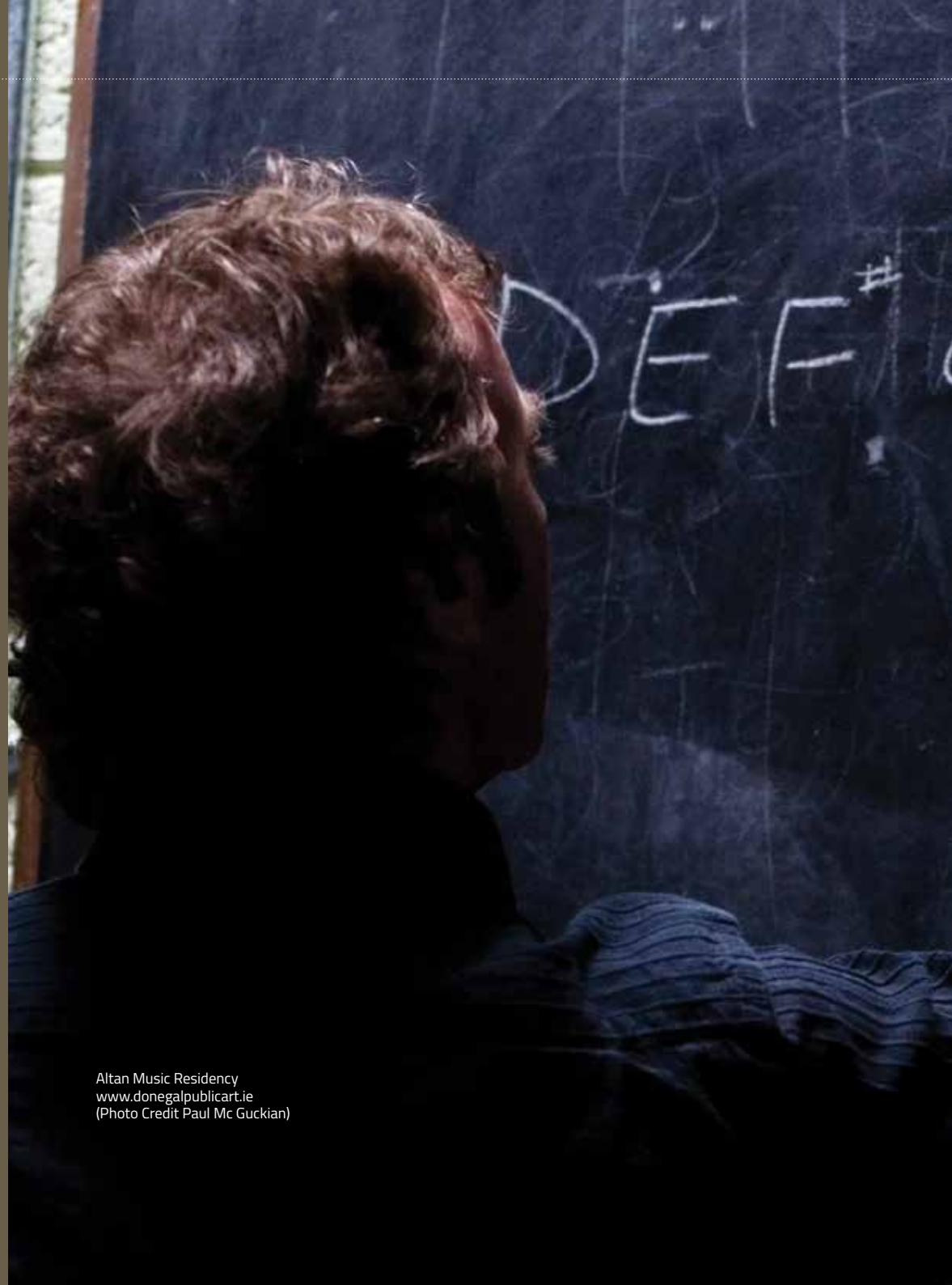
Executive Summary

County Donegal's unique and varied culture is a source of immense pride. Our county and its culture have always been intertwined. This culture is an all encompassing, evolving force that helps us express and celebrate who we are as a diverse, traditional and modern people.

To protect and promote our culture, language, arts, libraries and heritage in County Donegal and to encourage existing & new cultural forms to flourish, we must think laterally, aim high and chart out a vision for the future.

Recent years have seen unprecedented change in local government in Ireland. However the commitment to Culture and Cultural Development by Donegal County Council remains constant and if anything has been strengthened as outlined in the Donegal Local Economic & Community Plan 2015-2021 where valuing, sustaining and developing our culture and our creative resources is one of the seven priority goals.

By 2020, we want Donegal's reputation as a leader in culture to be strengthened by our commitment to its development. Donegal County Council believes that to invest in arts, culture, heritage and language is a commitment to a healthier, more fulfilled, prosperous, successful county.



Altan Music Residency
www.donegalpublicart.ie
(Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)

A unique model of delivery in Ireland, Donegal County Council Cultural Services is comprised of the countywide Library Service, the Arts Service, the Regional Cultural Centre, Donegal County Museum, the Archives Service, County Donegal Heritage Office and a complementary Cultural Resources support role. Donegal County Council is committed to having arts and heritage valued as central to civic life and a county where these are enjoyed widely in our communities. To that end Public Engagement is the first goal of the strategy.

Cultural Services will continue its commitment to high quality collaborative, community focused actions and projects that have social change at the centre of the work. These might include but are not limited to social inclusion, health, mental health and wellbeing, creativity in older people and so on and have entitled this second goal as Life Long Learning and Social Inclusion.

The work of artists and arts organisations inspire and reflect the rhythm of the everyday as well as the momentous events of public life. This important and distinctive creative power is an essential feature of our consciousness and we are committed to supporting and developing the work of artists and arts organisations through our third goal.

We work to encourage awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of Donegal's heritage. We want to protect and enhance Ireland's heritage for present and future generations as we realise that when it's gone, it's a loss that cannot be replaced or repaired. Increasingly the economic potential of cultural heritage is being recognised. Cultural Services will continue its commitment to maintaining and enhancing the quality of our natural, built and cultural heritage which includes the Irish Language and have set out the specific actions in our fourth goal.

We are committed to the development of partnerships for delivery of shared cultural goals and new funding opportunities at local, regional, cross border, national and international level and our fifth goal identifies realistic and achievable ways that this can be done.

We want Donegal's reputation as a leader in culture and cultural services at local authority level to be strengthened by our commitment to its development and have set out a comprehensive and ambitious range of actions that will seek to maintain high quality, sustainable services and we set out how to achieve this in our sixth goal.

Donegal County Council's cultural infrastructure is outlined in Section 5 of this strategy, along with exciting and innovative new capital projects for future development. Given the extent of the Council's network of service delivery points, stretching across the county, the importance of refurbishing and maintaining existing assets is also set out.

Through our arts, libraries, language and heritage, we showcase a county that strikes a unique cultural beat. We believe that this beat should be heard loudly, clearly and confidently across the mountains and lakes of Donegal, Ireland and the world.



Altan Music Residency
(Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)

Acronyms

CDB:	County Development Board
ETB:	Education & Training Board
GAA:	Gaelic Athletic Association
HSCL:	Home School Community Liaison
HSE:	Health Service Executive
LEO:	Local Enterprise Office
IFI:	Irish Film Institute
IMMA:	Irish Museum of Modern Art
LYIT:	Letterkenny Institute of Technology
NOAC:	National Oversight Audit Commission
NS:	National School
OPW:	Office of Public Works
PMDS:	Performance Management Development System
PSC:	Public Services Centre
RCC:	Regional Cultural Centre
RDS:	Royal Dublin Society
READ	LK/ READ DL: READ Letterkenny / READ Donegal
RFID:	Radio Frequency Identification
SCP:	School Completion Programme
VEC:	Vocational Education Committee



Launch of 21 Years of Public Art at RCC 2013 (Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)



The Death of Saimer Sculpture by
Artist Fred Conlon (RIP) Per Cent for Art
Scheme, Ballyshannon (Photo Credit
Paul Mc Guckian)

Section 1: Description of Cultural Services



Central Library
Letterkenny

8 Community
Libraries

4 Branch
Libraries

9 Taobh Tire
Service Points

Mobile Library
(Shared with
Libraries NI)

County Arts
Service

Regional Cultural
Centre

Public Art Office

Earagail Arts
Festival

An Grianán
Theatre

County Museum
Service

County Archive
Service

County Heritage
Office



*Flight of the Earls Sculpture by
Artist John Behan, Rathmullan
(Photo Credit Paul Mc
Guckian)*

Cultural Services

The Cultural Services Division of Donegal County Council provides services to the public across the three broad areas of Libraries, Arts and Heritage and operates within seven specialised sections of service provisions.

- Public Libraries
- County Arts Service
- Regional Cultural Centre
- Public Art
- County Museum
- County Archives
- County Heritage Office

Cultural Services also works closely with other Sections in Donegal County Council including The Irish Language Office, The Film Office, The Local Enterprise Office, The Tourism Product & Marketing Development Office and the Donegal Diaspora Project.

The Donegal County Council adopted budget for 2016 included a provision of €5,826,464 for Cultural Services (€4,612,121 revenue expenditure and €1,214,343 service support).

Libraries

Donegal County Council provides a network of libraries as cultural spaces for creating opportunities to enhance community life. Libraries promote pride, confidence and identity in local and national culture as well as providing economic stimulus through learning and creativity. By providing a modern library and information service the Council seeks to meet the need for general education, information and recreation, to support the quest for knowledge, and to meet the public's interest in reading and the arts.



Girls from Loretto Convent School, Letterkenny
(Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)



Libraries are a resource for Information & Learning, Culture & Imagination and people of all ages.

The Council has established a countywide library network, with the Central Library at the core, 8 community libraries (Ballybofey, Bunrana, Bundoran, Carndonagh, Gaoth Dobhair, Lifford, Milford, and Na Rosa; and 4 branch libraries (Ballyshannon, Donegal Town, Moville, and Raphoe) throughout the county. Taobh Tíre community outreach points and a Cross Border Mobile Library supplement this network. Details of all our library services are available online at www.donegallibrary.ie.

In addition to lending services a range of other services is provided through the library system, including:

- Children's services
- Internet/WIFI services
- Reference and Information services
- Literacy support services
- Services promoting health and wellbeing
- Online library services
- Europe Direct Information Centre
- An annual programme of events across the county
- Local and family history services.

Arts Service

The Arts Service works in partnership with a broad range of arts groups, educational interests, community groups and networks, and development agencies to strengthen the local arts sector and to further and enrich the community's engagement with the arts. The service also operates a successful new work and commissions programme, focusing, in the main, on the advancement of locally based professional artists.

Earagail Arts Festival was initiated in 1989 by Donegal County Council and is now administered independently by Earagail Arts Festival Management Company Ltd. Taking place throughout North and West Donegal in mid July; the Festival is the North West's premier multi-disciplinary, annual celebration of the arts. Its core funders include Donegal County Council, The Arts Council, Fáilte Ireland and Ealaín na Gaeltachta.

An Grianán Theatre opened to the public in October 1999. The facility is owned and part-funded by Donegal County Council and is managed on its behalf by An Grianán Theatre Management. To date, the theatre has played host to audiences of over one million people drawn from throughout County Donegal and beyond. Many thousands more have enjoyed the theatre's own in-house productions which tour regularly throughout the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.



LUXe Landscape Theatre Company
(Photo: Mark Loudon)

Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny

The award-winning Regional Cultural Centre building, designed by MacGabhann Architects, is one of the finest arts facilities in Ireland. A major Irish Times review stated that "Letterkenny's impressive new arts building places Donegal in an international context rather than on the periphery". Donegal County Council's vision for the Regional Cultural Centre (RCC) is to lead and assist cultural development in County Donegal and beyond, and to assist wider development in the County through culture. The main programme areas are visual arts, music, film & digital media, and education / community arts. The Centre has organised a very full programme of high quality activities since it opened in 2007, a significant proportion of which have been organised in partnership with cultural, community and statutory bodies in the region and beyond. The RCC works particularly closely with the other elements of Donegal County Council's Cultural Services Division. The programme is made possible by annual funding from Donegal County Council, the Arts Council and project funding from a variety of sources.



Public Art


The Public Art Office of Donegal County Council sets out to commission Public Art, utilising mainly The Per Cent for Art Scheme and gives the public the opportunity to experience a vast range of contemporary art in their everyday life whilst providing the artist with the challenge and opportunity to create work for public engagement and response. As a result of Donegal County Council's building programme over the last number of years, a significant range of budgets have presented under the Per Cent for Art Scheme. The Per Cent for Art Scheme is a government funded programme whereby an additional fund of up to 1% of the cost of a publicly-funded infrastructure or building can be applied for by the Local Authority, to commission original, site and context specific works of art. The 1% is subject to a maximum cap of €64,000. The fund is available across all government departments. The Per Cent for Art scheme supports the commissioning of artists and artworks across all contemporary art forms. In 2016, the Public Art Programme of Donegal County Council is twenty five years old. www.donegalpublicart.ie is a wonderful record of all commissions to date.

Donegal County Museum

Donegal County Museum was opened to the public in 1987. The Museum is partly housed in what was once the Reception Block of Letterkenny Workhouse, built in 1843. An extension was completed in 1991. The Museum develops and cares for a comprehensive collection of original artefacts relating to the history of County Donegal. The exhibition in the first floor gallery highlights aspects of the story of Donegal from the Stone Age to the Twentieth Century. A programme of temporary exhibitions and associated events are organised each year. The Museum maintains a workshop and



Between the Known and the Unknown by
Sean Campbell & Elizabeth Caffrey



storage facility where artefacts are preserved and stored under appropriate environmental conditions. The Museum also undertakes a series of outreach activities in communities and schools throughout the county and liaises with the relevant statutory authorities regarding the preservation of our archaeological heritage.

Donegal County Archives

The Archives Service manages, preserves and makes accessible the archives of the county's local authorities and their predecessor bodies and also archives acquired through private purchase or donation which relate to the history, heritage and culture of the county. The Archives Service is also responsible for the management, disposal and/or archiving of the County Council's non-current records. The Archives Service seeks to acquire permanent suitable accommodation for the Council's archives and non-current records.

The Archives Service works in partnership with many groups and organisations and, through its outreach programme, aims to bring archives to the wider community. Services include: facilitating and assisting researchers, exhibitions of collections, education programmes and publications, outreach events such as talks and workshops, involvement in festivals and events. Project work includes the production of document study packs for schools based on particular themes, including packs on the Ulster Plantation and on the history of County Donegal in the Decade of Centenaries 1912 - 1923

The Heritage Office

The County Donegal Heritage Office was established in July 2003 in the Cultural Services Division with the appointment of County Donegal's first Heritage Officer. Donegal County Council is committed to 'placing heritage at the heart of public life' in County Donegal as advocated in the National Heritage Plan. The role of the County Donegal Heritage Office is to raise awareness of County Donegal's cultural, built and natural heritage; to provide advice and information on heritage matters to the public and Donegal County Council staff; to collect data and conduct research on aspects of County Donegal's heritage; to promote best practice in relation to heritage matters and to implement the County Donegal Heritage Plan in association with the County Donegal Heritage Forum and The Heritage Council. The Heritage Officer post is a joint initiative between Donegal County Council and The Heritage Council under the Heritage Officer Programme.

Section 2 Review



18th Century rolled map in wooden case from County Archives collection, Archives Centre, Lifford (Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)

Donegal County Museum

In poetically well built museums, formed from the heart's compulsions, we are consoled not by finding in them old objects that we love, but by losing all sense of Time.

Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence*, Istanbul

Through the Museum Service, Donegal County Council preserves and celebrates the collective memory of the county and its communities, by preserving, displaying and interpreting artefacts related to the history of Donegal. The Museum aims to be a dynamic, social and cultural institution which serves all of its communities and which encourages all to learn and to understand the past through museum objects. The Museum works with a wide variety of individuals, groups and organisations to improve access to and participation in heritage and to promote and preserve our cultural inheritance.

Thistle head stick pin dating to the Medieval
Period from the collections of Donegal
County Museum



Exhibitions

Donegal County Museum organised a series of exhibitions between 2009 and 2014 exploring a wide variety of themes. The Museum worked with many groups both locally and nationally to develop its exhibition programme including: the Earagail Arts Festival; the National Museum of Ireland; the Donegal Travellers project; the Health Service Executive (HSE); the Holocaust Education Trust; the Irish Defence Forces; the Irish Deaf Society; Donegal Sports Partnership; the National Library of Ireland; the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland; The Irish Museums Association and the Gallery of Photography. Exhibitions were accompanied by an annual events programme which included talks, workshops, tours and special children's activities.

Exhibition highlights included:

A World Apart, Donegal District Lunatic Asylum

In 2011 the Museum, in conjunction with the County Archives and the HSE, organised a unique and fascinating exhibition entitled *A World Apart, Donegal District Lunatic Asylum*. This exhibition told the story of St Conal's Hospital, Letterkenny from 1866 to 1922 and coincided with Little John Nee's artist's residency in An Grianán Theatre and in particular his writing and performance of *The Mental*. The exhibition included a replica cell, photographs, artefacts and archives from the hospital. This project was supported by the PEACE III Programme and managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by Donegal County Council.

How We Remember

The *How We Remember* exhibition and associated education programme was created to explore the story of the Irish Defence Forces, and in particular, the 28th Infantry Battalion based in Donegal. The exhibition featured a Border checkpoint, archives, uniforms, army equipment, images and oral histories, as well as *Rockhill Remembered*, a short documentary on Rockhill army camp in Letterkenny.

An education booklet and guided tours for primary schools also accompanied the exhibition. Throughout the Easter holidays special family tours were organised and to facilitate schools throughout Donegal a small touring version of the exhibition was created.

In association with the Irish Defence Forces the Museum hosted career days as well as the unique *How To* sessions where members of the public were invited to learn how to iron trousers without an iron and polish shoes the army way!

The project was supported by the PEACE III Programme and managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by Donegal County Council.

Round the House and Mind the Dresser

In 2011 the Museum hosted the exhibition *Round the House and Mind the Dresser*, on loan from Cavan County Museum. This exhibition gave visitors an opportunity to learn about the history and culture of Irish traditional music, song and dance from the 1700s until the present day. The Museum also organised a series of events for schools and the general public in association with the exhibition. These included: *Come and Learn the Fiddle* with Theresa Kavanagh, the launch by Seamus Harkin of a republished book of songs and poems written by Niall Mac Giolla Bhríde, *The Donegal Fiddle Tradition* with Martin McGinley, *An Introduction to the Flute and Tin*

Whistle with Trudy O' Donnell, a talk by John Tunney on Paddy Tunney and the Irish Music revival of the 1950s and Comhaltas sessions as part of Culture Night.

The Glass Album

The Glass Album exhibition was organised in conjunction with the Archives Service, the Earagail Arts Festival and Derry City Council Heritage and Museum Service. The exhibition told the story of Derry photographer James Glass who took a unique series of photographs in Donegal in the late nineteenth century. These photographs were connected to the famous 1889 trial of Fr McFadden and some of his parishioners following the killing of District Inspector Martin in Gweedore. It is believed that James Glass was commissioned by the defence to take photographs in Gweedore. This was the first use of photographs as evidence in an Irish court. The Glass Album, which formed the centre piece of this exhibition, had never before been on public display.

Donegal Sporting Heroes

The Donegal Sporting Heroes exhibition featured sporting greats from County Donegal, who have achieved success at a national or an international level, in a wide variety of sporting fields from All Ireland Winners in GAA to World Champion Tug of War teams. The exhibition was organised in conjunction with the Donegal Sports Partnership and was supported by the Ulster Sports Museum Association and the International Fund for Ireland. The exhibition has since toured to venues throughout Donegal.

Commemorating the Decade of Centenaries

Between 2009 and 2014 the Museum worked on a variety of projects with groups locally, regionally and nationally to commemorate the Decade of Centenaries.

Ulster Covenant 1912 exhibition

In 2012 the Museum organised a unique exhibition to commemorate the signing of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant in September 1912. The exhibition told the story of the Ulster Covenant with particular reference to Donegal. The Museum also had on display some of the original Covenant signing sheets, on loan from the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. The exhibition was organised in conjunction with the Donegal Ulster Centenaries Committee and was funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Reconciliation & Anti-Sectarianism Funds.

Hands of History

Throughout 2013 and 2014 the Museum participated in the Hands of History Project led by Donegal County Council in conjunction with Inishowen Development Partnership. Launched in December 2012 with delivery of activities through to December 2014, the project was part of the Donegal Peace III Action Plan and was managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by Donegal County Council. The Hands of History project delivered an innovative programme exploring how we remember key events in our history and included seminars, conferences, study trips, a schools programme, a drama production and specific projects undertaken by the Museum, Archives and Library Services.

In Phase I of the project, the Museum worked with groups and venues throughout the County to deliver a series of exhibitions and events on a variety of themes.

In Phase II the Museum organised the exhibition *Remembering World War I: The Donegal Story*. Using artefacts, archives and images the Museum examined the story of World War I through the experiences of Donegal men and women. The Museum also developed an activity booklet





Artefacts on display in Donegal County Museum. (Photo credit Paul McGuckian)



for children based on the exhibition. The booklet was funded through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: Reconciliation Funds.

The Museum also created 5 pop-up exhibition panels entitled *Local Heroes, World War I* as part of the Hands of History Project. These panels tell the story of 5 people from Donegal who were involved in the War, Pte. Bernard McGeehan, Sister Catherine Black, Pte. Patrick MacGill, Pte. James Duffy VC and Capt. Henry Gallagher, DSO.

Both of these exhibitions subsequently toured to venues throughout Donegal including: Annagry Community Hall; the MacGill Summer School, Glenties; Fort Dunree, Inishowen; An tSean Bheairic, Falcarragh; Ostán Loch Altan, Gortahork; Cathedral Hall, Raphoe; Balor Theatre, Ballybofey; Letterkenny Public Service Centre (PSC) and the Omniplex, Bundoran.

The exhibitions also toured to venues outside Donegal including to the 48th plenary of the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly, Dublin; the *Border Counties and WWI Conference*, Monaghan, and the *Carols in the Trenches* service, Christchurch Cathedral, Dublin.

Centenary Events

The Museum organised a series of events to commemorate World War I in association with the Remembering World War I exhibition. These included a talk by Col. Declan O' Carroll entitled *Capt Henry Gallagher DSO - From Finner to Flanders*; an event to commemorate the Armistice entitled *Remembering World War I - The Donegal Story* and an outdoor projection event in conjunction with the Gallery of Photography, highlighting some Donegal related WWI photographs.

Donegal Museum Detectives Back Pack

In October 2013 a unique new children's activity was developed by the Museum. The Donegal Museum Detectives' Backpack contains an assortment of age appropriate activities designed to engage children with the Museum and its collections. The Backpack is available to borrow free of charge when visiting the Museum and also contains a pencil, badge and postcard that visitors can keep as a memento. The project was funded by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht under the Local and Regional Museums Scheme.

Remembering the Plantation of Ulster

Between 2009 and 2014 the Museum was involved in a number of projects on the theme of the Plantation of Ulster. The aim of all the projects was to increase awareness of the Plantation and its impact amongst communities in both Derry and Donegal.

Plantation Booklets

In association with Derry City Council Heritage and Museum Service and the County Donegal Heritage Office, Donegal County Council, the Museum launched three Plantation booklets: *The Plantation in Donegal and Derry*, *Plantation*

Architecture and Landscape and *The Legacy of the Plantation in Derry and Donegal*. These booklets are available free of charge.

The Planter and the Gael: Perspectives on the Plantation

In 2010 the Museum worked with Derry City Council Heritage and Museum Service and the Nerve Centre in Derry on The Planter and the Gael project. This project brought together cross community, cross border groups to raise awareness and increase their knowledge of the Plantation and its historic significance. The project culminated in a seminar entitled *The Plantation of Ulster – What does it mean to us now?*

Secondary School Plantation Workshops

Donegal County Museum worked in conjunction with Derry City Council Heritage and Museum Service to deliver a series of Plantation workshops to secondary schools on both sides of the border. Heritage Stories, Portstewart, were commissioned to undertake the living history workshops which took place in 10 schools, with over 200 students taking part. The workshops consisted of interactive drama performances. The students were encouraged to discuss their views on the Plantation and on what they had learned during the workshops.

Plantation to Partition: Shared Understanding, Remembrance & Legacy

Throughout 2012 and 2013 the Museum worked with partners in Derry City Council and Omagh and Strabane District Council areas on a cross border project, which was part of the North West Councils' Collaborative/Cross Border Strand. This project explored the last 400-year period in our shared history and its legacy and worked with a number of cross border, cross community groupings. The project programme included a series of workshops on a variety of

topics relating to the period from Plantation to Partition; a cross-community archaeological dig at Dunalong, Co. Tyrone, and an associated publication; a History Ireland Hedge School on the theme of the Ulster Covenant 1912; a touring exhibition; a booklet on World War I in each Council area entitled *From Home to Foreign Fields*, and *Planters, Paupers and Rebels*, a programme of Living History events delivered to schools in each Council area.

Bringing the Workhouse to Life

In 2010 the Museum received funding from the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport to organise a series of living history events. The Museum is based in part of the Letterkenny Workhouse built in the 1840s and to bring the history of the building to life the Museum organised a programme which included a living history event on the theme of the Workhouse during July and August; 2 week long programmes of free living history workshops in the Museum for primary schools and a special living history event in the Museum on Culture Night.

Due to the popularity of the 2010 programme the Museum sought funding from Fáilte Ireland for a 6-week programme of historic walks as part of Letterkenny 400. On the walking tour visitors were invited to learn more about the history of the town, with actors re-enacting scenes from the story of Letterkenny. Along the way they glimpsed the story of Niamh who was seeking work at the Hiring Fair, were welcomed to the Workhouse (now the Museum) by the Master and Matron and met one of its many residents. The tours were provided free of charge and proved to be a great success. They were organised in association with Fáilte Ireland, R&M Tours and Blue Eagle Productions.

Library

Ireland's public libraries promote community cohesion and well-being, economic growth and cultural identity. They will enhance self worth and confidence.

Opportunities for All: A strategy for public libraries 2013-2017

Donegal libraries have issued over 2.4 million items between 2009 and 2015, while over 2.3 million people have visited our network of libraries.

Library users, Central Library, Letterkenny
(Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckain)



Leabharlann Phobal Ghaoth Dobhair

Following extensive flash flooding in June 2008, when most of the equipment and book stock was completely ruined; it was decided to seek a safer location for future library services. The Council reprioritised its capital development plan and was successful in receiving grant-aid from the Department towards a new library at Aislann Ghaoth Dobhair. The new library of 501m², along with art gallery space, was developed in association with Údaras na Gaeltachta and opened to the public in October 2011. The new library has 22,000 items to choose from with a self-service option, 2 meeting rooms, public computers, WIFI, listening stations, and a dedicated teenagers area. The library has reading assistant software, accessibility equipment and an e-reader for public use. It also hosts the Donegal Offshore Islands Film and Radio Digital Archive. Since opening, the library has become a focus for community activities. As one of Donegal's Gaeltacht libraries, the first language in the library is Irish. The library has since become the service provider for all Gaeltacht areas in Ireland as a Europe Direct satellite centre.

Bealtaine Festival

Bealtaine is an annual festival which celebrates and promotes creativity as we age. The Bealtaine Festival takes place throughout Ireland every year during the month of May and is one of the highlights of the Cultural Services calendar. Through Bealtaine, Cultural Services works to bring a wide range of cultural and art events to our older generation in venues throughout Donegal. Between 2009 and 2015 events ranged from reminiscence sessions, exhibitions, storytelling, circular knitting, flower arranging, gardening, besom-making, pottery, creative writing, intergenerational computer classes, local history talks, film club, music and song. Over the years local talent included Aussie Bryson, Fergus Cleary, Mary

McGranaghan, Kate Fitzpatrick, Helen Meehan, Edel MacBride and many more.

Dámhlann an Ghleanna

Poet and author Cathal Ó Searcaigh gave his complete archive, including his original manuscripts and an extensive personal collection of books and visual artworks, to the people of Donegal in 1999. The books and artworks are housed at Dámhlann an Ghleanna, alongside Cathal's family home in Míin a'Leagha. This facility was constructed by Donegal County Council, in partnership with Údarás na Gaeltachta and The Arts Council/An Comhairle Ealaíon. Writers, academics and members of the public may participate in readings, and attend other arts events at Dámhlann. The official opening took place during Earagail Arts Festival 2010.

Libraries - ICT services

Significant investments in ICT facilities and services were made in Donegal libraries in recent years. A new Library Management System was installed in all public libraries during 2009. The new system, Horizon, drastically cut the time from item purchase to arrival on the library shelf and economically uses e-mail and text notices for overdue items and reservations. WIFI was introduced into public libraries in Letterkenny, Carndonagh, Ballybofey and Bundoran Libraries in 2010. OSCAR, a computerised self-service unit, was installed in seven Taobh Tíre sites during 2011 including Letterkenny Youth and Family Services, Oileán Árainn Mhór and Cill Chartha. These self-issue units enable Taobh Tíre members to issue and return their items online. Self-issue units were also installed in Bundoran Library and Leabharlann Phobail Ghaoth Dobhair to facilitate library members wishing to issue or return their own items. The library website was

redesigned, was launched and went live during 2012. www.donegallibrary.ie is the result of the collaboration between the Library Service and the Information Systems section of Donegal County Council. The site was designed to be modern, easy to update and interactive.

Donegal County Library Service introduced a facility for borrowing e-books and e-audio books online for its library members during 2015. Library members can download and borrow from a selection of hundreds of e-books and e-audio books through the library website for free. Other technology introduced to the Library Service was the option to borrow from a choice of digital magazines and newspapers. During 2015 two Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) self-service kiosks were introduced in Central Library, Letterkenny, making it simpler and faster for library members to borrow and return their own items within the library.

Libraries – Promoting Health and Wellbeing

Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy was introduced and launched in public libraries, as part of the Donegal Social Prescribing for Health and Wellbeing which is led by the HSE, during 2013. Since then Bibliotherapy has been promoting the good mental health and wellbeing of individuals and families in Donegal. For Bibliotherapy the Library Service recommends and makes available quality self-help books to enable people to help themselves.

Read Your Mind

Donegal County library and Jigsaw Donegal, supported by the HSE and The National Office for Suicide Prevention, collated

a catalogue of books on mental health topics to meet the needs of young people aged 12 to 25 years. Topics such as stress management, anxiety, depression, loneliness, eating disorders and addiction are included in the collection. In supporting young people's mental health, young people, their parents and friends can access and borrow titles from the Read Your Mind collection through the network of libraries and Taobh Tíre centres. Many of the titles are also available to access online through the library website www.donegallibrary.ie as e-books.

Libraries – Family Literacy Programmes

Access to books is recognised as the most important factor in children's reading development. The library provides a gateway to a world of knowledge for children, which stimulates imagination and creativity. Donegal County Library works with other agencies as part of the Children's Education and Learning Committee to implement initiatives to provide access to early reading for children and to encourage parent engagement.

Creating Lifelong Readers

The overriding objective of the Creating Lifelong Readers project is to support parents to understand how children's use of the spoken and written word develops in early childhood; to be aware of the crucial role of books and reading in this process, and to provide parents and educators with the knowledge and skills to inspire children to become readers for life. Donegal Library staff have worked with the Donegal County Childcare Committee and other agencies over the last number of years on the roll out of Creating Lifelong Readers, with pre-school facilities, children and their parents. The idea behind this project is to work with childcare facilities and parents groups on a programme to encourage parents to read

to their children on a regular basis, and to promote library services. Library staff worked with the Childcare Committee on delivering this programme to 31 childcare facilities and their staff during 2012 and 2013. Since then, Donegal libraries have tailored their own Creating Lifelong Readers programme and delivered it with Lifestart parent and toddler groups throughout Donegal since 2014.

Bookworm Babies

Bookworm Babies is an initiative between the Library Service, Lifestart and HSE Health Promotion to promote the importance of reading with young children to their parents/guardians. The agencies have come together as part of the Education and Learning Sub-Group of the Children and Young People's Services Committee. Research has shown that public libraries are a trusted source for providing quality reading material to families. Libraries can improve literacy and encourage reading for pleasure. As part of this initiative, the aim is to encourage families to join their local library, with automatic membership cards for new babies, and older children receiving birthday cards with tips for parents to help foster a love of reading. Lifestart works directly with families in Donegal, encouraging them to register for, and to use library services. The initiative was launched at Bunrana Library in October 2013.

Ag Léamh le Chéile

Library staff worked with the HSE on a programme to promote reading and library services to parents, students and teachers through primary schools. During 2012 the HSE arranged for local storyteller Liz Weir to visit two primary schools in Donegal to discuss storytelling with parents and to tell the students a story, while Library staff were on hand to discuss library services.



Azeez Obabire, Nigeria at Central Library, Letterkenny (Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckain)

READ LK/ READ DL

Read DL is a reading initiative inspired by the One Book, One Community projects that have been successful all over the world. Read DL, which took place in 2014 and 2015, has grown out of the Read LK (Letterkenny) initiative, which was run in 2012 and 2013, and involves schools and colleges, community groups, support services, health organisations and the Library Service. In primary schools, senior classes have taken part in the project; while in post-primary schools first year students have been targeted. The objective of the project is to get as many people reading a book from a particular author at the same time, therefore building a sense of community while also promoting literacy. In the past participating groups and schools developed drama pieces, took part in book clubs, promoted reading, organised workshops, wrote short stories, took part in competitions and most of all promoted reading in their communities. Agencies taking part are: Donegal Education & Training Board (ETB), HSE, Parentstop, SCP (School Completion Programme), HSCL (Home School Community Liaison), Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT), and the Library Service of Donegal County Council.

Laura Mc Nutt and her little boy Jonas Pable at Central Library, Letterkenny (Photo Credit Paul McGuckian)

Wainfest Arts and Book Festival for children

Wainfest, the annual Arts and Book festival for children in Donegal offers the very best in performance for children aged 4-12 years old. This festival has developed over the past 19 years into a major programme of activity which takes place in every area of the county for one week during October. Activities are organised in all libraries, Taobh Tíre centres, the County Museum and the Regional Cultural Centre. In 2015 a new element of corporate sponsorship and collaboration was introduced. This was successful and will be developed further in the coming years. There were 108 school events and 32 family events organised for 2015 and the total audience figure was 7,392.



Hands of History – One Donegal: many pasts: one future

Hands of History Project Extension

The first phase of the Hands of History Project took place throughout 2013. The extension period in 2014 presented an opportunity to build on the work previously completed. This project was led by Donegal County Council and managed by Inishowen Development Partnership, under the auspices of the Donegal County Development Board (CDB) Peace and Reconciliation Partnership. It was supported by the European Union's European Regional Development Fund, through the EU programme for Peace and Reconciliation and was managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by Donegal County Council. It explored a Donegal with many pasts and aimed to work towards one shared future which would create strong peace and reconciliation impacts for participants. The project was designed to ensure learning does not only involve presenting information, but also engages the participant in the learning process, thus embedding the learning and facilitating the opportunities to transfer the learning. To deliver the priorities of this project, workshops for schools were organised in libraries, and Michael Moylan, History Live, delivered a comprehensive programme to the 10 schools involved. The target for workshops was estimated at 100 children and Donegal libraries hosted workshops with a total attendance of 326. Another element organised by the libraries was a workshop for adults in a number of libraries which Dr. John O' Callaghan presented.

The workshops for children and adults were very successful and the attendances far exceeded the targets set.

Seachtain na Gaeilge – Irish Language Festival

The Seachtain na Gaeilge festival takes place from 1st – 17th March annually. This festival is an international Irish language festival and one of the largest celebrations of our native language and culture. The festival gives an opportunity to everyone to engage with the Irish Language.

Each year Donegal County Council Library Service and an Oifigeach Gaeilge, Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall, deliver a range of activities throughout the county. These activities take place both outdoors and indoors in libraries, community centres, teach tábhairne and the cinema. In 2016 a cross-border activity has been introduced as part of the 1916/2016 centenary programme.

Donegal County Council Library Service continues to work to deliver high quality and innovative services in the Irish Language. All libraries throughout the county host displays of our Irish language collections for adults and children throughout the festival dates. These displays have both informed and entertained visitors to our buildings and are one of the many components of the festival.

As set out in the Donegal Local Authorities Scheme under the Official Languages Act 2003, Irish is the working language in both Leabharlann Phobail Ghaoth Dobhair and Leabharlann Phobail na Rosann.

Each year Seachtain na Gaeilge undertakes to raise the profile of the Irish Language throughout our services and continues to improve on this as “the future of the language depends on people who make a positive choice to embrace the opportunities that this Strategy will create”.¹ Seachtain na Gaeilge events take place throughout the county.

Donegal Studies

Donegal County Library has special responsibility to collect, maintain and make available as complete a Donegal Studies

¹ 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010 - 2030, Government of Ireland, Dublin

collection as possible and as such is the centre for local studies in Donegal. For more than three quarters of a century a unique collection has been built up on the history, natural history, archaeology, heritage, culture and people of County Donegal and as such, the Donegal Studies collection is the collective memory of the county.

The collection is made up of all materials:

- printed and/or published in Donegal
- by Donegal authors, producers and musicians
- about Donegal and/or its population

It consists of books and audio visual material, newspapers, documents, maps, photographs, pamphlets and ephemera, plus a substantial rare books collection. It also includes semi-published and unpublished theses and documents about Donegal and/or its population. The collection is constantly growing as new items are published and older items purchased from antiquarian booksellers.

Some popular and out of print material, including newspapers, has been digitised for use in Central Library, which is the main repository for Donegal Studies. Other libraries have smaller collections relevant to their area.

Donegal County Library also contributes to a national resource network of materials for the study of local history and culture throughout Ireland. The Service responds to the interest in and demand for local studies material of all types, for example by producing annual lists of Donegal Studies publications published in the County Donegal Historical Society's Donegal Annual. A link to this can be found on www.donegallibrary.ie.

Donegal County Library facilitates and encourages local history groups and also hosts a substantial programme of

local history events in libraries throughout Donegal. Staff expertise in both local history and genealogy is a valuable resource and queries can be made by email, telephone or in person. In 2015 Central Library, Letterkenny, dealt with 4,300 local studies queries.

Donegal Studies has a remit to liaise with and serve the interests of the Donegal Diaspora. With this in mind, Library staff work closely with the Council's Diaspora Project on developing collections of material and in developing contacts.

In 2013 *Who Do You Think You Are? A Guide to Genealogy Resources* was published. This booklet is an invaluable first port of call to the many members of the Diaspora who are anxious to trace their family history. It can be accessed online at www.donegallibrary.ie as well as in hard copy in libraries.

1,500 new stock items were purchased for the Donegal Studies Collection in 2015. For a detailed list of Donegal Studies items purchased year by year see Donegal Studies Annual Bibliography link on www.donegallibrary.ie.

Library staff organise events annually for the Heritage Week programme in August.



Student Laura Kernan studying at Central Library, Letterkenny (Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)

Arts Service

Everyone has the right to participate freely in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancements and its benefits

Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
Article 27(1).

United Nations General Assembly, 1984



Bread and Roses Theatre (Photo: Rik Walton)

Donegal County Council provides a range of supports for the development of the Arts in County Donegal. The Arts Service worked closely with a wide range of artists, arts organisations, education service providers and community groups in all parts of the County. In line with goals and objectives of the Cultural Connections: Strategic Plan for the Cultural Services Division 2009 –2014, this work prioritised the continuous improvement of access to and engagement in creative activities among all members of the public, the promotion and development of the educational value of the arts and the support of quality and innovation in the arts sector.

Donegal Bay and Blue Stacks Festival

Donegal County Council initiated the Donegal Bay and Blue Stacks Festival in 2001 to provide a focus and context for the

creation and enjoyment of the arts in all their manifestations in the south of the county. The Festival takes place in late September/early October with events having taken place over the years in Ballyshannon, Bundoran, Ballybofey, Donegal, Mountcharles, Dunkineely, Killybegs, Cill Chartha, An Carraig, Gleann Choilm Cille, Ardara and Glenties. Audiences of local people and visitors enjoy a Festival programme which regularly includes touring theatre, traditional music and dance, literary events, visual arts, arts-in-schools, carnival arts workshops and a carnival parade, as well as classical and contemporary music performances.

Among the Festival highlights in recent years have been the Carnival Parades in Ballyshannon, especially LUXe landscape theatre company and Fidget Feet Aerial Dance in Cirque du Saimer in 2011 and Dark Daughter Productions, the Donegal





LUXe Landscape Theatre Company (Photo: Mark Louden)

Weavers and the Dominican School of Irish Dancing in 2015's Irish Dancing and W.B. Yeats themed Rince Rince Linn event. Theatre has always been a strong element of the Festival programme where productions by Donegal Drama Circle, Balor Rep Theatre Company and An Grianán Productions have been consistently to the fore. Particular recent highlights have included An Grianán Productions and Workhouse Theatre's *Aristocrats* (Brian Friel), Donegal Drama Circle's *The Lonesome West* (Martin McDonagh) and *The Odd Couple* (Neil Simon) as well as Balor Rep Theatre Company's *The Patsy Cline Story* (Conor Malone) and *The Country Boy* (John Murphy).

While co-ordinated and part-programmed by the Arts Service, the Festival is indebted to its core of long-standing partner arts organisations and companies including The Abbey Arts Centre and Erne Enterprise Development Company Ltd. in Ballyshannon, Dark Daughter Productions, Bundoran, the Inishowen-based LUXe landscape theatre company, Balor Arts Centre and The Balor Rep Theatre Company in Ballybofey, Donegal Drama Circle in Donegal Town, Cairdeas na bhFidléirí, the Donegal ETB Music Education Partnership, Coiste Chultúrtha Dhún Cheann Fhaola and the Meitheal Ealaíne artists group, Gleann Cholm Cille.

Culture Night

Culture Night is a nationwide initiative of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, designed to promote access to, and stimulate interest in, arts and heritage among all members of society. In 2009 Letterkenny was invited by the Department to be the focus of the Culture Night programme in Donegal, and since then, Donegal County Council, through its Cultural Services Division, has co-ordinated and contributed very significantly to the Culture Night programme in the town. The event, which takes place over one night in September, has proved hugely popular with the public,



Fidget Feet Irish Aerial Dance Festival Letterkenny (Photo Credit: Jym Daly)

attracting large numbers of family groups in particular to Council-owned cultural facilities such as Donegal County Museum, the Regional Cultural Centre, An Grianán Theatre and the Central Library.

Among the particularly popular elements of the programme over the years have been the Regional Cultural Centre's Hands-On Art Room, the An Cosán Glas Loinnir illuminated sculpture trail at Letterkenny Town Park, the exhibition programme and the Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann sessions at Donegal County Museum, the town walking tours organised by the Heritage Office, An Grianán Theatre's Crash Cabaret events, the talks and readings at the Central Library, the choral recitals at St. Eunan's Cathedral and Conwal Parish Church, the visual art workshops and exhibitions at Create-A-Link Artists Studios and the intercultural programme initially at Port na Fáilte Intercultural Resource Centre and latterly at the Donegal Travellers Project, Port House.

In addition, with the extension of the Culture Night programme to An Gaeltacht in 2011, the Library Service in particular has hosted Culture Night events in its Gaeltacht facilities, most notably at Leabharlann Phobail Ghaoth Dobhair.

Irish Aerial Dance Festival

The first Irish Aerial Dance Festival, which took place in Letterkenny in 2010, was initiated by a partnership of Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Company, An Grianán Theatre and Donegal County Council. From modest beginnings, the event now attracts over 120 dancers annually from Ireland, the UK and Europe as well as from the US, Canada, Australia, South America, Japan and India. The Festival features a wide ranging and intensive residential programme of specialized aerial dance classes which are facilitated by a team of 13 internationally recognised professional practitioners and

teachers from Ireland, Scotland, England, Canada, the US and Spain. Festival venues include An Grianán Theatre, the Regional Cultural Centre, the Aura Leisure Centre and Letterkenny Community Centre.

Founded and directed by Ballybofey dancer and choreographer Chantal McCormick, Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Company opened Ireland's first dedicated Aerial Dance Centre in Limerick in 2015.

EDGES International Cultural Partnership

Since 2007, Donegal County Council, through its Cultural Services Division, has been participating with partners in East Iceland and Northern Norway, in an innovative transnational, North Atlantic cultural project entitled EDGES. The project combines cultural heritage and contemporary art as a means of strengthening local identity and of sharing experiences to further educational and tourism development practice in these three peripheral regions of North Western Europe. The project partners are Vesterålen Regional Council (Norway), East Iceland Cultural Council and Donegal County Council Cultural Services.

In June 2009, a delegation of 19 elected representatives, Cultural Council members, artists and cultural services & facilities managers from Vesterålen and East Iceland, undertook a three day study visit to Donegal, hosted by Cultural Services. The delegation visited and met with local cultural managers and arts practitioners in Donegal County Museum, the Regional Cultural Centre and Donegal ETB Music Education Partnership, An Grianán Theatre and Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Company, the Glebe Gallery Churchill, An Cosán Glas artists at Ionad Phobail Machaire Rabhartaigh and the Tionscnamh Lugh traditional music initiative at Ionad Cois Locha, Dún Lúiche. In autumn 2010, as a direct result of this visit, Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Company, led by



Seamus Neely, Chief Executive Donegal County Council launching 'Ground Zero'.
(Photo Credit Clive Wasson)

Ballybofey choreographer Chantal McCormick, was invited to visit East Iceland where, with the support of Culture Ireland, the company staged three performances of their acclaimed touring show, *Madam Silk*, as well as hosting a series of aerial workshops with local youth groups.

The most ambitious collaboration, however, was a series of three museum-based residencies under the titles *The Edge of The Pier* (Vesterålen, Autumn 2010), *The Edge of the Sea* (Donegal, Summer 2010) focusing on sea journeys to Iceland by Donegal hermit monks of the Early Christian era and *The Edge of the Imagination* (East Iceland, Summer 2011) focusing on mythical folklore and beliefs. The artists in residence at Donegal County Museum were Theresa Kavanagh and Joleen McLaughlin, both accomplished traditional musicians and music composers. They worked in conjunction with musicians from Norway and Iceland and the resulting suite of music, *Imramh Theileann/The Teelin Voyage*, was premiered at the Earagail Arts Festival in July 2010 and at the Melbu Summer Festival in Vesterålen in 2012.

An Grianán Theatre

An Grianán Theatre is a Donegal County Council owned facility, managed on its behalf by An Grianán Theatre Management Company Ltd. The theatre opened to the public in October 1999 and since then it has established itself as one of the leading performance arts and theatre production houses in the North West of Ireland.

Brian Friel, Donegal Person of The Year

A highlight of An Grianán Theatre's programme in 2011 was a celebration of the work of Brian Friel, in recognition of his nomination as Donegal Person of the Year. The special programme included three separate events. The first, *Rediscovering Friel*, was presented during the Earagail

Arts Festival and featured two readings of Friel's lesser known works, *The Gentle Island*, directed by David Grant and *Volunteers*, directed by Frankie McCafferty. The readings were performed by a professional company of Donegal actors including Patrick McBrearty, Charlie Bonner, Frankie McCafferty, Dessie Gallagher and Gerard McSorley. In September, with additional support from Donegal County Council, An Grianán presented a full scale production of *Aristocrats*, directed by Iarla McGowan. The play sold four shows to capacity houses in An Grianán and also to capacity houses in Ballyshannon and Glenties as part of the Donegal Bay and Blue Stacks Festival. The final event in the Friel season was the presentation of two one-act plays, *Afterplay*, directed by Sean McCormick, with Jean Curran and Donal Kavanagh, and *Winners*, directed by John McGinley, featuring the young actors Odhran O'Donnell and Sarah McGoohan.

Little John Nee Residency

In 2010-11 An Grianán Theatre engaged in a very productive Peace III funded Residency with artist Little John Nee. The work of the Residency included productions and tours of three plays by Little John including *The Derry Boat*, *The Mental*



and Rural Electric. The culmination of the Residency was the publication, in association with Donegal County Council, of *A Donegal Trilogy* which included the scripts of the three plays as well as documentation of Little John's career and the An Grianán Residency. Completing the project in 2015, the Arts Service assisted Little John Nee to record a selection of songs from his theatre shows from 1999 to 2014, many of which were commissioned or assisted by Donegal County Council. The resulting CD, *Songs from The Swilly Delta*, was launched at the Regional Cultural Centre by An Cathaoirleach of Donegal County Council, Cllr. John Campbell.

Earagail Arts Festival

The Earagail Arts Festival was initiated by Donegal County Council in 1989. To facilitate its on-going growth and development, it was incorporated as a limited company in 2004 and is now managed and administered on behalf of Donegal County Council by Earagail Arts Festival Management Company Limited. The Festival is a significant platform for Donegal, Irish and international artists; a typical annual programme will include Visual Art, Theatre, Music and Song, Dance, Spectacle, Children's and Spoken Word events, in both English and Irish. The events take place mainly throughout North and West Donegal.

Earagail Arts Festival at 25

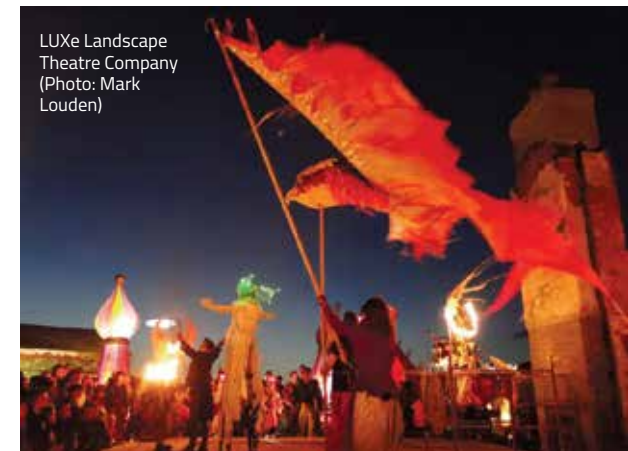
Earagail Arts Festival celebrated its 25th year in 2013, the year of The Gathering. With generous support of Fáilte Ireland, the Festival was designated a flagship Gathering event. This enabled it to produce its most ambitious event of recent times, the Abhaile / Homecoming concert event in a special Festival Marquee at Donegal International Airport, Carraig na bhFinne. The line-up of internationally successful Donegal musical talent included Clannad, Altan, The Henry

Girls and Fídil, who performed to a capacity audience of over 1,500 people.

Festival Commissions

Earagail Arts Festival continued to raise the profile of Donegal and Irish based artists as an ongoing process, via a series of commissioned works and premieres including Róise Goan and Catriona McLaughlin's Destination Doughnut, a series of stunning spectacles devised by LUXe landscape theatre company, Little John Nee's award-winning Sparkplug and various innovative musical commissions and collaborations between musicians from Donegal and overseas including Fídil, Solo Cissokho, The Henry Girls, The Foxhunt, Inishowen Traditional Music Project, Ralf Rolle and Selan Lerner (Nile Rogers/Chic).

The Festival continued to work with a range of partners locally including the Regional Cultural Centre, Donegal Public Art and Arts Service, Balor Arts Centre, An Gailearaí, Artlink at Fort Dunree, Glebe House and Gallery, Churchill, An Grianán Theatre, Aisteoirí Ghaoth Dobhair, An tSeanbheairic and Tionscnamh Lugh.



Archives Service

Our culture remains as the greatest source of our achievement as well as the most promising space for our renewal and our reimagining.

Michael D. Higgins

Rural District Council bound volumes from County Archives Collection, stored at the Archives Centre, Lifford, (Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckain)

The aim of the Archives Service is to preserve and make accessible the recorded and documented heritage of the people of County Donegal for present and future generations. It seeks to do this through the acquisition, cataloguing, conserving and secure storage of archival collections of public and private origin which relate to the history and culture of Donegal, and through the provision of public access to its archives. The Archives Service works in partnership with many groups and organisations. Through its outreach and education programme the Service aims to bring archives to the wider community.

Acquisition and preservation

Part of the remit of the County Archives is to actively seek archival collections of historical significance relating to the county of Donegal. In 2011 – 2012 the Service catalogued a substantial collection of archives donated by the Donegal Board of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). An accompanying illustrated booklet was published, *Archives of the Donegal Gaelic Athletic Association County Board*. The booklet lists the items in the collection and gives a short history of the GAA in Ireland and in the county of Donegal. The deposit of the collection and publication of the booklet were launched by Mr P.J. McGowan, Chair of the GAA County Board, in MacCumhaill Park, Ballybofey, in the weeks after Donegal won the All-Ireland Senior Football title, and the Sam Maguire Cup itself was in attendance.

In September 2010 the Archives Service received another important donation, the papers of Joseph Murray of Bundoran. Murray played a prominent part in the War of Independence and the early Civil War in south Donegal. The papers, which include correspondence, memos, letters, notes,



Board of Health minute book,
from County Archives Collection,
Archives Centre, Lifford, (Photo
Credit, Paul Mc Guckain)



County Donegal Committee of Agriculture correspondence book, from County Archives Collection, Archives Centre, Lifford, (Photo Credit, Paul Mc Guckain)

despatches, photographs and newspaper cuttings, were gifted to the County Archives by Joseph Murray's son Patrick. The papers were catalogued that year and launched in Finner Camp. The archive consists of original archival documents of national significance which disclose the high level of IRA activity in south Donegal, particularly Bundoran and Ballyshannon, during the War of Independence and leading up to the Civil War.

Preservation of archives and comprehensive access to collections were important actions in *Cultural Connections*, Cultural Services' Strategy. As part of this, the archived minutes of the meetings of Donegal County Council were microfilmed and digitised. In 2013, the two Gweedore Hotel Visitors' Books which date from 1842 to 1874 and which provide unique social, economic and political commentaries on 19th century west Donegal were digitised for access and preservation, both for their importance and because they are extremely fragile documents.

The surviving archive of the County Donegal Grand Jury, the County Archives' oldest collection, dates back to 1753. Conservation, rebinding and microfilming of the entire Donegal Grand Jury collection which had been in a fragile condition took place with the aid of a Heritage Council grant in 2011.

In 2009, the Archives Service collaborated with University College Dublin School of History and Archives on a conservation funding proposal to the Wellcome Trust. £12,000 sterling was granted by the Trust for a conservation survey project. This resulted in a comprehensive conservation priority database of the entire medical and health records held by Donegal County Archives Service.

A variety of collections were deposited with the County Archives, including national school rollbooks, registers and

inspectors' reports, minutes of meetings of the Inishowen Agricultural Society, graveyard registers, electoral registers, oral history recordings and photographs. Also acquired were items of individual historical significance, such as the Lifford Gaol turnkey report 1829 – 1831, the second Gweedore Hotel Visitors' Book, and an illustrated account of the history and heritage of The Rosses including photographs and text.

Collections listed, boxed and made accessible for research included many national school rollbooks and registers, records acquired from Fort Dunree, a second tranche of records from St Conal's Hospital, the Steele Nicholson collection, Lifford Endowed Schools collection and the records of the Urban District Councils of the county, as well as the County Council's Planning, Housing and Water and Environment records which were deposited with the Archives. In 2011 Teagasc donated a wealth of the archives of its predecessor body, the County Donegal Committee of Agriculture to the County Archives, including minutes of meetings and reports. This collection was fully listed in 2012.



Archives (Photo Credit:Paul Mc Guckian)

Education

Decade of Change and Ulster Plantation packs

Following the success of the education study packs for primary and second level schools on the subject of the Flight of the Earls in 2007 and 2008, the Archives Service produced a document study pack on the theme of the *Plantation of Ulster*, aimed mainly at second level schools but suitable for teachers of all levels. The pack contains an illustrated history of the period, covering the events leading up to the Plantation and the subsequent Rebellion of 1641. It includes 18 high resolution facsimiles of 16th and 17th century documents and accompanying worksheets for students. The project was part funded by the European Union's Regional Development Fund through the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation, managed for the special EU Programme Body by Donegal County Council. The pack was very well received and was distributed to teachers, schools and third level colleges throughout the county of Donegal, in border counties and across the country; also to Irish centres and groups abroad. Workshops utilising elements of the pack took place throughout the county in 2009 with second level schools.



As part of the Archives Service's commemoration of the Decade of Centenaries (1912 – 1923), a document study pack for schools entitled: *A Decade of Change: Donegal and Ireland, 1912 – 1923* was produced in 2013. The publication, which was part of the Hands of History project, was supported by the European Union's European Regional Development Fund and funded under Peace III. Included in the pack is an illustrated booklet giving a short history of Ireland and County Donegal from the late 19th century to the end of the Civil War. The pack also contains 18 high quality facsimiles of original archival material, many from the County Archives' own collection. On the rear of each facsimile are a number of questions for students. The pack was distributed to schools and colleges across the county and workshops for transition year students took place in 2014.

Special Projects

Malin Head

In 2014, Donegal County Archives produced an illustrated booklet on the many different historical aspects of Malin Head. Entitled *Malin Head: An Enchanting Place, A Colourful Past*, the publication is aimed at those interested both in cultural tourism and in County Donegal's heritage, landscape, folklore, archives and history. 3,000 copies of the booklet were printed and distributed to tourist and heritage centres and local history groups across the county.

The history of County Donegal's Urban Councils

The Archives Service produced an illustrated booklet entitled *Buncrana Urban District/Town Council: A Short History* as part of the commemorations marking Buncrana Town Council's centenary and its dissolution in 2014. Buncrana Town Council

has one of the best surviving collections of archives of any Town Council in the country, dating back to the establishment of what was then the Urban District Council in 1914. The collection includes correspondence, minute books, financial documents, maps, plans and legal deeds concerning the development of Buncrana over 100 years. The extensive collection includes files on public lighting, sewerage and water supply, roads, planning and housing infrastructure, staffing and Council elections and Council membership. The listing of the collection was finalised in 2014, and the printed catalogue and accompanying booklet were launched in Buncrana Town Council offices in October. Both booklet and catalogue were widely distributed and were made available online.

The Archives Service assisted the Museum, through research and provision of archives, in the production of an exhibition and book on the history of Letterkenny Town Council. The Archives Service also assisted the Library Service in its exhibition on the history of Bundoran Town Council. Both these Town Councils were also dissolved in 2014. Many of the archives from all Urban Councils have been transferred to the County Archives and catalogued.

Outreach and Exhibitions

The County Archives touring exhibition *The Past in the Present* has travelled all over the county, including to libraries, Public Service Centres, heritage centres, and for festivals and events. The exhibition, which also travelled to Derry, celebrates 250 years of County Donegal's archives and history and showcases many of the County Archives' collections.

The Local Authority Archivists Group presented an exhibition: *Local Elections* which went on display in June 2009 (at the same time as local elections were taking place), at Letterkenny Public Service Centre along with an exhibition of archives relating to elections in Donegal.



19th century Ordnance Survey Map of Ireland, from the County Archives Collection, stored at the Archives Centre, Lifford, (Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)

The County Archives collaborated with museum curators in a number of exhibitions including *A World Apart: the Donegal District Lunatic Asylum/St Conal's Hospital* at the County Museum. This exhibition included documents from St Conal's Hospital archives collection; this collection had been deposited in the County Archives and catalogued. In 2013, the Archives Service worked with the County Museum and Derry Museum and Heritage Service in the production of an exhibition entitled *The Glass Album* which featured, among other archival items, the collection of papers held by the County Archives relating to the death of Inspector William Martin and the arrest of Father James McFadden and others in Gweedore in 1889. This exhibition was part of Derry's City of Culture celebrations.

Displays of archives were also held at the Archives office exhibition area in Lifford, including: *Family history Resources and Women in the Archives*. The latter was produced to coincide with International Women's Day. It highlighted the diverse collections held in the Archives relating to women and girls. An exhibition was held in 2014 on the subject of emigrant and lobbyist Daniel Doherty of Malin Head, following the full cataloguing of his unique collection of private papers. Daniel Doherty emigrated from Malin Head in the first

of the 20th century to Boston, fought in World War I and became an influential lobbyist for Irish causes in later life. An exhibition in Lifford in 2010 on *Social Exclusion and Poverty in 19th Century Donegal* displayed many of the unique archives of the county's eight workhouses.

The Archives Service has participated for many years in reminiscence sessions at Day Centres and with retirement groups, bringing to these old photographs, newspapers and other items. The Service regularly participates in national and local festivals such as Heritage Week, Bealtaine, Wainfest and Social Inclusion Week. Events for Heritage Week have included exhibitions at community centres and public buildings, as well as talks and workshops. Its Archives in the Attic Day in 2013 in Lifford, a promotional event to encourage donations of archives, was covered by the local and national media.

Illustrated talks, workshops and lectures on the subject of County Donegal's archival heritage have been given to many local history and heritage groups and organisations. The archivist was invited by the County Donegal Historical Society to give the Emerson Lecture as part of the Allingham Arts Festival in Ballyshannon in November 2013. The theme was *The History and Archives of 19th Century Ballyshannon*.

The Archives Service took part in 'Who Do you Think You Are?' family history sessions which took place in various locations in 2010 and the following year took part in a series of genealogy road shows in Letterkenny, Gweedore, Lifford, Buncrana and Bundoran to mark The Gathering, along with Museum and Library staff. Archives relating to family history were brought to each event for viewing, including electoral registers, valuation books and estate papers.

Advice and Support: researchers

Each year, researchers were assisted by letter, phone,

email, Facebook and at the Archives Service research room. Researchers included staff and members of Donegal County Council, family historians, local historians, academics, students of history, the HSE and other public service organisations, professional genealogists, independent researchers, film and television producers, businesses, writers and journalists.

Records Management

Part of the remit of the County Archives is the management of the non-current records of Donegal's local authorities. The Service acquired archives from various services of all County Donegal's local authorities, preserved and listed them and made them accessible for research; acquired, stored and provided access to the non-current records of Donegal's local authorities, and made recommendations regarding the archiving or disposal of non-archival local authority records. Training was held on management of non-current records. The Service surveyed non-current records held in all buildings owned or rented by local authorities in the county, and submitted annual reports on the status of non-current records each year.



Microfilm reader at the Archives Centre, Lifford, Credit: Paul Mc Guckain

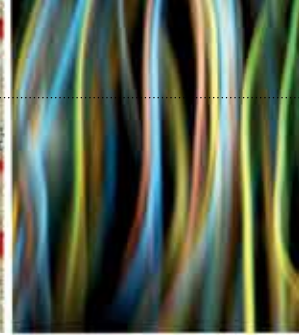
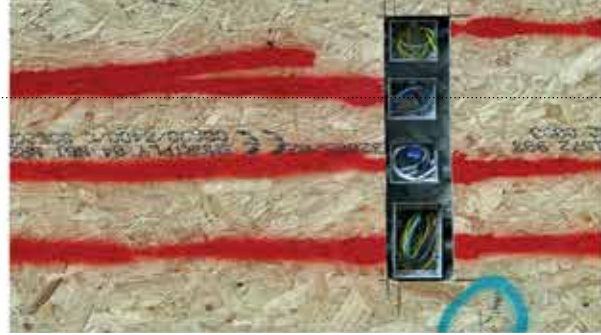


Regional Cultural Centre



The work of artists illuminates
the present, nourishes our
understandings of the past and
inspires our visions of the future.

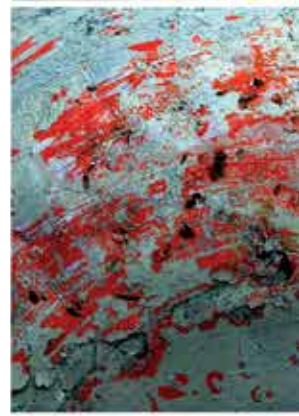
The Arts Council / An Comhairle Ealaíon



Opened in 2007, The Regional Cultural Centre is a purpose built arts centre developed by Donegal County Council which specialises in visual arts, music, film & digital media, and education / community arts. The RCC receives annual programme funding from The Arts Council. The biggest single influence on the RCC's work during the period 2009 – 2014, in common with the rest of Ireland, was the major crisis in the Irish economy. The priorities of the Centre switched from one broadly of growth to one of survival. As was the case in the rest of the public service, the RCC experienced a significant reduction in public funding and in staff numbers. Despite this however, the

Centre largely maintained the level of programming and continued to organise roughly the same number of events as it had prior to the recession.

Key characteristics of the work of the Centre during this period included an increased level of partnership, an increased reliance on project funding, an increased number of Arts Council supported touring events and an increased reliance on volunteers. Whereas the RCC had previously directly programmed virtually all events in the building it started increasingly to provide space for cultural events organised by statutory and community groups such as the HSE, Cara House Family Resource Centre and Donegal County Council itself. Similarly the Centre continued to build its relationship with and increase the number of joint-projects with key local and national cultural partners including Donegal Music Education Partnership which is based in the Centre, the neighbouring An Grianán Theatre, Earagail Arts Festival, Glebe Galley Churchill, Nerve Centre Derry, An Gailearaí Gaoth Dobhair and Music Network, Irish Architecture Foundation,



Rising from the Ground
Picture Story by Declan
Doherty, RCC



Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) and The Arts Council (all Dublin). A significant number of key initiatives were made possible by project funding from a variety of sources including Per Cent for Art through the Donegal County Council Public Art Programme, EU Peace III Funds and the International Fund for Ireland (IFI). The RCC also started to programme an increased number of Arts Council supported touring exhibitions during this period.

Earagail Arts Festival Exhibitions

The RCC has one of the finest art gallery spaces in Ireland and it continued to commission and show major Irish and international art exhibitions between 2009 and 2014. The exhibition policy is deliberately broad as its main aim is to offer local people and visitors a variety of arts experiences that are likely to be of interest to them. The RCC is also committed to exploring issues of local and wider interest through the medium of the exhibition. As a result there is considerable variety of exhibitions including contemporary art, craft, design, architecture, education, social history, disability, and health. The Centre operated a continuous year-round programme of approximately six exhibitions in the Main Gallery on the First Floor and a similar number of exhibitions in the Ground Floor Foyer Gallery. The Earagail Arts Festival exhibition programme from July to September, organised by the RCC and The Glebe Gallery in partnership with participating venues, is one of the visual arts highlights of the year in County Donegal. It featured *Hungarian Constructivism*, a major exhibition of modernist artworks from early 20th century from the National Museum of Hungary in 2009, *ID - Imaging Donegal*, a public art funded project comprising photographic commissions by five leading Donegal artist-photographers in 2010 and *this then*, a retrospective of the work of award-winning Derry artist Locky Morris in 2011.

The 5th Birthday Show, an Irish and international group exhibition that marked the venue's 5th anniversary was held in 2012. It comprised of a wide range of artworks associated with County Donegal, both works made in Donegal and works from Donegal art collections. It included iconic Donegal pieces like *West End Village*, James Dixon, *Eddie Moore*, Derek Hill and *Pullin the Devil by the Tail*, Steve McCollum, and international artworks such as *Puppy*, Jeff Koons, from the Donegal County Council Collection, and *Faun*, a ceramic plate by Picasso from the Derek Hill Collection. *R-M222: Contemporary Artists of the Donegal Diaspora*, an RCC commissioned Gathering project in partnership with the Donegal Public Art Programme, was exhibited in summer 2013. Curated by Declan Sheehan it brought together a number of leading Irish and international contemporary artists of the first, second, third and fourth generation Donegal Diaspora. The very high profile line-up included Turner Prize winner Susan Philipz, Turner nominees Liam Gillick and George Shaw together with renowned locally born artists Frances Hegarty, Vivienne Dick and Padraig Timoney. *Patrick Scott: Image Space Light* was a major retrospective of the work of the leading 20th century Irish artist developed by IMMA and curated by Christina Kennedy, Head of Collections. The exhibition celebrated the diverse nature of Scott's work, spanning more than seventy years. From architecture to painting, tapestry, furniture and graphic design, a distinctive aesthetic informed all of the late Patrick Scott's work and this was reflected in this wide-ranging exhibition. The exhibition was held in IMMA and Visual Carlow in the first half of 2014 and at the RCC and Glebe Galley in the summer and formed part of a larger RCC led Earagail Arts Festival programme.

Exhibitions in partnership with the Public Art Programme

A number of important exhibitions commissioned by the RCC during the period 2009 – 2014 were organised in partnership with Donegal County Council's Public Art Programme as part of its Residency Strand and funded under Per Cent for Art. One of the first Residency projects was *The Sweet Stuff*, a specially commissioned project to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the Oatfield Sweet Factory in Letterkenny. This three phase project included the exhibition *Oatfield, a Short but Sweet History* at Donegal County Museum and *The Sweet Fantastic*, a primary school project at the RCC. It was created by the internationally renowned Redmoon Company from Chicago and pupils from Ballyrairie N.S., Letterkenny, Educate Together N.S. and Naomh Fiachra N.S. Illistrin. The children devised fantastic narratives about Oatfield Sweets' mysterious origins and the exhibition was accompanied by a fun activity trail. The third element of the project was *Temperance* by artist-in-residence Abigail O' Brien, who documented the workings of the Oatfield factory over the period of one year. Her spectacular large-scale photographs were exhibited in a major show at the RCC in 2009-2010.

There were two other major exhibitions commissioned in 2010 in partnership with the Public Art Programme and funded under Per Cent for Art, *Lovely Weather* and *ID - Imaging Donegal*. *Lovely Weather*, the international art and climate change residency project in association with the art and science journal Leonardo Olats featured five artist teams, one in each of County Donegal's five Electoral Areas. It culminated in an exhibition and a one-day conference at the RCC in November - December. The final exhibition during this period commissioned in partnership with the Public Art Programme was *R-M222: Contemporary Artists of the Donegal Diaspora* in 2013.



Anthony Lyons, *Lovely Weather* Art and Climate Change Commission Series, (Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)

Touring Exhibitions

The RCC hosted a significant number of large touring exhibitions from 2009 – 2014, the vast majority of which were funded under the Arts Council touring scheme. A joint show of the RDS National Crafts Competition Winners Exhibition and the RDS Student Art Awards Exhibition was exhibited in 2009. *Noughties But Nice*, a major Arts Council funded touring Irish group exhibition from the collection of Limerick City Gallery of Art was shown in 2010. *Altered Images*, an innovative exhibition, designed to stimulate engagement with the visual arts by people with disabilities, organised by South Tipperary and Mayo County Councils and the Irish Museum of Modern Art was shown in 2011. There were three Arts Council supported touring exhibitions in 2013: *A Space For Learning*, curated by the Irish Architecture Foundation, showcased a collaborative project between architects and school students about school design; a large-scale exhibition curated by VISUAL Carlow of the work of Sam Walsh, one of Ireland's leading painters; and *Fish, Flesh and Fowl*, a retrospective of the work of the Belfast born painter Dermot Seymour. The main touring exhibition in 2013 was *Motion Capture* from Glucksman Gallery Cork, featuring major international artists such as Tacita Dean, William Kentridge, Dennis Oppenheim and Henri Matisse. 2014 featured: *Expanded Territories*, celebrating creative industries from the Leitrim, Fermanagh and Tyrone region; and *The Everyday*

Experience, a group show, curated by the Irish Architecture Foundation, of national and international architects, designers, artists and filmmakers.

Exhibitions in partnership with the Glebe Gallery

The RCC's main partner in visual arts is the Office of Public Works (OPW) operated Glebe Gallery, Churchill. Both galleries have worked together to organise the Earagail Arts Festival exhibitions programme each year for the past fifteen years. They also jointly organise exhibitions of the Glebe's Derek Hill Collection in the RCC. *Art Of Desire - The Derek Hill Collection*, featuring work ranging from leading Irish artists Camille Souter and Jack B. Yeats to international greats like Morandi, Kokoshka and Hokusai was shown in 2009. *Real to Abstract: Contemporary Art for Children*, a specially commissioned exhibition designed for primary school children, was shown in 2014. The exhibition featured 60 Irish and international artworks from the Glebe Gallery Collection and the Donegal County Council Collection and included works by Pablo Picasso, Pierre Bonnard, Derek Hill, Jeff Koons, James Dixon, Nora McGuinness and Victor Pasmore. It attempted to give children an insight into how art has developed from being realistic to being abstract and included a significant number of hands-on art activities. Forty school groups attended workshops over ten days and almost 1,200 children participated in total.

Art and Social History exhibitions

The RCC commissioned two major exhibitions in 2011 that provided rich insights into aspects of life in the local area. *Sharing Stories*, the two-year International Fund for Ireland (IFI) funded cross-border community film project in County Donegal and Derry City, organised in partnership with the Nerve Centre Derry, culminated in 18 completed short films,

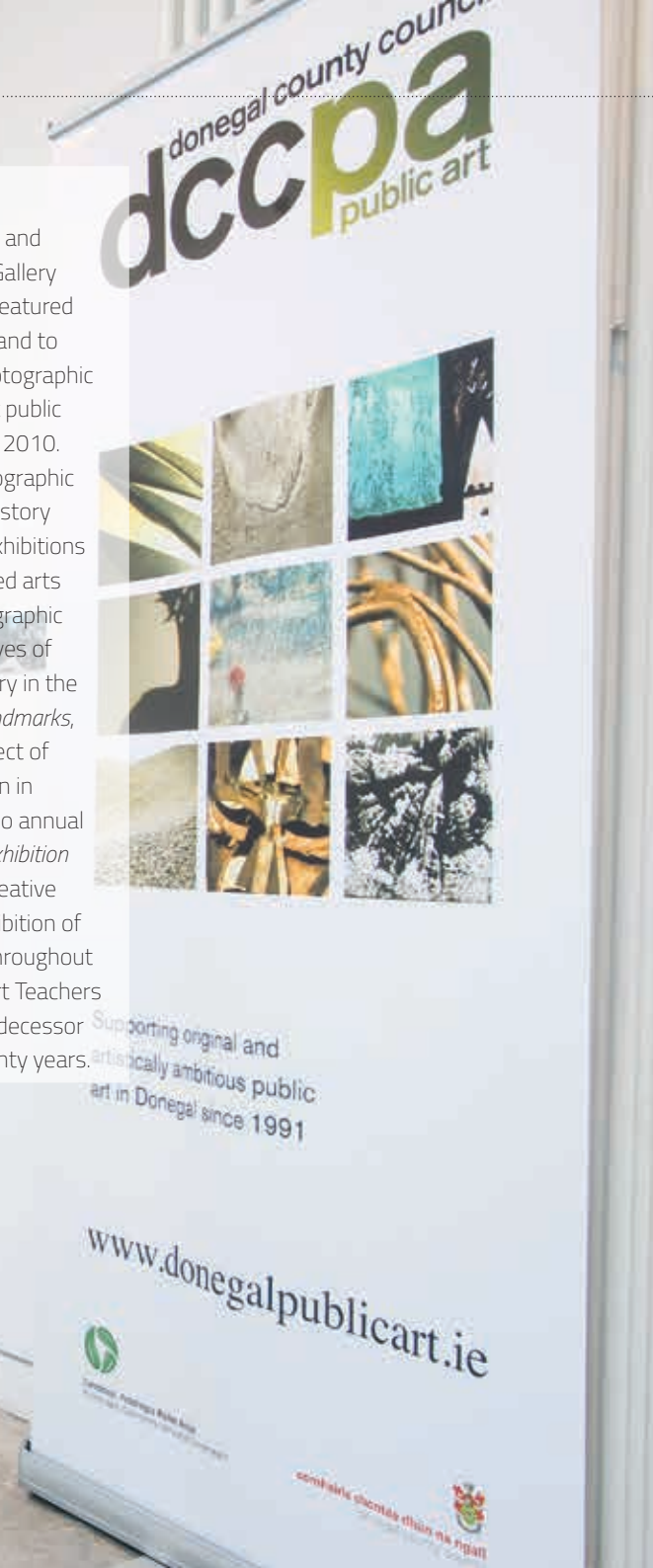
Peter d'Agostino
World-Wide Walks / bet
/ Dún na nGall
Glenties

a major exhibition and a conference. *Destination Donegal* was one of three Peace III funded exhibitions commissioned by the RCC and curated by Harriet Purkis. It was organised in association with the One Donegal project and featured the stories of 10 people who immigrated to Donegal from various parts of the world told through photography, quotes, video interviews and personal objects. *Fiddle Case*, a multimedia, art and social history exhibition, exploring the North Atlantic fiddle tradition, was organised to coincide with the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention in Derry and Donegal in 2012. *Local People*, a Donegal /Derry social history and art project featuring the life story of 40 local people was held in 2013. It comprised of two large-scale exhibitions at the RCC to coincide with The Gathering and at the University of Ulster, Derry, to coincide with Derry/Londonderry UK City of Culture.

Local Artists

The RCC exhibits the work of Donegal based artists and art and design work by students, in both the Main Gallery and the Foyer Galleries. *New Works* by Philip Moss featured painted testimonies to the victims of violent crime and to the Disappeared in 2009. *Abandoned Donegal*, a photographic commission by Denzil Browne documenting vacant public properties across County Donegal, was exhibited in 2010. *Arc of Fire*, comprising of a series of video and photographic works by Mhairi Sutherland on Donegal's military history was shown in 2011. There was also a number of exhibitions by North – 55, the Inishowen based socially engaged arts group led by artist Marie Barrett. *Remnant*, a photographic and multi-media exhibition exploring the working lives of the people who were central to the garment industry in the Northwest was shown in 2009. *Borderland* and *Landmarks*, both community photographic projects on the subject of the Border between Donegal and Derry were shown in 2010 and 2011 respectively. There are currently two annual student exhibitions at the RCC. The *LYIT Graduate Exhibition* by students from the Department of Design and Creative Media commenced in 2014 and *Súil na nÓg* the exhibition of Junior Certificate Art from the Secondary Schools throughout County Donegal, in partnership with the Donegal Art Teachers Association, has been held in the RCC and in its predecessor Letterkenny Arts Centre every year for the last twenty years.

21 years of Public Art in Donegal Exhibition 2013 at the RCC



County Donegal Heritage Office

Heritage is a vital part of our identity and sense of place. It is an intrinsic part of our everyday life, and an exceptional resource offering employment, recreation, health, learning and enjoyment.

Heritage Council Strategic Plan 2012 - 2016



Rope-thatched extended farmstead near Malin, Inishowen. County Donegal has one of the largest surviving concentrations of traditional cottages in Ireland.



The role of the County Donegal Heritage Office is to raise awareness of County Donegal's cultural, built and natural heritage; provide advice and information on heritage matters; collect data and conduct research on aspects of County Donegal's heritage; promote best practice in relation to heritage matters; and implement the County Donegal Heritage Plan in conjunction with the County Donegal Heritage Forum. The Heritage Office is a joint initiative between Donegal County Council and The Heritage Council.

National Heritage Week

County Donegal is one of the places to be during National Heritage Week with over 100 events taking place in County Donegal every year and most of them are free. National Heritage Week is coordinated by The Heritage Council and Local Authority Heritage Officers with the support of the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht and Fáilte Ireland. County Donegal is the county with the most events in Ireland per head of population. Heritage Week is very much a collaborative effort with Donegal County Council's Cultural Services organising over 20 events for Heritage Week annually. Events include family open days, guided walks, built heritage open houses, heritage site visits, fieldtrips, exhibitions, illustrated talks, historical re-enactments, traditional skills demonstrations, storytelling, traditional music and children's activities. The Heritage Office compiles

and publishes the very popular County *Donegal Heritage Week Event Guide* every year.

County Donegal Heritage Plan

The aim of the County Donegal Heritage Plan (2007–2013) was "to gather knowledge, raise awareness, encourage appreciation of the natural, built and cultural heritage of our county and to promote best practice in the management of our heritage for the enjoyment of present and future generations". The County Donegal Heritage Forum is a committee of Donegal County Council established to oversee the implementation of the Heritage Plan. The Heritage Forum comprises representatives from local government, local development, state agencies, educational institutions, farming sector, community/voluntary groups and the heritage sector. Donegal County Council, The Heritage Council and other Heritage Forum partners have invested at least €750,000 in the implementation of Heritage Plan actions between 2007 and 2013. In autumn 2013, work began on the preparation of the new County Donegal Heritage Plan.

Heritage Seminars

The Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, in partnership with Donegal County Council and Gola Development Committee, hosted a weekend Traditional Building Skills Field School on Gola in June 2010. Participants restored part of Teach Charlie Ned, a traditional cottage on the island, and 200 people participated in the free tours of the island's vernacular architecture. The County Donegal Heritage Office continued its successful series of vernacular architecture seminars that included *Hearth & Home* in association with Cumann Staire Chill Chartha in Kilcar (2012) and *Rural Houses of Donegal* in Carrigart (2014). The aims of these seminars were to raise awareness of County Donegal's vernacular architecture

and its cultural significance; disseminate information on traditional building methods, materials and skills; highlight sources of information on researching your traditional home; and promote best conservation practice. Both seminars were fully booked in advance with between 130 and 160 people attending each.

Over 130 people attended the *Care and Conservation of Historic Graveyards* seminar in Maghery in October 2011 organised by the Heritage Office and the Roads and Transportation Directorate in association with the Peadar O'Donnell Weekend and the Teampall Cróine Conservation Group. The aims of the seminar were to provide participants with advice on the conservation of the built, cultural and natural heritage found in historic graveyards and to promote best practice in the management and care of these graveyards. About 60 people representing 22 Tidy Towns' groups from all over County Donegal attended the *Heritage in Tidy Towns'* seminar organised by the Heritage Office and the County Museum in March 2012. The seminar provided information and advice on the care, conservation, maintenance and promotion of the built, cultural and natural heritage of Tidy Towns. Over 90 people attended the *Lost & Found* archaeological heritage seminar organised by the Heritage Office and the County Museum in June 2014. The aims of the seminar were to raise awareness of County Donegal's archaeological heritage; outline the statutory protection afforded archaeological monuments/objects; provide advice to landowners and communities in caring for and conserving our archaeological heritage; and promote best practice in the management of archaeological heritage sites/objects. The Heritage Office, in association with the Heritage Forum, organised the *Held in Trust* seminar in Ballyshannon in November 2014 attended by about 100 people. The aims of the seminar were to raise awareness

and appreciation of the built heritage and streetscapes of Donegal's historic towns; disseminate information and practical advice on the establishment of civic trusts; investigate sources of information on the built heritage of our towns and villages; and promote best practice in the conservation of our built heritage.

Heritage Publications

As part of the Donegal Heritage Series, the Heritage Office published a free booklet entitled *Donegal's Farming Heritage* by Dr. Jonathan Bell and Mervyn Watson in May 2011 and an audit of heritage objects associated with farming and fishing in County Donegal. The Heritage Office produced a free guide to museums and heritage centres in County Donegal entitled *Heritage in Your Hinterland* in April 2013. In association with Sound Woman Productions, the Heritage Office launched a free downloadable audio heritage tour of Ramelton produced by Mary Phelan, independent radio producer, in September 2013. The *Plantation Architecture and Landscape in Derry and Donegal* booklet by Duncan McLaren, Dedalus Architecture, was launched in February 2011 as part of a series of booklets produced by the County Museum and Derry City Council Museum and Heritage Service and part-funded under the County Donegal Heritage Plan. The Heritage Office commissioned the research and publication of a booklet on the cultural migration and material culture of Donegal communities abroad in 2013. Support was provided for a number of publications under the Heritage Plan including *Ballyshannon: its history, heritage and folklore* book by Anthony Begley (2009), *Lime Works* book by Patrick McAfee (2009), *Cooley Cross & Historic Graveyard* brochure by Cooley Cross Heritage Committee (2013) and *Kenneth King: Life & Work* book by Marianne O'Kane Boal (2013).



Gathering Heritage Information

As part of the implementation of the County Donegal Heritage Plan, the Heritage Office initiated surveys/studies of mills and mill sites (2010), geological heritage sites in south Donegal (2010) and north Donegal (2014) in association with the Geological Survey of Ireland, booley sites (2011) and holy wells (2012). In partnership with the County Archives, the Heritage Office commissioned an audit of historical photographic collections for County Donegal in 2010. The Heritage Office initiated the first survey of dry-stone wall types in Ireland in 2011. The Heritage Office also launched the hedgerow survey of County Donegal and the first *Biodiversity Species List for County Donegal* in May 2009.

The Donegal Heritage *Life & Lore* Collection was launched by Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh of Altan and Donegal Person of the Year, in May 2010. The collection of 64 CDs of oral recordings tells part of the story of County Donegal through the lives, and in the words, of some of its residents. People involved in landmark industries such as Magee's of Donegal, Oatfield Sweets, Donegal Carpets and James McDaid & Sons Ltd. were recorded as were key figures in the county's heritage and traditional ways-of-life. The collection is available to consult free-of-charge through the County Library Service and the County Archives. A permanent maritime heritage exhibition in the Killybegs International Carpet-Making and Fishing Centre was launched in June 2012. The exhibition was part-funded under the County Donegal Heritage Plan and consists of 15 illustrated panels on maritime heritage themes and a small travelling exhibition. The Heritage Office commissioned and launched an ecological study of Inishfree Upper and Inishmeane in October 2010 and commissioned the Department of Geography, National University of Ireland – Maynooth to work with local community groups to map placenames for eight townlands in the county.

Working in Partnership

In 2011, the County Donegal Heritage Office, in association with the Cooley Cross Heritage Development Committee, commissioned a conservation report on the Skull House (one of only five mortuary houses in Ireland and an archaeological monument protected under the National Monuments Acts) in Cooley historic graveyard near Moville. A Historic Landscape Characterisation of County Donegal was commissioned as part of the implementation of the Heritage Plan in 2013-2014. Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies and highlights the contribution the past makes to our landscape.

As part of the *Historic Towns - Walled Towns* symposium, the Heritage Office assisted The Holywell Trust, Derry City Council, The Heritage Council and the European Walled Towns Network in organising and co-hosting a fieldtrip to/ workshop in County Donegal around the theme of heritage in historic towns including visits to Grianán of Aileach and Raphoe. The Heritage Council held one of its board meetings in Gaoth Dobhair in June 2014. During their stay, board members visited Teach Mhicí Mhic Gabhann in Doire Chonaire, Old Church in Derrybeg, the Cooperage in Burtonport, Templecrone Church and Historic Graveyard in Maghery, the fifteenth-century Franciscan Friary at Ballysaggart, Magee's of Donegal and Brown Hall near Ballintra. The Heritage Office provided advice to applicants to the annual Heritage Council Grants Programme. Between 2009 and 2014, The Heritage Council provided over €468,000 in funding for over 70 County Donegal-based community heritage initiatives.

Heritage Education Initiatives

In conjunction with the Donegal Education Centre and two secondary schools in Bundoran and Glenties, the Heritage Office commissioned the *Heritage & Habitat in Your Community* schools' initiative in 2013 to raise awareness of natural habitats in local communities and to encourage surveying and recording. The guidance notes produced will be made available to all schools through the Donegal Education Centre. The Twite education initiative in primary schools in County Donegal and County

Traditional Chair, Ionad Cois Locha, Dunlewey. (Photo Credit Joseph Gallagher, Heritage Officer DCC)






Mayo was a partnership between BirdWatch Ireland and Anair Ecology in association with Donegal County Council, Mayo County Council, The Heritage Council and the National Parks & Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht. The aim of this initiative was to train teachers and students in the implementation of conservation actions for Twite, an endangered bird species, and the production of a comprehensive step-by-step *Teacher's Manual*. The Heritage Office also oversaw the implementation of biodiversity awareness training for local authority staff in March 2009.

In partnership with the *Donegal Democrat* in 2011, the Heritage Office commissioned a monthly newspaper column entitled *Nature's Calendar* by Liz Sheppard. Each month, a different seasonal theme was addressed from a nature and wildlife perspective. In conjunction with BirdWatch Ireland, the Heritage Office prepared interpretive panels highlighting the corncrake and the conservation of its habitat on Tory Island. The Heritage Office assists students and staff from the Department of Geography, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, in arranging and delivering its fieldtrip programme to County Donegal each year. The Heritage Council won the National Award for Outstanding Leadership at the Industrial Heritage Association of Ireland awards ceremony in February 2013. In its citation, the Industrial Heritage Association of Ireland recognised the outstanding leadership of The Heritage Council and the network of City and County Heritage Officers in promoting awareness and positive action in the conservation of Ireland's industrial heritage.

The Heritage Office assisted RTÉ in highlighting the preservation and conservation of vernacular architecture for a feature on *Winning Streak* (December 2012), the survey of holy wells commissioned under the County Donegal Heritage Plan for *Nationwide* (March 2013) and the 1930s Schools' Folklore Collection in County Donegal for *Nationwide* (August 2013). The Heritage Office has organised an event for Culture Night each year and has worked with other Cultural Services in organising events for Bealtaine, Wainfest, and International Biodiversity Day and with local heritage groups in organising local heritage awareness days. A new County Donegal Heritage Office website (www.donegalcoco.ie/heritage) was established in 2013 and continues to be improved.



Grianan of Aileach
(Photo Credit Joseph
Gallagher, Heritage
Officer DCC)

Public Art

Original, artistically ambitious, high quality public art which aspires to international standards of innovation, imagination and excellence.

www.donegalpublicart.ie

Triskele Heads by artist Brendan Mc Gloin (Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)

H.E.A.R.T: Heritage, Environment, Art and Rural Tourism was a cross border initiative by Donegal County Council and Strabane District Council which assisted a total of twelve towns and villages to undergo significant heritage and environmental regeneration across both counties. One of the most imaginative and central parts of the HEART programme was the public art aspect which saw the commissioning of a twelve strong sculpture trail across both counties with eight of the large scale sculptures in Donegal in the towns of Ardara, Ballybofey, Stranorlar, Ballyshannon, Lifford, Moville, Ramelton and Raphoe.

The Fid: The artist's design for the Moville sculpture called *The Fid* looks to Moville's maritime heritage for inspiration. Partly inspired by a fid, which is a tool used by fishermen for splicing ropes, the piece stands over 30 feet high and is sited on the Old Pier. This work was part of a broader programme of events commemorating the region's shared emigration heritage with New Brunswick, Canada.

Manus Lunny Residency culminated with a new CD comprising the unique song archive from Rann na Feirste in West Donegal. Most of the songs were composed by writers and poets from Rann na Feirste and all but two tracks are performed by local artists or by those who have strong family links to the area. Two of Donegal's most celebrated traditional

singers, Máire Brennan and Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh perform tracks on the CD. A free copy of the CD was distributed to each household in the townland of Rann na Feirste and all subsequent proceeds from the CD and associated concerts benefited both Scoil Náisiúnta and Áislann Rann na Feirste community and enterprise centre.

Fireworks with Soul was a spectacular once-off outdoor pyrotechnics, music and light show on and around the Regional Cultural Centre's distinctive glass and aluminium structure. The event featured a dramatic pyrotechnics show designed by Pierre-Alain Hubert who is a craftsman, performance artist of the sky and a dealer of dreams. French based Hubert is considered to be one of the great Pyrotechnic artists of our time. For over 35 years he has enthralled audiences the world over from Athens to Zimbabwe, with his spectacular creations. In his own words his displays are "an opera of light where fireworks play a part", but not the only part.

Rory Gallagher Sculpture was commissioned to mark the legendary singer's fame, to celebrate the dedication of his international fans in Ireland and abroad, and to augment the success of the Ballyshannon Rory Gallagher Festival.

Imaging Donegal photography commission invited the five commissioned artists, Simon Burch, Declan Doherty, Chris Primrose, Paul Rooney and Richard Wayman to actively research and engage with a particular aspect of a specific electoral area and its character in order to create a significant body of photographic work that reflected and captured local images and realities. The commission culminated in an exhibition at the Regional Cultural Centre and included a limited edition print collection.

Lovely Weather Donegal Artists Residencies was a ground breaking, highly ambitious, multi faceted art and science



project which examined the issues of climate change in County Donegal and how artists could be part of the climate change debate. The overall project was delivered by The Public Art Programme, The Regional Cultural Centre and Leonardo Olats (a nonprofit organisation that serves the global network of distinguished scholars, artists, scientists, researchers and thinkers through programmes focused on interdisciplinary work, creative output and innovation).

Altan Music Residency consisted of music education workshops led by the world-renowned group Altan for communities and schools in West Donegal. In addition, Altan composed a new work for public performance in collaboration with Donegal Youth Orchestra and this formed part of the Earagail Arts Festival in July 2010.

The Picture Book was a large scale animation on the facade of Balor Arts Centre, Ballybofey, using a technique called Illuminated Animation which is where performers animate silhouette puppets on overhead projectors and these images are then magnified at large scale onto screens. The innovative arts project was based upon the themes of Frances Browne, the 'blind poetess of Stranorlar' and her famous book of fairy tales for children, *Granny's Wonderful Chair*. Over the course of four weeks Redmoon artists worked with over ninety students from St Mary's N.S., Robertson N.S., Scoil Naisiúnta Seiseadh Uí Neill to create original animations using silhouette images inspired by the classic fairytales of Frances Browne.

How We Remember programme of events was a highly ambitious multidisciplinary arts and community project that was both process and project based. It was managed by the Public Art Office in partnership with the 28th Infantry Battalion of the Irish Defence Forces (which was established as the Border Battalion in 1973), Donegal County Museum, The Heritage Office, the Regional Cultural Centre and the





The Death of Saimer
by Fred Conlon (RIP),
Ballyshannon (Photo
Credit Paul Mc Guckian)



Organisation of Ex-Service men Teoranta (ONET). The project consisted of a number of different elements including a significant new stained-glass / contemporary glass window at the Oratory at Finner Camp, the base of the 28th Infantry Battalion. This was presented by Donegal County Council to the Irish Defence Forces in late April 2011.

Working for Peanuts & Olympic Whispers were two digital animation projects informed by the children's game 'Chinese whispers' and created by students from Letterkenny Institute of Technology in Donegal and Expression College for Digital Arts in San Francisco. The Irish students created the first half of the animation and then passed on the final frame of the film to the US team to complete. Students from Expression College then created their interpretation. The project was produced by Belfast based *Cinemagic* Festival which embraces the magic of film, television and digital technologies to educate, motivate and inspire young people through film screenings, industry workshops, practical master classes, filmmaking projects and outreach activities, with support from the Public Art Office and The Donegal Film Office. Both films were screened at the various *Cinemagic* Festivals in Ireland and the USA.

Barrack Hill Design was a ground breaking commission for the Public Art Office as it sought to extend the definition of Public Art in Ireland by inviting Diarmuid Gavin, celebrity gardener and landscape architect, to come up with an amazing 'design concept' for a new playground/community space in Carndonagh. **Carndonagh Heads** were commissioned to take a prominent place in the overall design of Barrack Hill Town Park. Like centurions, five stylised heads stand tall protecting both the playground and the town.

The Happy Prince was an exquisite and beautiful work composed and conducted by Vincent Kennedy with song, text and narration by Little John Nee. Based on the Oscar Wilde

Jeffreys House, Public Art Commission at Ards Forest Park, Dunfanaghy, Donegal. Delivered by The Regional Cultural Centre in partnership with The Irish Architecture Foundation (Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)

story 'The Happy Prince', the piece explored the timeless themes of love, friendship and compassion in a magical way for stage and was performed by Donegal Youth Orchestra and Donegal Youth Choir in Letterkenny and Ballyshannon.

Killybegs PlaySpace: In 2011, Killybegs was one of the few towns in Donegal not to have had a playground. Utilising the Per Cent for Art Scheme, the Public Art Office sought to expand the definition of Public Art nationally whilst also delivering a play space for Killybegs. Presented as a mutually beneficial project, the Office persuaded both the Irish Architecture Foundation and the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland to become partners and delivery agents in the Killybegs Play Space Project which was to become the first architecturally designed play space in Ireland. A site was secured from The Department of Marine and a successful application was made to Donegal Local Development Company. The play space was officially opened in summer 2014.

ArtScape Donegal & Jeffrey's House: Building on its reputation for culture, landscape, sculpture and contemporary arts, Donegal County Council is exploring the possibility of establishing an ambitious flagship Sculpture Park, unique in Ireland, using the working title of *ArtScape Donegal*

in Partnership with Coillte Teoranta, The Irish Forestry Board. This will be an outdoor gallery showcasing the best of modern and contemporary Sculpture/Landscape interventions/Architectural structures or tree houses set in Donegal's most dramatic landscape that will connect with the essence of Donegal's culture and heritage.

As an introduction to this, Jeffrey's House was commissioned by Donegal County Council Public Art Programme in partnership with Coillte, the Irish Architecture Foundation and the Earagail Arts Festival. The simply crafted work is by architect Thomas O'Brien and artist Emily Mannion and is hopefully the first of many architectural commissions for Ards Forest Park.

Public Art Agency: Donegal County Public Art Office established the *Public Art Agency* based on the County Development Board philosophy of co-ordination and integration of services for all Government Departments and through this agency has delivered several successful commissions for the VEC (now ETB).

The Public Art Office also celebrated its 21st Birthday in 2012 and hosted a retrospective of the Public Art Programme and launched its website www.donegalpublicart.ie which is a wonderful archive of all commissions to date.





Daisies by Walker & Walker, Oatfield Sweet Factory Commission, Blacksmiths Ball, The Hiring Fair
(Photo Credits Paul Mc Guckian)

Section 3: Policy and Legislative Context

*Tiled Seat by Aileen Barr,
Porthall Primary School
www.donegalpublicart.ie
(Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)*



Our cultural heritage
is priceless. We must
protect it and invest
in it in new and
imaginative ways.

Sheila Pratschke. Chair, The Arts Council

Conor Newman. Chair, The Heritage Council

April 2016

Although the policy and legislative context for the delivery of cultural services is constantly evolving, the commitment to our vision remains constant

..where everyone in our society is inspired and enriched by cultural activity

Cultural Services vision 2009-2020

This chapter sets out the current framework and landscape in which Cultural Services operates at local and national level.

The last number of years has seen unprecedented change for local government in Ireland. The implementation of the new reform agenda has changed the representational structures at local level, has repositioned and strengthened the role of local government in economic, social and community development and has changed the way some services are delivered.

However the commitment to Culture and Cultural Development by Donegal County Council has remained unchanged and if anything it has been strengthened as outlined in The Donegal Local Economic & Community Plan 2015-2021 where *valuing, sustaining and developing our culture and our creative resources* is one of the seven priority goals.

In addition, The Donegal County Council Corporate Plan 2015-2019 outlines *Culture & Heritage* as one of the five priority themes *To conserve, manage, support and promote our arts, culture, environment, heritage and languages.*

Donegal County Council Corporate Plan 2015-2019

The delivery of a strong Cultural Service to the public continues to be at the core of the work that Donegal County Council undertakes.

As recently as May 2016, the new Programme for a Partnership Government was issued, and states the Government believes *arts and culture are intrinsic to the Irish State. We believe the arts belong to everybody and we need to increase access to, and engagement in, the arts, boost our*

creative industries and preserve our heritage. Societies which invest in the arts and heritage are more prosperous, successful societies. The new Programme encourages Local Authorities to strengthen the role of Arts and Heritage Officers. The Government also states it will boost supports to regional museums.

What is Culture? There are many definitions in the public domain. In its widest use, culture encompasses everything we do as a society and how we behave. However the new Culture 2025 Discussion Document prepared by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in late 2015 defines culture in the three key areas of Arts, Cultural Heritage and Creative Industries.



'Whose County' from the Imaging Donegal Public Art Project. Photo by Declan Doherty



Cultural Services has direct responsibility in the two areas of Arts and Cultural Heritage which include The Arts (County Arts Office, Public Art, and the Regional Cultural Centre), The Library Service, The Archives Service, Donegal County Museum and The County Heritage Office (Cultural, Built and Natural Heritage of County Donegal).

In Donegal, there is a view gaining momentum that Culture includes the growing creative industries. This is not only to protect and grow the more traditional creative industries such as craft but also new generation creative industries including film & television, production, animation, broadcasting, electronic games, architecture, design and fashion, publishing, media and advertising (source: EU Commission COM (2014) 477).

2014 saw the amalgamation of County Enterprise Boards with Local Authorities and Donegal Local Enterprise Office (LEO) was established. LEO now leads and is making great progress in the development of the Creative Industries in Donegal particularly with the launch of the Strategic Action Plan for Creative Entrepreneurship in Donegal which seeks at its essence to create the right conditions for creative entrepreneurship in Donegal by:

- Increasing the profile and the business skills of the creative entrepreneurs;
- Inspiring new creative ideas and business skills of creative entrepreneurs;
- Contributing to the sustainability of Donegal's cultural heritage and identity as a creative, resilient place.

Supporting artists and creative workers is of fundamental importance to any society that values culture. Notwithstanding the supports that are available, there is evidence to suggest that existing provision is not adequate





to allow artists and creative workers in the cultural sector to operate on a self sustaining basis in Ireland. A report commissioned by both The Arts Council and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in 2010 reported that the average income of artists in Ireland in 2008 was €14,676. Opportunities exist for Donegal County Council and the Local Enterprise Office to work together to look at ways to facilitate artists and creative workers to operate in a self sustaining way.

Donegal County Council is inspired by the intrinsic value of culture and by the idea of a county where high quality cultural experiences are enjoyed by those who live and visit Donegal and that is why Public Engagement is one of the key goals.

The work of artists and arts organisations inspire and reflect the rhythm of the everyday as well as the momentous events of public life. This important and distinctive creative power is an essential feature of our consciousness and we are committed to supporting and developing the work of artists and arts organisations as a third goal of our Strategy. This commitment is also evident in the Arts Council Strategy 2016-2025 *Making Great Art Work*:

we intend that the centrality of the arts to Irish Life will have been strengthened by our advocacy, by our support of artists throughout their careers, by the involvement of many agencies in cultural provision, by the impact of the arts on the creative economy and by the depth and breadth of people's engagement with the arts as a valued feature of their lives.

Cultural Services will continue its commitment to high quality collaborative, community focused actions and projects that have social change at the centre of the work. The essence of this is a commitment to Life Long Learning and Socially Engaged Practice which is also a key goal of this strategy.

Providing opportunities for wider and richer cultural engagement can play a role in addressing social exclusion.

The Oireachtas Joint Committee on Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht in its 2014 report *Utilising the Arts to Combat Disadvantage*, recommended that the arts should be recognised as a fundamental means of combating social exclusion and promoting the well being and inclusion of disadvantaged groups within local communities. This plan will address ways that Donegal County Council Cultural Services can continue to do this both independently and in partnership with the Donegal County Council Social Inclusion Office and with the other agencies in Donegal that have the social inclusion agenda as part of their remit.

Over the decade to 2011, Ireland had the highest net migration rates of the EU. The share of foreign-born people living in Ireland rose from 6% in 1991 to over 17% of population in 2011. This population change has introduced a rich, new and diverse cultural landscape to Ireland. Over the last number of years Cultural Services has delivered several projects that celebrate Cultural Diversity. This strategy recognises and embraces the potential enrichment and possible challenges to the Cultural Sector in Donegal that this change brings.

2015 was a record year for Irish tourism and the growth aspiration is for 10 million overseas visits to Ireland by 2025. In 2013 Donegal received 199,000 overseas visitors and 269,000 domestic visitors. This was an increase of 14.3% and 9.8% respectively on the 2012 visitors and this trend continues.

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport has developed an interdepartmental Tourism Action Plan 2016-18 which commits to the ever developing role of local authorities in supporting tourism.

Culture is now recognised as a key component of our tourism industry. Fáilte Ireland estimates that cultural tourism is both

a global and regional growth area, with 3.5 million overseas cultural visitors spending nearly €2.8 billion in Ireland in 2011. In addition, visitors who engage with Ireland's culture and heritage tend to stay longer, spend more, be affluent, well-travelled, highly educated and socially concerned and look for themed and authentic experiences. Cultural Services recognise the potential economic benefits to the county in this regard and will seek to work more closely with the tourism sector to maximise these opportunities.

Our heritage defines our sense of place and contributes to our sense of identity in County Donegal. The Heritage Act (1995) does not define the concept of heritage but identifies the following categories of heritage resources: archaeological objects, architectural heritage, landscapes, fauna, flora, geology, heritage gardens and parks, heritage objects, inland waterways, monuments, seascapes, wildlife habitats and wrecks. Our heritage reflects our values, attitudes, beliefs, customs, traditions and aspirations. It enhances the local distinctiveness of our communities, landscapes and culture. These attributes of our heritage engender pride and enhance our quality of life. The important role that heritage plays was recognised by government in the National Heritage Plan which aimed *to ensure the protection of our heritage and to promote its enjoyment by all*. The major themes in the National Heritage Plan of placing heritage at the heart of public life, protecting heritage, acquiring knowledge and promoting awareness are reflected in the County Donegal Heritage Plan. In the new *Programme for a Partnership Government* (May 2016), there is a commitment by government to prepare and publish a new National Heritage Plan *that sets out policies for the protection and promotion of our built and natural heritage and responds to challenges within the heritage sector*. In its Strategic Plan (2012-2016), The Heritage Council highlights the role that heritage plays in contributing to

identity, well-being and health; managing and conserving for sustainable development, and facilitating appreciation and enjoyment. The aim of the County Donegal Heritage Plan (2014-2019) is to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of the rich and diverse heritage of our county; to promote its conservation, enhancement and enjoyment; and to sustainably harness the economic, social and cultural benefits of heritage for current and future generations.

Our Heritage must also be seen as a key economic driver and therefore must be resourced. Maintaining and enhancing the quality of our natural, built and cultural heritage is now at the core of our most important economic drivers, including agriculture and tourism.

The recently- launched policy document *Growing Tourism To 2025* states in its opening paragraphs:

The focus of tourism policy must be to maximise the export contribution of tourism, while protecting the invaluable assets that are our natural, built and cultural heritage.

National policies and strategies such as *Culture 2025: National Cultural Policy and Archaeology 2025* (currently in preparation) will also suggest future directions for the preservation, conservation and promotion of heritage and the planned 2018 mid-term review of this strategy, will allow for reflection on these new policies.

Our public libraries play a vital role in the lives of individuals and their communities. For generations, the local library has acted as a vehicle for access to knowledge, ideas and information and as a democratic service open and available to everyone. The local library is a trusted and recognised feature of the local area but it is also a remarkable local asset and network with over 330 branches covering all parts of the island and in Donegal. The value of the Irish Public Library Service was highlighted in the survey *Ireland's Vital Signs 2013* where *libraries and reading*



were placed in 5th position out of 119 options regarded by the public as most important to them.

Information is essential in today's global society and the library has a key position in the information world. Library staff need to be able to provide the correct information or access to the relevant information resource for their community of users. A frequent comment from the public is that many people remain unaware of the total range of library services provided and that its full potential is not realised.

Local Government Reform was a key agenda item in the Programme for Government 2011 and in the action plan for effective local government *Putting People First 2012*. To this end, in the latter part of 2012, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna was dissolved and its functions transferred to Libraries Development, a new unit of the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA). This offers a significant opportunity for new and strengthened functions in the changing role of local government so that its full potential can be maximised. Through their civic presence, libraries have the potential to assume a leadership role in local authority community engagement.

One of the Library Service priorities nationally as set out in *Opportunities for All* is Business, Enterprise & Employment supports. Donegal County Council Cultural Services will work with the LEO on the provision of supports to start-ups, business and entrepreneurs, and others in terms of support for jobseekers and in accessing up-skilling/re-skilling training.

The second priority nationally for libraries is Literacy & Reading Development. Donegal County Council Cultural Services will enhance existing programmes, participate in national programmes & pilots, and will co-ordinate the roll out of the Right to Read campaign. This is a local authority-

wide campaign and will be delivered in association with local and national partners.

These two priority areas will be the focus, while all areas covered in *Opportunities for All* will ultimately be delivered.

The Museum Standards Programme for Ireland was developed by the Heritage Council in consultation with the Irish museums sector and in keeping with best international practice. The Programme aims to raise standards across a wide range of areas, promote the care and welfare of collections and enhance co-operation between Irish museums. Donegal County Museum has been involved with the Programme since the first Pilot Study began in 1999. The Museum achieved Full Accreditation in 2011 and Maintenance of Accreditation in 2015. Accreditation under this Programme offers quality assurance to visitors that the Museum is adhering to a high set of standards in the management of the museum, care of collections and visitor services.

Section 80 of the Local Government Act 2001 reinforces the Local Government Act of 1994 which made it a function of local authorities to preserve, conserve, and make accessible local archives and to manage their local records. County Donegal's Archives Service has been in place since 1999 and it endeavours to implement the provisions of the Act by managing, acquiring, conserving and preserving archives and records within its remit, and by improving and extending access to its collections for all those interested in our archival heritage.

The Donegal Gaeltacht is the second largest Gaeltacht in the country has a population of 23, 783 (Census 2011) The Irish Language is an intrinsic element of the culture and heritage of County Donegal and its Gaeltacht area. Údarás na Gaeltachta, under the Gaeltacht Act 2012, is responsible



Donegal County Museum, Letterkenny
(Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)

for the implementation of the language planning process in the Gaeltacht. The Gaeltacht Act 2012 gives statutory effect to the implementation of the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030, where it is stated that *under the new Act, a language planning process will be instigated whereby a language plan will be prepared at community level for each Gaeltacht district.*

Over the lifetime of this Strategy, Cultural Services will proactively seek out opportunities to develop projects and programmes with the Donegal County Council Irish Language Development Office, Údarás na Gaeltachta and Ealaín na Gaeltachta and other stakeholders to maximise opportunities to preserve and promote the Irish Language which is the most important facet of Gaeltacht culture.

In addition, Donegal County Council will continue to deliver services in Irish in line with *Donegal County Council Council Irish Language Development Plan* and other statutory requirements including the *Official Languages Act 2003*, *The Gaeltacht Act 2012* and Government's 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030.

Ireland is one of the most renowned nations in the world with regards to its arts and culture. According to Heather Humphreys TD, Irishness and culture are intertwined:

Our culture is an all encompassing, evolving force that helps us express and celebrate who we are as a diverse, modern nation.

Led by our creatives and by our national and local cultural institutions, the programme of events for the 1916 Easter Rising Centenary have been incredibly rich and inspiring. However as a country we are at the bottom of the European League Table for percentage of government investment in the arts.

At the time of writing, we can remain optimistic that the

newly configured Department of Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts and the Gaeltacht will seek to commit to an investment of 0.3% of GDP over the lifetime of the next government – a commitment which would take us halfway to the European average.

At the conclusion of RTE's acclaimed broadcast Centenary, President Michael D. Higgins paid tribute to the centrality of Irish culture as inspiring the new State:

From that foundation, that cultural and literary awakening, Irish artists known and appreciated throughout the world have emerged, and continue to emerge. Tonight we celebrate not only our rich cultural heritage, but also its contemporary expression, our new imaginings, and the many creative ways in which we are telling our stories. For ours is a story still in the making.

This year, as we celebrate this important centenary and reflect on what we have achieved, we are committing ourselves to continuing the journey of imagination, committing ourselves to sustain the artistic work that will form the next chapter of our story.

Donegal County Council Cultural Services are committed and excited by a new cultural chapter for Donegal that this Strategy will inform.

Preparation of Plan

In addition to the Policy Context outlined, the strategy has also been shaped by detailed consultation with Cultural Services staff.

In addition, a series of meetings was undertaken with the following internal stakeholders:

- Information Systems Division
- Communications Office

- Tourism Product Development Office
- The Irish Language Officer
- Social Inclusion Officer
- Training Officer
- Local Enterprise Office
- Donegal Film Office
- Donegal Diaspora Project
- Information Systems

A community consultation process was also undertaken which resulted in valuable feedback. The bi-lingual consultation document was circulated widely through staff networks, the Public Participation Network (PPN), local print and social media, local radio and an on-line survey. The consultation document is included as Appendix 2.

In summary, the following Plans and Acts of Legislation were also consulted in the preparation of this Strategy:

Key National Policies, Plans and Strategies

- Local Government Act 2001(including Section 80 relating to Archives and Records Management)
- Local Government Reform Act 2014
- National Cultural Institutions Act 1997
- National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1997
- Official Languages Act 2003
- Opportunities for All: A Strategy for Public Libraries 2013-2017
- Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011-2020
- Right to Read Campaign 2014

- Museum Standards Programme of Ireland Guidelines 2014
- Making Great Artwork: Leading the Development of Arts in Ireland: Arts Council Strategy 2016 – 2025
- A Framework for Collaboration: An agreement between the Arts Council and the County and City Management Association
- Culture 2025: Discussion Document: Dept Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
- Heritage Council Strategic Plan (2012-2016)
- National Heritage Plan
- National Children's Strategy 2000
- Preserving the Past – Shaping the Future: Local Authority Museums Network Strategy 2016 – 2019
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable persons) Act 2012
- Putting People First – Action Programme for Effective Local Government
- Public Sector Reform Plan 2014-2016
- Healthy Ireland – A Framework for Improved Health and Well Being 2013-2025
- National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020
- Planning Policy Statement 2015
- Growing Tourism to 2025
- National Action Plan for Social Inclusion
- National Positive Ageing Strategy
- National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan 2013-2015
- Our Sustainable Future – A Framework for Sustainable Development in Ireland
- 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030


Key Local Plans and Strategies

- Donegal Economic & Community Plan
- Donegal County Development Plan
- Donegal County Council Corporate Plan
- Donegal County Council Irish Language Development Plan
- Strategic Action Plan for Creative Entrepreneurship in Donegal: Local Enterprise Office
- County Donegal Heritage Plan
- Making Shapes 2: Public Art in Donegal 2013-2017





Section 4: Statement of Strategy

A group of diverse people, including children and adults, are gathered in a room, likely a classroom or rehearsal space, playing various musical instruments. In the foreground, a woman is playing a violin. To her right, another person is playing a mandolin. In the background, several people are playing acoustic guitars. The room has a chalkboard and a television in the background, suggesting an educational or community setting. The overall atmosphere is one of collaborative music-making.

Culture shapes and challenges us, give us pleasure, helps us know who we are & where we are going: the distinctive, creative power is an essential feature of our consciousness and conversation. At home and abroad, our culture is the hallmark of us as a people

Culture 2025

1. Public Engagement

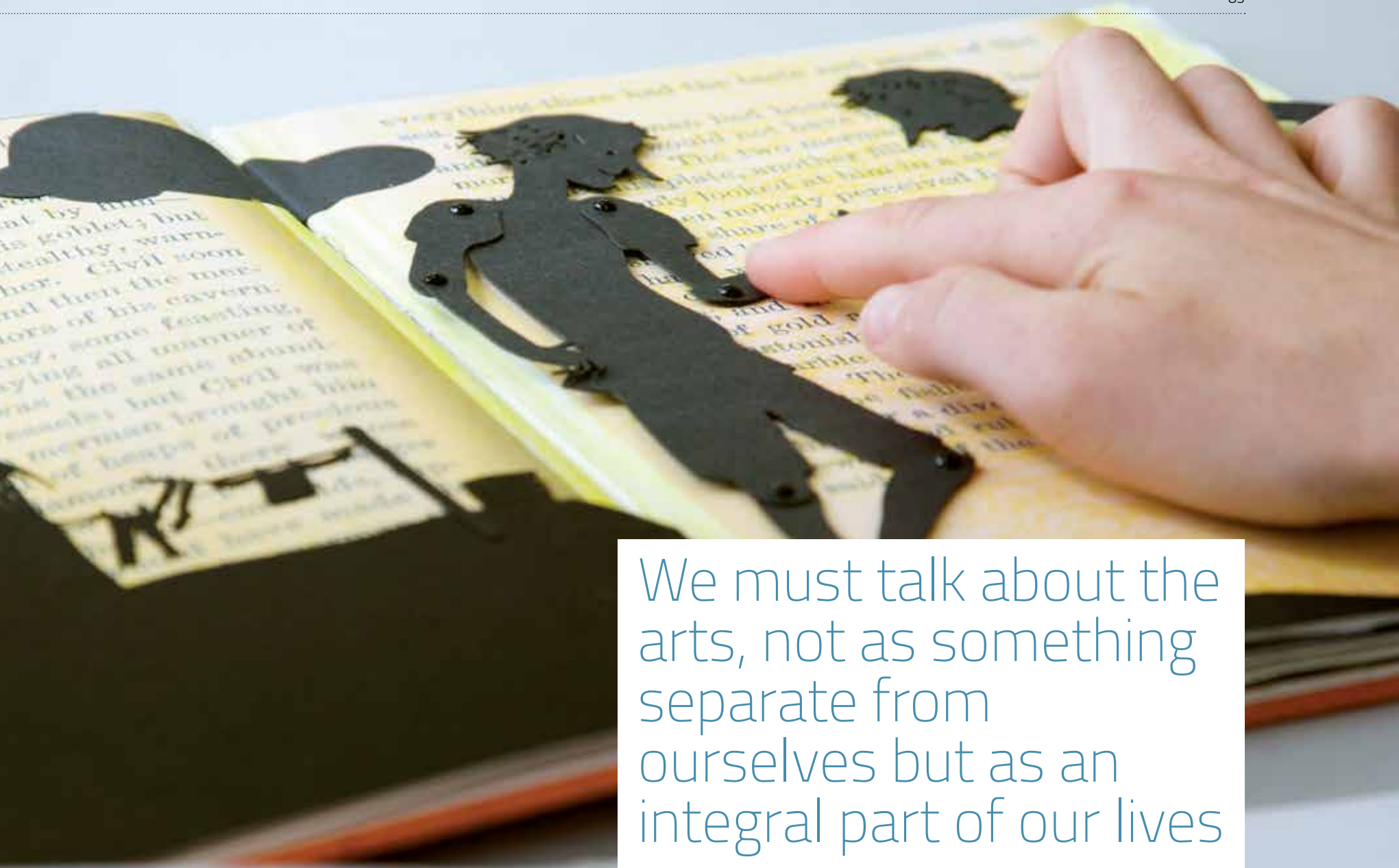
Donegal County Council Cultural Services are inspired by the intrinsic value of culture and by the idea of a county where high quality cultural experiences are enjoyed by those who live and visit Donegal. We will continue to deliver an ambitious, unique and progressive programme of work. We will continuously work to achieve a level of funding where Cultural Services can deliver on its stated objectives and create the scope for future forward-thinking developments.

To achieve this we will:

- 1.1 Advocate the value and importance of culture.
- 1.2 Initiate actions that seek to develop new audiences and deepen the engagement of those who already participate.
- 1.3 Support amateur participation in the arts.
- 1.4 Foster and develop a passion for reading and literary appreciation.
- 1.5 Recognise and support volunteering in the cultural sphere.
- 1.6 Continue to enhance existing outreach programme delivered by Cultural Services.
- 1.7 Review, and where appropriate develop, Taobh Tíre outreach library services to rural and isolated communities.
- 1.8 Keep charges to a minimum and ensure a significant programme of free events.
- 1.9 Promote the use of digital technology to improve access to Cultural Services by the most geographically hard to reach.
- 1.10 Work to deliver Opportunities for All, National Strategy for Public Libraries 2013-2017.
- 1.11 Implement the new national library management system (LMS) to provide access to all public library collections in Ireland and allow for single national membership for public libraries.
- 1.12 Extend access to information on Council services through the library network.
- 1.13 Support and promote Council campaigns through Cultural Services networks (e.g. Fire Safety Week, Road Safety, Donegal Business Week).
- 1.14 Continue to develop and secure Donegal County Council's Festival Programme including Wainfest, Bealtaine, Earagail Arts Festival, Donegal Bay and Blue Stacks Festival, Culture Night and Heritage Week and, where resources permit, respond to opportunities to develop new festivals and cultural events.
- 1.15 Continue to deliver high quality exhibition programmes which include those organised by Cultural Services and those sourced nationally and internationally.
- 1.16 Continue to provide a wide and varied events programme to encourage engagement and promote services.

- 1.17 Support communities to identify and demonstrate their cultural and creative resources through community led festivals and events.
- 1.18 Seek a means by which a single searchable calendar of cultural events could be made available to the public.
- 1.19 Prepare and implement a marketing plan for Cultural Services which includes the appointment of a Marketing Officer.
- 1.20 Work towards providing all public information in plain language.
- 1.21 Design more accessible print material and produce material in other formats.
- 1.22 Extend the level of services provided online across all Cultural Services Sections and further promote existing services already online.
- 1.23 Extend access to local studies material online.
- 1.24 Explore the evolving opportunities presented by new technology specifically relating to social media, e.g. facebook, twitter, snapchat & instagram.
- 1.25 Continue to develop www.donegallibrary.ie & www.donegalcoco.ie/culture to improve access to information on all available services.
- 1.26 Provide and promote the extensive range of e-books, e-audio books, e-newspapers, e-magazines and e-reference materials that are available online through the library website.
- 1.27 Develop a rolling programme of investment in public services including updating computers and responding to new digital demands (e.g. Wireless printers).
- 1.28 Introduce free Wi-Fi in all public libraries and Cultural Services buildings.





We must talk about the arts, not as something separate from ourselves but as an integral part of our lives

Mary Robinson

2. Socially Engaged work (Social Inclusion) and Life-long learning (Education)

Cultural Services will continue its commitment to high quality collaborative, community focused actions and projects that have social change at the centre of the work. The essence of this is a commitment to Life Long Learning and Socially Engaged practice. These might include but are not limited to social inclusion, health, mental health and wellbeing, suicide prevention, creativity in older people and so on.

To achieve this we will:

- 2.1 Continue to deliver a high quality, collaborative, community focused Cultural Service that has a commitment to the philosophy of community development and social change at its core.
- 2.2 Deliver specific cultural programmes and arts activities in the context of health and wellbeing, disability, cultural diversity, and children & young people.
- 2.3 Develop specific cultural programmes for target groups including those who may be or feel socially excluded.
- 2.4 Enhance the contribution of culture to health, wellbeing and sense of belonging.
- 2.5 Deliver on the commitments outlined in the Age Friendly Strategy.
- 2.6 Promote opportunities to recognise and embrace the rich and diverse culture of new communities and support new communities in promoting and maintaining their culture.
- 2.7 Provide opportunities for the creation of socially engaged art through collaborative projects between artists, arts groups and community groups.
- 2.8 Foster and develop reading as a basic life skill.
- 2.9 Seek to develop a Babies Love Books early intervention Library initiative.
- 2.10 Improve literacy, numeracy and ICT Skills in adults and young people through service wide initiatives, programmed activities and guidance services.
- 2.11 Implement the Right to Read campaign.
- 2.12 Utilise libraries to promote opportunities for education and training programmes and lifelong learning, including online.
- 2.13 Promote the resources and services of the Cultural Services Division among education and training providers.
- 2.14 Continue to provide educational support materials, including a series of themed educational packs.



- 2.15 Develop a programme of relevant training for teachers in conjunction with the Donegal Education Centre.
- 2.16 Explore the development of an appropriate and relevant Museum based Transition Year course in conjunction with the Donegal Education Centre.
- 2.17 Provide learning and training programmes and supports to children and young people through expansion of the digital media programme for schools and to pilot a Moving Image Arts Programme in Donegal Secondary Schools.
- 2.18 Continue participation in the Junior Achievement Programme.
- 2.19 Maintain Europe Direct Information Centre services and apply to extend contract beyond 2017.
- 2.20 Encourage active EU citizenship amongst adults, young people and children through Europe Direct Information Centre
- 2.21 Offer training and work placement opportunities which provide work experience and/or pathways to employment.

The Work of artists inspires and reflects the rhythm of the everyday as well as the momentous events in public life. The arts shape and challenge us, give us pleasure, help us know who we are: their distinctive, creative power is an essential feature of our consciousness and conversation. At home and abroad, the arts are the hallmark of our creativity as a people.

'Making Great Art Work' Arts Council Strategy 2016-2025

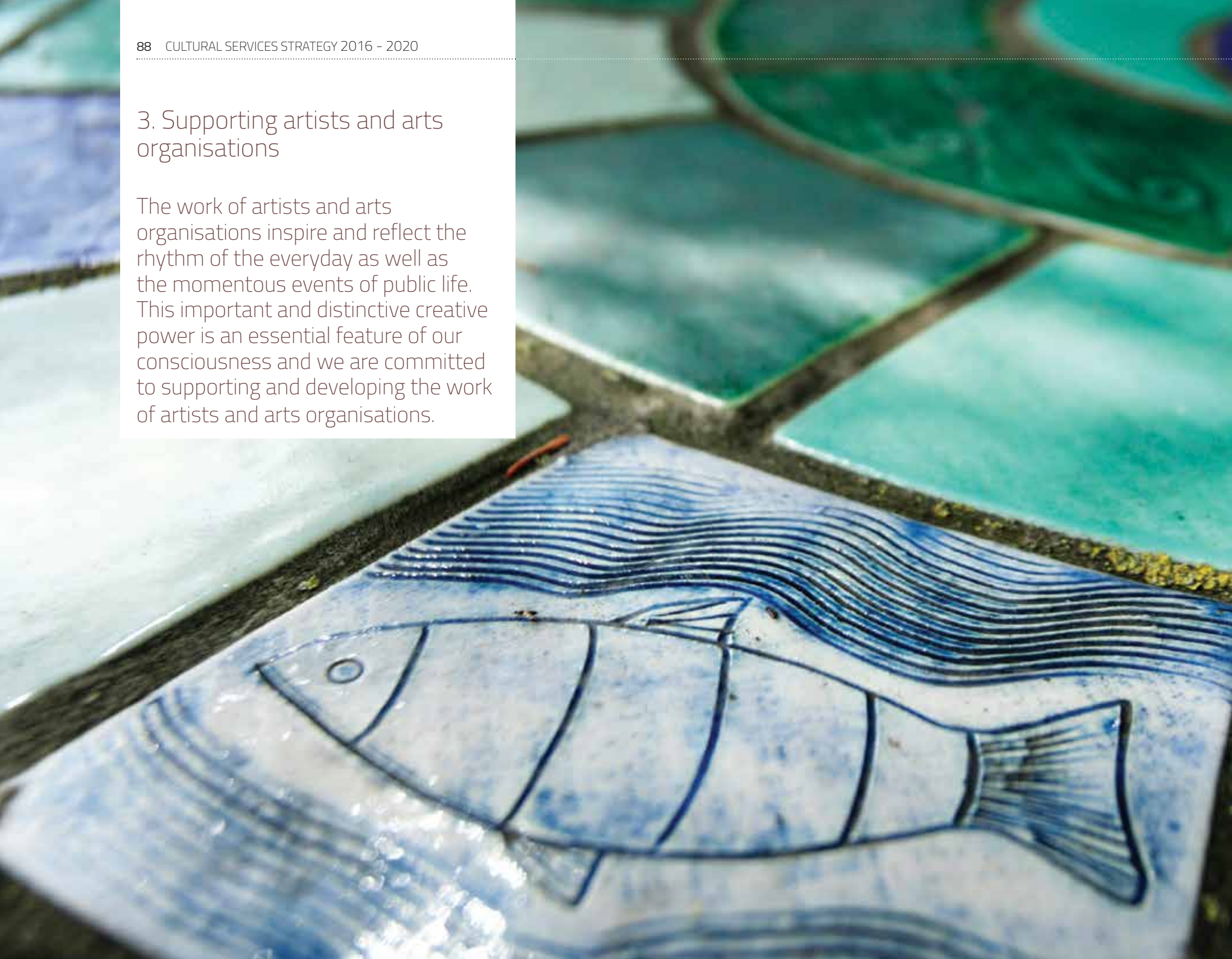
The large Roshine slate slabs on this outbuilding near Dunfanaghy are a reflection of the local quarried stone slate available and root this building in its local landscape. (Photo Credit Joseph Gallagher, DCC Heritage Officer)





3. Supporting artists and arts organisations

The work of artists and arts organisations inspire and reflect the rhythm of the everyday as well as the momentous events of public life. This important and distinctive creative power is an essential feature of our consciousness and we are committed to supporting and developing the work of artists and arts organisations.



To achieve this we will:

- 3.1 Continue to support individual artists in their career practice.
- 3.2 Continue to support arts organisations, professional and amateur, in their practice.
- 3.3 Provide capacity building supports to arts and cultural organisations and to practitioners to help them grow and develop.
- 3.4 Maximise the opportunities presented to artists and arts organisations by the development of the Donegal County Council Repository Database.
- 3.5 Support, facilitate and encourage the creation of international contacts and partnerships by Donegal artists, heritage professionals and cultural organisations.
- 3.6 Continue to support individual artists, arts and community groups through the County Council's annual Scheme of Arts Grants (Arts Act 2003).
- 3.7 Continue to provide direct revenue and programme funding support to Council owned and initiated cultural institutions and initiatives, including An Grianán Theatre, the Abbey Arts Centre, and Earagail Arts Festival.
- 3.8 Continue to support a network of independent, strategically important arts organisations in the county, through the annual Strategic Partnership Revenue Grant Programme.
- 3.9 Continue to support the development of both traditional and contemporary arts.
- 3.10 Continue to support the development of new art forms including those who use digital technology for creative expression.
- 3.11 Continue to support the development of the arts in Irish, English and the languages of Donegal's new communities.
- 3.12 Support and promote the integrated provision of Music Education services in County Donegal, specifically Donegal Music Education Partnership
- 3.13 Continue to expand national, cross border and international partnerships in culture.
- 3.14 Work in partnership with the Donegal Local Enterprise Office on the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan for Creative Entrepreneurship in Donegal.
- 3.15 Work with the Local Enterprise Office to explore the establishment of creative hubs for the creative sector. Examine all opportunities to provide space for artists and arts organisations to work and continue to develop their professional practice so that they can move towards creating long-lasting sustainable jobs and add value to the creative entrepreneurial sector as a whole.
- 3.16 Commission ambitious Public Art where the artist is celebrated as intrinsic to excellent work.
- 3.17 Develop a policy for Donegal County Council's Art Collection and establish a fund to add to the collection annually.
- 3.18 Provide a platform for local writers and performers to engage with local audiences, including encouraging audiences to develop their own creativity.

Our heritage
is a presence
which physically
expresses the
essence and
the heartbeat
of our collective
historical
identity

Heritage Manifesto, National
Heritage Council of Ireland

A Strategic Investment
Programme for People & Place
1995 – 2015



Marian roadside grotto on Tory Island
(Photo Credit Joseph Gallagher, DCC
Heritage Officer)

4. Conserve and promote Cultural Inheritance

We work to encourage awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of the County's heritage. We want to protect and enhance Ireland's heritage for present and future generations as we realise that when it's gone, it's a loss that cannot be replaced or repaired. Increasingly the economic potential of cultural heritage is being recognised. Cultural Services will continue its commitment to maintaining and enhancing the quality of our natural, built and cultural heritage which includes the Irish Language.

To achieve this we will:

- 4.1 Raise awareness of, and generate pride in, County Donegal's heritage
- 4.2 Explore, research, record and document the culture, heritage and creative resources of County Donegal.
- 4.3 Facilitate research on various aspects of County Donegal history and heritage.
- 4.4 Provide advice and assistance to museums, archival, local history and genealogy institutions, heritage centres, heritage groups and other organisations to support the appropriate preservation, conservation and promotion of our history and heritage.
- 4.5 Support best practice in the preservation, conservation and promotion of our history and heritage.
- 4.6 Work in partnership with the County Donegal Heritage Forum and The Heritage Council in implementing the County Donegal Heritage Plan
- 4.7 Work with relevant stakeholders to encourage the appropriate preservation of the archaeological heritage of Donegal.
- 4.8 Undertake and promote lectures, seminars, fieldtrips and case studies on County Donegal's heritage and history.
- 4.9 Continue to contribute to relevant publications (including books, newsletters and journals), radio, television and film productions, and on-line resources, relating to the history, heritage and culture of Donegal.
- 4.10 Maintain investment in, preserve and develop the Donegal Studies Collection, while promoting the value and uniqueness of the collection through exhibitions and events.
- 4.11 Continue to provide access to genealogy resources through the Library, Museum and Archives Services and further enhance the capacity and resources available.
- 4.12 Deliver Library, Museum, Heritage and Archives Services that preserve and promote the history and heritage of the Donegal Diaspora.




- 4.13 Support local communities and individuals in the collection, preservation and dissemination of folklore and oral history.
- 4.14 Encourage the preservation and promotion of traditional crafts and skills.
- 4.15 Develop projects that respond to the Donegal aspect of the Decade of Centenaries.
- 4.16 Work in partnership with other Directorates of Donegal County Council to preserve, conserve and maintain historic graveyards and archaeological monuments in the guardianship of Donegal County Council.
- 4.17 Explore opportunities to unlock the potential of our built heritage through the conservation, regeneration and reuse of historic buildings for cultural activities.
- 4.18 Encourage the appropriate use of heritage sites for festival programmes and pilot animated visitor experiences at selected heritage sites in County Donegal.
- 4.19 Explore and nurture methods to protect the unique culture, heritage, traditions, language and dialect of the Donegal Islands.
- 4.20 Prepare new Museum Strategic Management Plan and update and implement the Museum's Collection Care Strategy, Exhibition Policy, Collections Policy, Disposal Policy, Education Policy and Loan Policy.
- 4.21 Update and implement the Archive's policies, including the Acquisitions Policy, Records Management Policy, Preservation Policy and Education Policy.
- 4.22 Seek to preserve local studies material and archives through digitising their content.



- 4.23 Devise and implement a conservation priority plan for the Archives' most fragile collections.
- 4.24 Develop a commemorative plaques and monuments policy.
- 4.25 Continue to develop our capacity to borrow and display artefacts, archives and artworks.
- 4.26 Continue cataloguing the Archive and Museum collections with a view to delivering an online resource.
- 4.27 Explore mechanisms to respond to the growing public demand for more interactive exhibitions.
- 4.28 Deliver services in Irish in line with the Council's Irish Language Development Plan and other statutory requirements including the Official Languages Act 2003, The Gaeltacht Act 2012 and Government's 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030.
- 4.29 Seek opportunities to develop projects and programmes with the Donegal County Council Irish Language Development Office to maximise opportunities to fully implement the Irish Language County Development Plan.
- 4.30 Seek opportunities to develop projects and programmes with other stakeholders, including Údarás na Gaeltachta and Ealaín na Gaeltachta to maximise opportunities for the promotion and protection of the Irish Language in Donegal.
- 4.31 Work with other departments of the Council, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Foras na Gaeilge and the broader community, towards achieving statutory Gaeltacht Service Town status for Letterkenny.
- 4.32 Support nominated Gaeltacht communities in their development and delivery of Irish Language Plans for their respective Language Planning Areas, as outlined in the 20 year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010 – 2030.
- 4.33 Deliver a comprehensive annual Seachtain na Gaeilge programme.
- 4.34 Evaluate the current provision of resources in Irish in libraries and online and set an appropriate standard in consultation with the Irish Language Development Office.
- 4.35 Work in partnership with Ealaín na Gaeltachta to support the practice and enjoyment of the traditional and contemporary arts, through Irish, in the Gaeltacht areas.

This ruined traditional dwelling on Gola Island and its adjoining outbuilding (comprising a byre on the ground floor and a hay loft above) demonstrate the underlying bedrock of pink granite and the wonderful stonemasonry of local craftsmen. (Photo Credit Joseph Gallagher, DCC Heritage Officer)





'Partnerships can inspire great ideas – Working in partnership can reap huge rewards and deliver extensive and surprising results – the whole is greater than the sum of its partners!'

National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement UK

The Workers by Artist Maurice Harron, Dry Arch, Letterkenny
(www.donegalpublicart.ie)
(Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)

5. Building relationships with stakeholders and partners

We are committed to the development of partnerships for delivery of shared cultural goals and new funding opportunities at local, regional, cross border, national and international level.

To achieve this we will:

- 5.1 Collaborate on a cross border, national and international basis in order to identify and celebrate cultural linkages and to create and sustain new linkages.
- 5.2 Explore the development of a strategic cultural plan for the county.
- 5.3 Contribute to policies, strategies and other relevant plans as they relate to culture.
- 5.4 Contribute to national cultural developments through professional networks and associations.
- 5.5 Share in the delivery of relevant actions in other strategies (e.g. Connecting Donegal, Age Friendly Strategy).
- 5.6 Promote the grants programmes provided by all state bodies including The Arts Council, The Heritage Council and Department of Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts & the Gaeltacht.
- 5.7 Investigate opportunities which arise from the Peace IV Programme.



How We Remember Multi Disciplinary
PEACE 111 Funded Project



- 5.8 Promote co-operation and develop shared project work between Cultural Services and other Council Services.
- 5.9 Promote co-operation between Cultural Services and the neighbouring local authorities and providers of like services, including Libraries NI, Derry City & Strabane District Council, and Fermanagh & Omagh District Council.
- 5.10 Work in collaboration with the County Donegal Heritage Forum, the Donegal Heritage Network and the heritage sector to preserve, conserve and promote County Donegal's heritage and history.
- 5.11 Collaborate with partners to strengthen and support literacy development in children, young people and adults.
- 5.12 Work with partners to provide information on community, youth, enterprise, employment, environment, health and well-being through the library service.
- 5.13 Strengthen existing local partnerships and initiate new partnerships in order to maximise opportunities arising as a result of the PPN and LCDC structures.
- 5.14 Continue to develop the newly established European Folk Music Network.
- 5.15 Continue to put forward *best practice* projects for local, national and international awards.
- 5.16 Explore the potential for the establishment and maintenance of a network of professional arts organisations in the county
- 5.17 Develop new sponsorship relationships that are built on the philosophy of Corporate Social Responsibility.
- 5.18 Work independently and with the Local Enterprise Office to increase capacity in the existing library network to improve services to both those seeking employment and those starting and expanding their business.
- 5.19 Continue to support the work of Donegal Film Office to promote and support an active film industry in Donegal.
- 5.20 Partner with Galway 2020/Galway local authorities in their bid for European Capital of Culture for 2020 and work with them, if successful, to develop and deliver elements of the programme in Donegal, in 2020.
- 5.21 Work to deliver *A Framework for Collaboration* : An agreement between the Arts Council and the City and County Management Association, 2016-2025, including :
 - 5.22 *The Invitation to Collaborate* local authority arts development programme
 - 5.23 A formal agreement between the Arts Council and Donegal County Council, regarding investment in the arts, over a period TBC.
 - 5.24 Work with the Donegal Diaspora Office
 - 5.24.1 To reach out to identify the potential for cultural and /or creative partnerships or collaborations.
 - 5.24.2 Promote the history and heritage of the diaspora on www.donegaldiaspora.ie .
 - 5.24.3 Encourage local-led cultural initiatives in reaching out to Donegal's global family.
 - 5.24.4 Develop a world class Donegal Diaspora Centre (see Capital Development Section).

5.25 Maximise the Cultural Tourism potential of Cultural Services

- 5.25.1 Seek effective and efficient ways to work more closely with the Council's Tourism Product Development Team.
- 5.25.2 Work with IS Section to develop a high quality repository of open information and photographs to promote the county.
- 5.25.3 Promote heritage and genealogy as a tourism product.
- 5.25.4 Work with IS Section to maximise the opportunities presented by the Donegal Portal.
- 5.25.5 Support the development of the 'Go Visit Donegal' website as it relates to culture.
- 5.25.6 Develop a county wide mechanism for information sharing on 'what's-on', with particular emphasis on the extensive Donegal Cultural Festival calendar (See Appendices).
- 5.25.7 Contribute to the annual Dublin & Belfast Tourism Trade Fairs and the Milwaukee Show Case 2017.
- 5.25.8 Maximise opportunities for Donegal County Museum and The Regional Cultural Centre to be part of a 'Cultural Quarter' for Letterkenny.
- 5.25.9 Develop an annual cultural tourism project through the Regional Cultural Centre that focuses on the Wild Atlantic Way.
- 5.25.10 Identify and promote historic landmarks, historical figures and culture along the Wild Atlantic Way.
- 5.25.11 Enrich the experience of the Wild Atlantic Way by supporting and promoting host communities' cultural expression, in the traditional and the contemporary arts, both in English and in Irish.



Manus Lunny Artist in Residence
(www.donegalpublicart.ie)
(Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)



Excellence is the result of caring more than others think is wise, risking more than others think is safe, dreaming more than others think is practical, and expecting more than others think is possible.

Ronnie Oldham

6. Sustainable, High Quality Cultural Service

We want Donegal's reputation as a leader in culture and cultural services at local authority level to be strengthened by our commitment to its development. Donegal County Council believes that to invest in arts, culture, heritage and language is a commitment to a healthier, more fulfilled, prosperous, successful county.

To achieve this we will:

- 6.1 Advocate for the enhancement of integrated cultural services at local and national government levels to increase the capacity of these cultural services to engage with, and deliver services to, the local community.
- 6.2 Increase Donegal County Council's per capita investment in Cultural Services.
- 6.3 Provide a high standard of customer care and encourage customer feedback.
- 6.4 Develop systems to monitor and respond to changing public needs and demands.



Altan Music Residency (www.donegalpublicart.ie) (Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)



- 6.5 Undertake a mid-term review of Cultúr in Spring 2018, including a review of public submissions made to the plan.
- 6.6 Arrange for training in multi-culturalism, age awareness, disability and related areas.
- 6.7 Develop a Workforce Plan appropriate to Cultural Services.
- 6.8 Explore the appointment of culture and heritage specialist staff to address the cultural services' needs of Donegal County Council.
- 6.9 Ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff.
- 6.10 Continue to prepare staff development plans through PMDS to maximise continual learning and development.
- 6.11 Provide training to Cultural Services staff on the new digital technologies and social media.
- 6.12 In association with the Training Section and specialised organisations, organise training, seminars and workshops so that we are at the cutting edge of innovation and promote best practice.
- 6.13 Continue to provide information and advice to elected members and staff of Donegal County Council relating to culture and cultural development.
- 6.14 Improve Donegal's position in the NOAC Performance Indicators.
- 6.15 Set out a plan to achieve the national Public Library Standards and Benchmarks within the 3 year transition period, including attaining the national target of €3.77 per capita investment in library stock.
- 6.16 Update the Library Collection Development Policy.
- 6.17 Maintain accreditation in the Heritage Council's Museum Standards Scheme.
- 6.18 Work with external bodies to update existing archives standards and to develop new standards in line with current and best practice.
- 6.19 Work with Council Services to devise and implement records and files management policies and programmes for the present and future records of Donegal County Council, including electronic records.
- 6.20 Manage financial resources effectively to achieve strategic objectives.
- 6.21 Support the implementation of the County Donegal Digital Action Plan.
- 6.22 Draw up a Cultural Services Digitisation Plan.
- 6.23 Maximise the opportunities that arise for Cultural Services through the development of digital technology.
- 6.24 Maximise the opportunities that arise for Cultural Services and for the public through the development of strategically located Local Digital Hubs.
- 6.25 Continue to enhance access to broadband connectivity through the availability and development of digital media services in the existing library network to contribute to economic and community activity.
- 6.26 Work towards a digital library and the expansion of online cultural heritage, developing local digital collections and optimising accessibility.

Section 5: Capital Programme / Infrastructure Plan

Public Library Capital Programme

County Donegal has an ambitious public library development programme and has developed high quality services in many of the county's population centres. However, being a large county with a dispersed population, there remain large areas of the county that are currently inadequately served. Public libraries are funded under the Library Capital Investment Programme 2016 – 2021, one of the key pillars of Opportunities for All: A Strategy for Public Libraries. Open Libraries (whereby library members can access the library for extended periods outside staffed opening hours) is a condition for funding and Donegal Town will pioneer this new system in County Donegal. A core population of 3,000 is also a requirement under the national programme.

The library network in Donegal is supplemented by a network of Taobh Tíre community partnership access points.

The priority listing for the county, as adopted in Cultural Connections, includes for libraries in Donegal Town Library, Cultural Services Headquarters, and Ballybofey/Stranorlar Library, amongst others.



Amy and Aine Britton reading together at Central Library, Letterkenny (Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)

It is proposed to prioritise the new library development programme as follows:

Donegal Town Library (confirmed to Department in June 2015 as the top priority)

Cultural Services Offices

Ballybofey/Stranorlar Community Library

Killybegs Community Library

Glenties Community Library

Raphoe Community Library

* A new delivery van will also be required.

1. Donegal Town Public Library

This project ranks at the top of the library development priority list as identified in Donegal County Council's strategic plan for the Cultural Services Division *Cultural Connections 2009 – 2014*. It was confirmed to the Department in June 2015 that Donegal Town remains the top priority on the Library Capital Building Programme.

The Donegal Town Library will create a visible library for the community with improved access and an enhanced customer experience. It will be an important civic space and will make a valuable contribution to the cultural fabric of the town and its environs. People will be able to combine going to the library with shopping, work and school. The community will enjoy an open plan library with access to a dedicated local





Students from Loretto School,
Letterkenny at Central Library, Letterkenny
(Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckain)

history/genealogy area, a multi purpose ICT/training space, community meeting areas, study/learning areas and spaces for children and for teenagers. Public parking space will be available adjacent to the library.

The Donegal Town Library will maximise the use of emerging technologies and prime consideration will be given to smart services including self service, quick selection and return, mobile and moveable ICT, WiFi, self check out/check in and RFID (Radio frequency identification). Computer learning will be promoted and internet access will be available throughout the building.

The Donegal Town Library will promote pride, confidence and identity in local history, culture and heritage. It will exploit new and emerging digital technologies to optimise accessibility. The Library will provide easy access to reliable and authoritative information on Donegal Culture and Heritage. Users of the Library will be local people from Donegal Town and its hinterland, as well as tourists and visiting/returning Donegal diaspora. Donegal Town is a 'Historic Town' designated for general archaeological heritage

protection under the National Monuments Acts (1930-2004) and with the Castle, Abbey and other historical and heritage sites, as well as high quality and large-scale accommodation for visitors, has a year-round visiting population that are potential Library users.

Donegal Town has a population of 2,607 (2011 census). The catchment includes the immediate hinterland of the town and since the closure of the library in Killybegs extends to the whole of south west Donegal, beyond Killybegs to Glencolumbkille. The total population of this area is 18,290. Donegal Town is the nearest library for each of these inhabitants.

It is 53km from Glencolumbkille to Donegal Town, with no public library in between. In the other direction, it is 79km from Glencolumbkille to Dungloe where the next library northwards is located. A large number of school age children will use the library, with 3 primary schools in the town itself and a further 11 primary schools in the immediate hinterland. The Abbey Vocational School is also located in the town.



Grainne Haines choosing a book at Central Library, Letterkenny (Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)





Donegal Town is currently served by a part-time branch, open 11 hours per week. The current library is 84m².

Action: Develop plans and prepare application so that readiness to proceed is confirmed in advance of funding becoming available

Action: Identify potential site and develop plans for Ballybofey/Stranorlar Community Library

Action: Identify site and develop plans for the Cultural Services Offices.

Action: Identify potential site and develop plans for Killybegs Community Library Community Library

Action: Identify potential site and develop plans for Glenties Community Library

Action: Identify potential site and develop plans for Raphoe Community Library

Action: Assess all Cultural Services vehicles in terms of condition, review the need and use of these vehicles, prepare proposal for meeting future needs.

Action: Refurbish the ground floor of the Central Library to accommodate RFID and to improve layout and accessibility.

Action: Transfer Ballybofey/Stranorlar Library to new location in line with the provision of Library and other Council services in the local area.

Action: Consider if there are options to extend Bundoran Library.

2. Donegal Diaspora Centre

The vision is to create a world class Donegal Diaspora Centre where entertainment, technology and culture combine in celebration and commemoration of the achievements and experiences of the Donegal Diaspora.

The dispersal of the Irish throughout the world and their contribution to the economies and cultures of the places where they settled is one of the defining elements of our nation's past and present. The Irish Diaspora is estimated to be in excess of 70 million people and is the largest in the world. We want to acknowledge and celebrate those from Donegal, both lay and missionary, who have made a significant impact in education, sport, business, medicine, nursing, construction, invention and community development throughout the world.

When visitors come to Donegal or when our Donegal Diaspora seek to unearth their history, there is not one physical place of connection with their Donegal of the past, present and future. Donegal County Council Cultural Services seek to create a focal point through which we can harness the benefits of this largely untapped resource.

In the context of developing a Donegal Diaspora Centre, Donegal County Council will explore all options and synergies and will include Donegal County Museum, Donegal County Council Cultural Services Centre, Archives Service, The Arts Service, The County Heritage Office and The Irish Language Development Officer in this exploration.

The Donegal Diaspora Centre will be a brand new approach to presenting Donegal to visitors and locals alike. It will promote pride, confidence and identity in local history, culture and heritage. It will exploit new and emerging digital technologies to optimise accessibility while preserving resources for future

generations. The Centre will provide easy access to reliable and authoritative information on all aspects of Donegal culture and heritage. This will be a new family orientated, flagship tourism project.

The Centre will provide an interactive and enhanced user experience in a high quality cultural space by providing access to combined resources under one roof rather than from numerous disparate locations as at present. This will be a world class visitor and research facility, unique nationally and internationally, and will make a significant contribution to the tourism offer along The Wild Atlantic Way.

The Donegal Centre will be a focal point for tourists and visitors, for researchers, and for the local community. It will also be a beacon for the Donegal Diaspora across the globe.

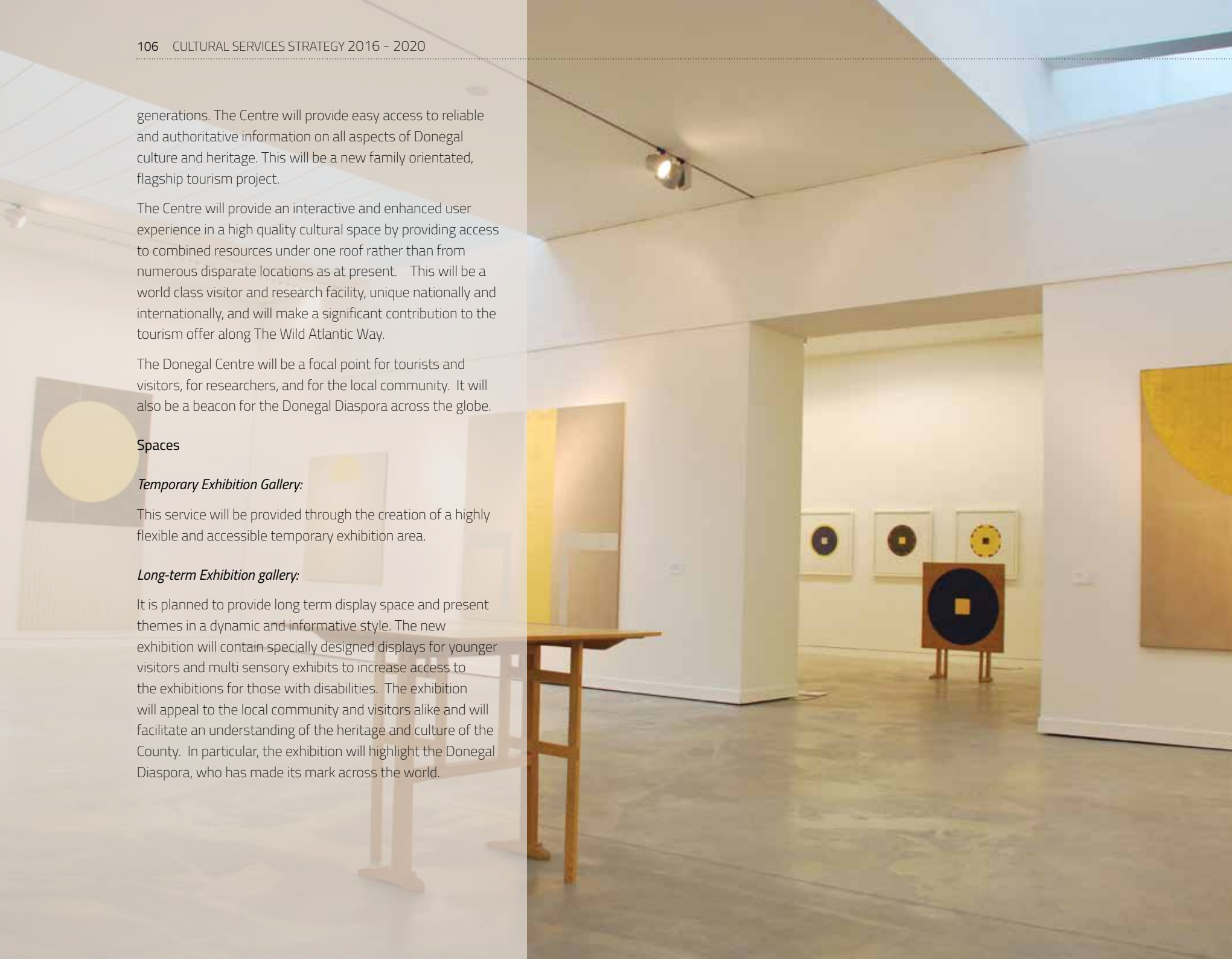
Spaces

Temporary Exhibition Gallery:

This service will be provided through the creation of a highly flexible and accessible temporary exhibition area.

Long-term Exhibition gallery:

It is planned to provide long term display space and present themes in a dynamic and informative style. The new exhibition will contain specially designed displays for younger visitors and multi sensory exhibits to increase access to the exhibitions for those with disabilities. The exhibition will appeal to the local community and visitors alike and will facilitate an understanding of the heritage and culture of the County. In particular, the exhibition will highlight the Donegal Diaspora, who has made its mark across the world.



Multi-functional space/s

Such spaces would enable public performances and events, Research space for students, Meeting areas, Activity space for digitization or community partnership projects, and Consultation space for providing advice on family history, research etc.

Management, Administrative and Conservation

This development has huge scope to bring together the management of the Cultural Services Division which would demonstrate the Council's commitment to culture as a major asset to the county and the region, within a very high profile capital project. Hence it is proposed to locate the management team for Cultural Services within this development. 'Behind the scenes' facilities are critical to the provision of a high standard. The building could locate the curatorial, administration, and conservation areas in a rational and co-ordinated manner to provide environmentally controlled and secure storage spaces, Conservation facilities for collections, a hydraulic lift, administrative space, staff and public facilities.

A unique collection of public resources

The following resources would be brought together for the first time: Museum collection of over 8,000 artefacts; Archaeological Survey of County Donegal; North West Film Archive and Islands Archive; Oral history recordings; Donegal Studies Collection of over 7,000 books, journals and other material on the history, geography, antiquities, archaeology, folklore, heritage and culture of County Donegal; Archives most utilised by members of the public including academics, local and family historians, including digitised and microfilmed collections. Original archival material could be made available by appointment.

Action: Develop vision document for the proposal.

Action: Explore options for suitable sites including co-locating with the proposed Archives Centre in Lifford or with the County Museum in Letterkenny.

Action: Develop full plans and source funding.

3. County Museum Redevelopment

The County Museum was developed over 20 years ago and in order to demonstrate Donegal's history to best effect, the building should be renovated and updated. Exhibition areas and public spaces, including education areas, need to be made more attractive and interactive.

Storage of artefacts and conservation areas are currently off-site which should be re-examined in terms of efficiencies and the effective management of the Museum Service.

The site at the High Road offers huge potential and is of sufficient size to accommodate a substantial extension to the rear of the Museum building.

There is also space to enable car and bus parking, and delivery area, which is a major restriction at present and limits the scope for school and other large-scale visits as well as for programming.

Adjacent to the Museum, part of Letterkenny's Workhouse, is a famine garden which could be sensitively incorporated into a single complex and public resource. The proposed development could re-establish the former entrance to the historic workhouse building as the main visitor entrance.

Action: Consider how to present Donegal's history in a modern, attractive and interactive manner at the County Museum.

Action: Consider the full footprint available and develop plans accordingly, particularly in terms of parking, storage of artefacts, and conservation facilities

4. Archives Centre

Under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 2001 it is a function of each local authority 'to make arrangements for the proper management, custody, care and conservation of local records and local archives'. It is the policy of Donegal County Council to acquire, preserve, make accessible and to encourage research and interest in the written/recorded/archival heritage of the county.

Archives are the raw material of history. Donegal is fortunate in having one of the greatest collections of local archives in the country. Donegal County Council's Archives Service has developed exponentially since its inception in 1999. At least 1,200 linear metres of archival material, drawn from both public and private sources, is deposited in the Archives and available for research (15,000 collections and items catalogued). Many more unlisted collections are held in various unsuitable storage conditions throughout the county, some for many years, and there are hundreds of linear metres of more collections still to be acquired, listed, preserved and made accessible. In order to do this and to meet statutory duty imposed on local authorities to make provision for an archives service it has been planned for many years to bring together all archives within the Council's jurisdiction in one central location. However this has not happened to date (2016).

The permanent County Donegal Archives Centre needs to be a purpose-designed facility with room for expansion. It will be both a repository as well as a facility for the public. It will require storage space both for material that is already archival, and for the archives of County Donegal of the future, privately acquired as well as public accessions. For a permanent archival repository holding a unique collection, issues of temperature, relative humidity, security and protection against fire, flood and theft are of the utmost importance when designing the building. Spaces needed include: a document reception area and a room for storage of contaminated documents; a room for processing and conservation of archival materials; the archivist's office; an open plan office with access to research room/archive reference library; meeting room/workshop space; a reception & exhibition room; staff facilities; a storage facility for electronic archives and a repository or repositories: the latter being the most important area in an archives building. (See PD 5454:2012 Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials; Standards for the Development of Archives Services in Ireland, Society of Archivists).

Action: Review current arrangements in terms of storage standards and VFM.

Action: Develop plans for permanent Archives Centre in Lifford.

5. ArtScape Donegal Sculpture Park

Ireland and its culture have had a significant influence on culture world-wide, particularly in the fields of the arts. Ireland is also noted for its landscape, its remoteness, its seascape and its lighting. Ireland has a long tradition of art





in nature, especially as far as sculpture and installation are concerned and dates back to the early dolmens and stone circles of prehistoric times and Ireland is increasingly noted for its success and strength in the area of contemporary arts practice.

Building on our reputation for culture, landscape, sculpture and contemporary arts, Donegal County Councils Public Art Programme now seeks to establish an ambitious Flagship Sculpture Park, unique in Ireland, using the working title of ArtScape Donegal. This will be an outdoor gallery showcasing the best of modern and contemporary Irish sculpture set in Donegal's most dramatic landscape. This will be a unique and extraordinary place that sets out to challenge, inspire, inform and delight the local, national and international visitor and will add significantly to what Donegal has already to offer the Cultural Tourist.

The ambition is to place up to 30 large-scale sculptures by Ireland's best sculptural artists in the landscape of Ards Forest Park, as a major Cultural Tourism Attraction.

As well as being one of the most beautiful, Ards Forest Park is certainly one of the most varied of Ireland's forest parks. Bays, rivers, loughs, beaches, salt marshes, valleys, viewing points, deer enclosures and historic monuments are woven together by a series of fascinating nature trails. Largely canopied by splendid deciduous and coniferous trees which clothe the 481 ha former estate of the Stewart family, the park is capable of providing days, rather than hours, of enjoyment. Its appeal currently embraces the stroller, ornithologist, geologist, botanist, historian, children, and lovers of beauty in all its forms. The Forest Park, owned and managed by Coillte already has a large car park, toilets, a seasonal coffee shop, a children's playground and a magnificent and comprehensive series of mapped walks and trails.

Jeffreys House at Ards Forest Park
(Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)



Bound volumes from the County Archives Collection stored on archival standard steel shelving, Archives Centre, Lifford

We are keen to build on the resource already there and provide an additional Flagship Cultural Tourism in Donegal. We want to encourage the local, national and international visitor to stay an extra day in Donegal. This product will be unique in Ireland. As an outdoor gallery, it is proposed to change this major exhibition every 3-5 years. At the start of each new exhibition cycle it is also proposed to have a Public Sculpture Symposium to create site specific sculptures, installations and land artwork that will use the natural and raw materials found in the Park. Donegal County Council are also keen to run an ambitious on-line Education Programme/Resource as part of ArtScape Donegal that will help mediate the artwork to young and old alike.

Action: Develop the current proposal with partner organisations to ensure readiness to proceed.

There will be a full time records management service, managed by staff who are assigned to the centre. The centre will ensure regulated and regular cataloguing, boxing and storage of non-current records. It will include regular transfers, retrievals and returns of records, as well as fully prepared and planned disposal or transfer to Archives of its records. The records centre will include a large repository/ repositories, offices, staff quarters and space for accessioning and disposal of records, and a room for electronic records.

Action: Review current arrangements in terms of storage standards and VFM.

Action: Develop plans for permanent Records Centre in Lifford.

6. Records Centre

Under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 2001 it is a function of each local authority 'to make arrangements for the proper management, custody, care and conservation of local records and local archives.' Many other laws and regulations govern the practice of managing public records, including Freedom of Information, Data Protection, Planning Act 2000, laws governing procurement, and EU legislation on EU funded projects.

It is Donegal County Council policy is to manage, store in suitable conditions, make accessible where necessary, and ultimately either safely dispose or archive the non-current records it creates itself.

A permanent, suitable, secure, purpose-designed and furnished centre for Donegal County Council's non-current records is needed, one that is based on best archival practice.

Cultural Services Portfolio

Central Library, Letterkenny

Buncrana Community Library

Carndonagh Community Library

Moville Library (leased)

Leabharlann Phobail Ghaoth Dobhair including visual arts space

Leabharlann Phobail Na Rosann (leased)

Donegal Town Library (leased)

Ballyshannon Library (leased)

Bundoran Community Library

Ballybofey/Stranorlar Library (leased)

Raphoe Library (leased)

Lifford Library (leased)

Milford Community Library

Cultural Services Administrative Centre (leased)

Library Storage and Warehouse (leased)

Regional Cultural Centre

Dámhlann an Ghleanna

Donegal County Museum

Museum Storage and Workshop (leased)

Archives Centre (leased)

Archives Storage (leased)

Percent for Art Scheme public artworks

Action: Maintain all buildings to a high standard at all times. To this end, seek a corporate approach to ensure quality, consistency and Value for Money.

Action: Develop a rolling programme of refurbishment/upgrading to ensure attractive and safe public spaces and work spaces.

Action: Prepare plan to ensure all public buildings meet the required standards in terms of accessibility.

Action: Complete and implement Health & Safety plans for all Cultural Services buildings.

Action: Seek to provide adequate parking at the County Museum.

Action: Review all rented accommodation in terms of Value for Money.

Action: Enter into lease agreements where long-term arrangements are required.

Action: Work with the DCC Energy Team to achieve 5% reduction in energy & heating under the ISO 50001 Energy Management Initiative.

Action: Examine options for night time lighting to key Cultural Services buildings.

Action: Mark significant events in the lifetime of key Cultural Services buildings such as the upcoming RCC's 10th anniversary and the County Museum's 30th anniversary.

Action: Participate in the Greening of Donegal initiative on a phased basis, commencing March 2017.

Action: Contribute to the creation and maintenance of a National Venues Audit (Arts) and co-operate with the LGMA on the audit of libraries.

Action: Develop a maintenance plan for Donegal's Public Artworks.



Sliabh Liag Cliffs, Donegal



Cultural buildings owned by Donegal County Council and managed by independent companies:

- An Grianán Theatre, Letterkenny
- The Abbey Arts Centre, Ballyshannon
- Art Gallery in Leabharlann Phobail Ghaoth Dobhair complex

Action: Maintain support to each facility to enable it to develop its potential and to function effectively.

Other

Fort Dunree Military Museum – There is a Caretakers Agreement between the Minister of Finance and Donegal County Council for a portion of the land and property and the Council owns a further portion of land at Fort Dunree. The site is operated and managed by Fort Dunree Military Museum Co. Ltd.

Flight of the Earls Heritage Centre - The building in which the Flight of the Earls Visitor's Centre is based is owned by the Council.

Lifford Old Courthouse and Visitor Centre - The building in which the visitor centre is based is owned by the Council.

The Workhouse at Dunfanaghy – The buildings in which the visitor centre is based are owned by Donegal County Council and leased to Donegal Famine Heritage Centre (Dunfanaghy) Limited.

Action: Confirm the legal position in each case to establish the Council's role.

Other emerging Donegal cultural projects:

- Ballyshannon Workhouse
- Amharclann Ghaoth Dobhair
- The Laurels, Glenties (maternal ancestral home of Brian Friel)

Action: Support the lead agency or promoter in each project as it develops.

Section 6: Case Studies



Image from early 19th century Donegal Grand Jury map, from the County Archives Collection, Archives Centre, Lifford, Credit: Paul Mc Guckian

These Case Studies illustrate the range of our projects and give a flavour of our innovative approach.

Donegal County Museum: Reaching Out to Communities

Donegal Library: Europe Direct Information Centre (EDIC) Donegal & Gaeltacht

Arts Service: Investing in the Creation of New Artistic Work in Donegal

Archives Service: Across the Atlantic - Emigrating from Moville and Derry

Regional Cultural Centre: Lived Lost Lives

County Donegal Heritage Office: Our Vernacular Architecture Inheritance

Public Art Office: The Happy Prince



Little John Nee and Donegal Youth Orchestra in *The Happy Prince*
(www.donegalpublicart.ie)
(Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)

Donegal County Museum - Reaching Out to Communities

Between 2009 and 2014 the Museum developed two unique and innovative outreach projects. These projects sought to address the challenges of geography and financial constraints that faced communities throughout Donegal over these years.

Donegal is a large county, with some naturally forming divisions that divide the county geographically into west, north and south. The Museum is based in Letterkenny, geographically distant from some parts of the county and it can therefore be perceived as being too far away for regular visits. This is particularly true for schools, of which there are over 200 spread throughout the county. With the increasing financial constraints placed on schools, hiring a bus to bring students to the Museum in Letterkenny was often considered only a once-a-year experience organised during the school tour season.

The Museum also needed to counteract the perception that the Museum was the “Letterkenny” Museum, not the Donegal County Museum, due to its position in the largest town in the County. For many communities travel to Letterkenny was infrequent and people rarely included a visit to the Museum in their itinerary.

To address these challenges the Museum developed two outreach projects, designed to deliver the Museum’s services beyond the walls of the Museum in Letterkenny and out into the communities of Donegal. These projects are the Archaeology Loan Box for Schools and the Museum’s Touring Exhibitions.



Oatfield Sweet Factory Multi Disciplinary Project, Donegal County Museum, Letterkenny
(Photo Credit Caroline Carr)



Archaeology Loan Box for Schools

The Archaeology Loan Box was launched in 2012 and is one of the central features of the Museum's education programme. This project was developed due to the geographical nature of Donegal with its widespread population and the financial constraints on schools which had impacted on their ability to visit the Museum. In consultation with the Donegal Education Centre and teachers, the Museum designed the Archaeology loan box which takes a fresh approach to interacting with schools. The loan box contains artefacts, both real and replica, dating from the Stone Age to the Viking period. Children are able to handle the artefacts and learn about the archaeology of County Donegal. The loan box is facilitated by staff from the Museum who encourage children to actively engage with the heritage of Donegal. The children have the opportunity to investigate history and archaeology through hands-on experience with original artefacts. The boxes are specifically designed to tie in with the curriculum.

The contents of the boxes were determined from a combination of an analysis of the primary school curriculum and the availability of relevant objects within the Museum's collections. The breadth of the primary school curriculum, with its emphasis on multi-disciplinary and cross curricular learning, gave the Museum an opportunity to develop the boxes in a way that overlaps with many school subjects, not just history.

The project was developed over a number of years and evaluation is ongoing both with the schools and through the Donegal Education Centre. During the initial research and consultation phase the Museum consulted with local primary school teachers and the Donegal Education Centre. The programme was discussed with other museums, international good practice was investigated, and ideas on

approaches and education resource materials were gathered from a wide variety of sources.

The project is facilitated by the Donegal Education Centre who arranges the school visits in consultation with the Museum. In those instances where smaller schools are involved, a number of schools can be brought together in one venue. Since 2012 Museum staff have visited over 3,500 pupils in schools throughout the county from Ar dara to Fanad, Inishowen to Bundoran, Glenties to Letterkenny.

The Archaeology Loan box was part-funded by the Heritage Council.

Touring Exhibitions

Since 2009 Donegal County Museum has developed a series of travelling exhibitions, which are available for loan to organisations and venues throughout Donegal and nationally.

For many communities in Donegal travel to Letterkenny is infrequent and rarely includes a visit to the Museum. There are also a number of local museums and other venues throughout the county which act as resources for their communities. The Museum realised that these venues could act as outreach centres for Museum exhibitions. There are also a number of annual festivals and events organised by communities throughout the county. The Museum's touring exhibitions also act as a resource for these programmes. In organising exhibitions within the Museum, staff considered each exhibition's touring potential and ensured that exhibitions on themes with broad appeal were designed in such a way that they could travel easily to suitable venues. The exhibitions consist of either pop-up display stands, free-

standing or hanging display boards on a variety of themes including the Flight of the Earls; the Plantation of Ulster; the Emergency/World War II in Donegal; World War I; the Ulster Covenant 1912; Connection and Division 1910-1931 and Donegal Sporting Heroes.

Since 2010 the Museum exhibitions have toured to venues and events throughout Donegal including Arranmore Island, Oakfield Park, Raphoe, the McGill Summer School, Glenties, Bundoran Library, the Drimarone Schools' Gathering, the Tip O'Neill Diaspora Award, Buncrana, the East Meets West Conference, Ballybofey, the Diaspora Conference in the LYIT, Letterkenny, the Courtyard Shopping Centre, Letterkenny, An tSean Bhearraic, Falcarragh, the Sliabh Sneacht Centre, Buncrana, Fort Dunree Military Museum, Inishowen, An Chúirt Hotel, Gweedore, Corgreggan Mill, Dunfanaghy, The Emergency in Ireland conference, NUI Galway; Annagry Community Hall, the Balor Theatre, Ballybofey and Letterkenny Public Services Centre.

Library Service - Europe Direct Information Centre (EDIC) Donegal & Gaeltacht

EDIC Donegal & Gaeltacht is based in Central Library Letterkenny with a satellite base for service through the Irish language provided by Leabharlann Phobail Ghaoth Dobhair to all Gaeltacht areas in the country.

The objectives of EDIC are to provide access to information about the EU while stimulating discussion, debate and feedback. We are an outreach point for all EU institutions while supporting the work of the European Commission Representation in Ireland.



Donegal County Museum's historic walks during the Letterkenny 400 celebrations

In addition to the provision of information we also host a programme of events. These events are aimed at the general public and at particular audiences (e.g. the media, local politicians, business, community groups, students and children).

The theme of Active Citizenship is an integral element of the current EDIC work plan as it underpins all other themes & priorities. We aim especially to work on the promotion of Active Citizenship to our young, future voters with the activities of the Donegal Youth Council as an example.

We offer a European Public Space at both Central & Gaoth Dobhair libraries. This consists of publications, computer, printer & scanner access and a free direct line to the Europe Direct Helpdesk in Brussels.

We also provide a meeting room which is used as necessary for the purposes of the centre, e.g. current use in EDIC Letterkenny includes monthly CAVA (Chartered Accountants Voluntary Advice) sessions to small and medium sized businesses.

In 2015 EDIC became a EURODESK Relay working with colleagues at Eurodesk to bring information to young people in Donegal & Gaeltacht areas nationally. As a support organisation to the Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020), Eurodesk is a comprehensive and accessible source of free youth information about international learning and mobility opportunities.

EDIC events focused on the EU Year for Development, Active Citizenship, CAP & CFP reform implementation, business and economic recovery and informing the population and local media about the rights of EU citizens.

Events are also targeted at supporting and addressing the aims and objectives of Europe 2020 in the areas of employment, education, climate change, research &

development and social inclusion, bringing the policy and strategy directly to the community in practical and accessible ways that have direct meaning and application for them.

We also highlight the concept of being united in diversity and stimulating dialogue to increase awareness of the benefits of being European. We facilitate EU policy of making information readily accessible to EU citizens and give them a forum for expressing their views.

In 2015 the centre had 9000 visitors. We answered 1300 queries and 139 events took place throughout the county with over 5,000 attending.

The EDIC manager writes monthly EU News articles for the Donegal News, highlighting current EU developments.

Queries cover various EU topics such as retirement, mobility, rights, funding and training. We liaise with our colleagues in various EU services such as: EURES (Jobs), EURODESK (Youth), ERASMUS (Education), EU Consumer Centre, Your Europe Legal Advice Service, SOLVIT etc.

Our annual programme of events reflects current EU priorities.

In 2015, in anticipation of the Paris climate conference in December, we hosted a Climate Change workshop.

To mark Human Rights Day on 10 December, a Human Rights workshop highlighted the current migrant crisis throughout Europe.

We hosted a very successful workshop on The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) currently being negotiated between the EU and the US. This gave speakers both for and against TTIP the chance to state their views and respond to public concerns. Speakers included a government minister, 2 MEPs and an IMPACT official.

We also host many events for children and in 2015 the priority was promotion of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) subjects. EU research shows evidence of skills shortages in STEM fields with a lack of female graduates. To address this priority, we hosted workshops in libraries plus science themed Summer Reading Programmes.

EDIC also organised a presentation to senior students by Professor Fiona Doohan from University College Dublin, whose research under EU Horizon 2020 programme is designed to improve control of crop diseases.

In our capacity as a EURODESK Relay, we staged a series of quizzes and talks for senior students, teachers and parents throughout Donegal. This series of events provided valuable information to 18-30 year olds on EU funding opportunities and EVS hosting, which facilitates working in other European countries and beyond.

The topic for our annual Soapbox debate in September was Charity Begins at Home. Every year this debate highlights an EU theme or priority and this motion highlighted the current migrant crisis in the Mediterranean. These debates encourage active citizenship and give people of all ages a platform. The two winners receive an IPAD each and go on to the national final in Dublin where they compete for €1000 and a trip to Brussels for two.

These are only samples of EDIC's extensive programme of events.

Our 2016 work programme revolves around President Juncker's State of the Union Address and his 10 point plan, which includes Citizens' Dialogue & Participation, Migrants, Jobs, Growth & Employment, Research & Development, Climate Change/Energy, and Poverty/Social Inclusion.

These topics will all be explored in upcoming 2016 EDIC events. For more information see www.europedirect.ie.



Arts Service – Investing in the Creation of New Artistic Work in Donegal

One of the most important roles of the Arts Service is that of encouraging the creation and presentation of new artistic work in the county. Between 2009 and 2015, the following works were among those supported by the Service –

Awakening The Horsemen at An Grianán of Aileach.

In 2013, the Awakening The Horsemen project at An Grianán of Aileach – under the direction of Burnfoot-based LUXe Landscape Theatre Company – culminated in a wonderful, elemental performance on Midsummer’s night, mixing theatre, dance, music, traditional arts, sculpture, spoken word (in six languages) and mechanical engineering, to fabulous effect. The project was inspired by local folklore that a troop of mythical Celtic warrior horsemen lie sleeping under the iconic An Grianán of Aileach stone fort at Burt. One legend has it the horsemen are the remnants of Conor Mac Neasa’s Red Branch Knights army (An Craobh Rua), who went underground after the death of their talisman, Cú Chulainn. In another, they are the magical white warriors of Mannanán Mac Lir, the King of the Sea, and in yet another, they are the Uí Néill, the ancient kings of Tír Chonaill. In all versions of the tale, the sleeping warriors may be woken at a time of Ireland’s greatest need.

Almost 50 performers, makers and crew were involved in the project and the performance took place before a capacity audience of 250 people. Taking place in the context of the Arts Council’s Culture Connects programme and Ireland’s Presidency of the Council of the EU, it was appropriate that the project should provide a platform for a truly international

artistic collaboration between artists from the North West of Ireland, Iceland, Norway, Cornwall, Scotland and Malta. Project partners included Féile Grianán Ailigh, LUXe Landscape Theatre Company, Wild Works Theatre, Earagail Arts Festival and Derry/Londonderry UK City of Culture 2013.

The Donegal Weavers and Turas

The Donegal Weavers and Turas were two new danceworks assisted by the Arts Service in 2014. *The Donegal Weavers* was an Irish figure dance, popular among the Irish community in Glasgow in the 1960s. Gort a’ Choirce dance teacher, Nora Kavanagh, revived the dance especially for the Donegal Fleadh Cheoil. When performed at the John Molloy Knitwear and Tweed factory shop in Ardara as part of the Donegal Bay and Blue Stacks Festival, the dance was accompanied by a demonstration of handloom weaving by local master weaver, Colm Sweeney. The following year, Nora Kavanagh and her dancers were invited to present *The Donegal Weavers* in Malaga as part of the city’s St. Patrick’s Day celebrations.

Turas was a contemporary dance work created by Letterkenny dancer and choreographer Aoife Toner, in response to the ritual movements enacted by pilgrims undertaking the *Turas* along the St. Colmcille Pilgrim Path at Gleann Cholm Cille. *Turas* was performed to an audience of local people at Oideas Gael, Gleann Cholm Cille as part of the Donegal Bay and Blue Stacks Festival, to a very positive response. Arising out of the success of *Turas*, Aoife was invited to devise a further dancework, inspired by the Studio Donegal spinning, hand-weaving and design facility at Cill Chartha. This new project commenced in late 2015.

North West Opera Company

In October 2009, the newly founded North West Opera Company staged its debut production, *Hansel and Gretel* by Englebert Humperdinck, at the Balor Arts Centre in Ballybofey. The work was presented as part of the Donegal Bay and Blue Stacks Festival and was the first of a series of such productions to be assisted by the Arts Service over the course of the following six years.

For each production, Artistic Director Ann Jennings assembled a cast which paired world-class, international operatic voices with the best of local North West artistic talent, accompanied by chamber orchestra and chorus. The company's staging of Puccini's *La Boheme* at the Balor Arts Centre in 2010 saw Nathan Payes (Spain), Elena Konomenko (Russia), Fernando Araujo (Sao Paulo) and Fritz Kamp (Germany) sing leading roles alongside local singers John Porter and Ann Jennings, while 2012's *Die Fledermaus* (Johann Strauss) featured Diane McLaughlin, Donal Kavanagh, Ann Jennings and Aaron O'Hare performing with Jens Muller, Markus Herzog and Gudrun Ayasse (Germany). The Musical Director for the production was Anton Zapf of Stuttgart State Opera.

The increasingly ambitious scale of North West Opera's productions necessitated a move to An Grianán Theatre in 2014 when the company staged Georges Bizet's classic opera *Carmen*, under the direction of Nader Abbassi. Nader is artistic director and principal conductor of the Cairo Opera Orchestra and of Orchestre pour la Paix, Paris. *Carmen* was performed by an ensemble which included ten professional singers, a thirty member chorus and a chamber orchestra comprised of twenty international musicians.

Fiesta

The Arts Service has assisted a number of new theatre productions in recent years, among these Bread and Roses Theatre's *Can't Pay? Won't Pay!* (Dario Fo), *Anna Katherine Kelly* (Maura Logue), *If I Could Walk These Fields Again* (Guy le Jeune) and Balor Rep Theatre's *The Lad From Laghey* (Michael Harnett). One of the most successful of these new plays, however, was *Fiesta* – a play commissioned by Earagail Arts Festival, An Grianán Theatre and Donegal County Council Arts Service, celebrating the glory days of the Fiesta Ballroom in Letterkenny. Written by Letterkenny-based writer Guy le Jeune, it was based on the real-life stories as told by those who danced, worked and played through the 1960s and 70s at the much-loved venue. The show played to great acclaim to capacity audiences over a four night run at An Grianán Theatre in July 2014, as part of the Earagail Arts Festival. *Fiesta* was directed by Sean Donegan, with choreography by Aoife Toner. It was revived for another successful run at An Grianán Theatre in November 2015, this time under the direction of Rachel Diver.

'Fiesta', by Guy Barriscale, was a new and very popular community drama work commissioned by An Grianán Theatre, Donegal County Council Arts Service and Earagail Arts Festival in 2014. (Photo Credit Declan Doherty)




Archives Office - Across the Atlantic: Emigrating from Merville and Derry

In 2009 Donegal County Council's Archives Service and Derry City Archives (Derry Heritage and Museum Service) collaborated on a unique publication whose central theme was emigration, to coincide with the launch of a public art monument in Merville which was dedicated to emigrants from the north west of Ireland to Canada and the United States of America.

The monument is the work of artist Locky Morris. It was commissioned by Donegal County Council Public Art Office and is called *The Fid*. A fid is the small wooden tool, used by fishermen for splicing ropes and nets and by sailmakers for opening holes in the sails. Locky Morris's striking sculpture both recollects that form of a 'fid' and the beacon flames lit on the hills by Lough Foyle for emigrants. The monument, which stands on Merville's historic old stone pier, represents Merville's maritime history and the legacy which emigration has left on this town and community.

The book is entitled *Across the Atlantic: Emigrating from Merville and Derry*. The title symbolises the unique history of Merville and Derry as major points of departure for thousands of emigrants. The book contains a series of short illustrated articles on the history of emigration from the North West of Ireland, particularly to New Brunswick, Canada. The production of the book is a prime example of an ambitious cross-service, cross-border and transnational collaborative project, including the Archives Services of three states, the Public Art Office and County Library in Donegal and historians and genealogists from a variety of backgrounds and universities.

The book was funded by Donegal County Council and co-edited by Niamh Brennan and Bernadette Walsh, Derry City archivist, with contributions from historians and archivists.



The Fid by Artist Locky Morris,
Merville, Co. Donegal
(www.donegalpublicart.ie)
(Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)

Ciara Joyce's article paints a vivid picture of Moville's interesting and varied history. By the middle of the 19th century, Moville was a bustling market town, and had become a major port for passengers heading on the McCorkell Line sailing ships to the 'new world', especially to Canada. By the 1870s large transatlantic passenger steamers of the Allan Line and the Anchor Line had replaced the sailing ships. Small boats called tenders ferried emigrants leaving from Donegal and Derry to the ships anchored in the Foyle waters. The steamers took emigrants of all ages to their new lives in various parts of Canada and America.

Bernadette Walsh's article, *Derry and its Port*, outlines the central role played by the port of Derry in the facilitation of emigration across the Atlantic, making special reference to the impact of emigration from Derry to Saint John, New Brunswick, which has resulted in a large percentage of the New Brunswick population tracing 'Irish' ancestry today. Denis Noel of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick reflects on the impact of immigration to New Brunswick by so many people from the North West of Ireland on the development of that province. Seán Beattie quotes from some of the poignant poems and songs about emigration including the following excerpt from 'Greencastle Shore':

*From Derry quay we sailed sway all on the eighth of May
Being forwarded by a pleasant gale, we soon reached Moville Bay.
Fresh water there some twenty tons our brave Captain took in store
Lest we would want going to Saint Johns far from Greencastle shore.*

Mickey McGuinness writes of the successful trading links, particularly in the area of shipbuilding, between Derry and New Brunswick and recalls the successful careers of many emigrants working in these industries in Canada. Patrick Fitzgerald's article recounts some of the stories of individuals who left their families forever to make the arduous journey to New Brunswick and their experiences settling into their new lives in Canada. Brian Mitchell discusses the settlement patterns of emigrants from various areas of Ulster to east Canada.

Declan Sheehan outlines the history of the creation of Locky Morris' sculpture, The Fid, and how inspiration came from the village's powerful connections to the sea. Berni Campbell informs readers of the many sources for emigration available in Donegal County Library's Local Studies Collection while Niamh Brennan provides an introductory





guide to accessing primary sources for emigration, also outlining some of the emigration sources in Donegal County Archives. Brian Mitchell outlines some of the emigration-related collections available in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

The articles demonstrate the importance of archives in vividly and comprehensively reconstructing for us the lives of past generations of emigrants, and in facilitating our understanding of what life was like for those who emigrated in an era vastly different to our own. We discover not just the facts of peoples' lives, but also the feelings of people who had to leave their homes and their country to sail thousands of miles across the ocean to a country they knew little of, in most cases never to see their loved ones again.

Emigration touches peoples' lives at every level and this is reflected in some of the letters quoted in this book. The sense of sorrow and loss is starkly evident in Jane Dudgeon's letter, written from Inishfree to her sister Elizabeth who had emigrated to Ohio in 1828:

'You must think I have quite forgot there is such a being on earth as you. Do not, I pray, my dear sister. Neither distance of place or length of time can ever make me forget a sister of whom we all often think'. (Return to Inishfree: The Trail of the Dudgeon Family Letters by Andrea McKewn Bhatt and Jeanne Haffa McKown,)

The book and Locky Morris' sculpture *The Fid* were launched together in September 2009 in Moville, and in Derry. Five thousand copies of the book were printed and distributed widely. The book is extremely popular and always in demand, especially by our Diaspora; and it is planned to reprint it over the next few years.

Regional Cultural Centre - Lived Lost Lives

Background

The Lived Lives art and research project was initiated in 2006 by the Donegal born artist and researcher Dr. Seamus McGuinness and psychiatrist and clinical researcher Professor Kevin M. Malone, University College Dublin, author of the *Suicide in Ireland Report*. Seamus and Kevin interviewed 104 families from 23 Irish counties, who responded to invitations via local newspaper advertisements to take part in the Suicide in Ireland Survey/Lived Lives Project. Following informed conversational interviews, belongings and stories associated with the suicide deceased were donated by over 40 of the families to the artist. From these donations of objects, images, writing and stories, McGuinness made a series of artworks-in-progress, which were initially presented back to the families for private feedback and their approval to display these works in the public domain.

The process was informed by conversations mainly held around the bereaved families' kitchen tables and subsequent family engagements with the Lived Lives works-in-progress, in carefully organised events in Galway and Dublin. In this way, the families became co-creators and co-curators of the works. Emerging from the Lived Lives project, with the families' informed permission, active involvement, and heartfelt encouragement, the next stage Lived Lost Lives was made public for the first time at the Regional Cultural Centre in November 2013, transposing private experiences of suicide into the wider public domain.

Lived Lost Lives in Letterkenny

Lived Lost Lives in Letterkenny was the first public exhibition of the project ever held. The Regional Cultural Centre has curated and commissioned a number of socially engaged exhibitions since it opened, exploring a range of issues, but never anything approaching the seriousness and sensitivity of Lived Lost Lives. It was a major immersive exhibition comprising a large number of objects belonging to the young people who died by suicide with artworks made by Seamus McGuinness. It comprised of a number of Lived Lives Archive Rooms containing objects and images associated with the suicide-deceased and film documentation on other archive rooms. It also featured two large-scale installations by Seamus McGuinness, *21g* and the *Lost Portrait Gallery*. A number of short research films documenting the poignant views of the bereaved families and the key developments of the project up to that point were also featured. The emphasis of the exhibition was on the lived lives of the young people who died by suicide and on the experiences of their families. The multiple layers and immersive feeling of the exhibition combining art, film, objects, family photographs and letters, which communicated with a number of the senses including sight, sound and touch, offered an opportunity to connect with and understand this very sad subject to a greater extent and in greater depth than a written report or film might do.

The Official Opening of the exhibition was held on Friday 1st November and the exhibition continued until November 30th. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter each aspect of the exhibition was planned as carefully as possible. It was not presented in the usual unmediated way where people walk off the street into an exhibition. The artist Seamus McGuinness was present for the duration of the exhibition and there was also a bereavement counsellor present at all times. This care was applied to the Official Opening where





21g Large Scale Installation by Artist Seamus Mc Guinness from the Lived Lost Lives, Regional Cultural Centre

entry to the exhibition was preceded by a presentation by Seamus McGuinness and Kevin Malone in the Auditorium of the Regional Cultural Centre before Seamus and Kevin led everyone up to the exhibition. A one day seminar Lived Lost Lives: Remembering Donegal Lives Lost to Suicide was held on Saturday November 2nd. This was a private day, exclusively for suicide bereaved families from County Donegal. It was a day for recollecting Donegal lives lost to suicide, going behind the cold clinical statistics and remembering the individual lost life. The Donegal families were joined by a number of the Lived Lives families who had gone through the same loss of a loved one to suicide and who shared their experience of this loss and of being involved in the Lived Lives project.

Group Visits and Workshops

In addition to the one-day seminar for Donegal families bereaved by suicide there were also a number of other targeted workshops and an extensive number of group visits. The workshops included a meeting between Seamus McGuinness and Kevin Malone and a number of young people aged 16 to 18 years old drawn from Donegal Youth Council. The majority of the group visits were aimed at second level Transition Year students and third level students from LYIT. The group visits were all structured in the same way and lasted approximately 90 minutes. Seamus McGuinness gave an introduction and brief tour of the exhibition, the students had then the opportunity to explore it themselves and finally there was a debriefing conversation with each group. In common with individuals who visited the exhibition, all the students participating in the group visits were encouraged to complete the Lived Lost Lives pink feedback form. As was the case throughout the period of the exhibition there was a bereavement counsellor present during all the group visits in case anyone became distressed. Research and

documentation was a key aspect of the exhibition and in addition to the feedback forms there was extensive audio, video and photographic documentation of the exhibition.

Post Event Forum and Future Initiatives

A post-event forum held in April 2014 was attended by policy makers, health officials, community leaders and the lead artist and psychiatrist. It reflected on Lived Lost Lives and on the overwhelmingly positive feedback received. Further consultation conversations took place during the preparation of the Connecting for Life Donegal Action Plan in 2014 -2015 and it resulted in a cultural action being included in the plan. Given that so much has been invested in the Lived Lives project in County Donegal to date and given how successful the project has been there is a strong case for continuing to develop the model in a number of different locations in the County over the duration of Connecting for Life Donegal implementation plan. A proposal to host three Lived Lives exhibitions and associated programmes in three towns across County Donegal over the period 2016 to 2010 years was submitted to the Connecting for Life Steering Committee in early 2016 for their consideration.

County Donegal Heritage Office - Our Vernacular Architecture Inheritance

The County Donegal Heritage Office initiated a programme of vernacular architecture seminars in 2007 and this continued during the lifetime of the Cultural Connections Strategic Plan for Cultural Services with vernacular architecture seminars in Kilcar (2012) and Carrigart (2014) and a traditional building skills field school in conjunction with the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society in 2010.

The traditional homes of County Donegal supported by traditional building skills/technologies and informed by our social history





display distinctive regional distributions that contribute to the character of our cultural landscape and to our sense of place and identity. Few places are as intrinsically associated with their vernacular architecture as County Donegal which has one of the largest concentrations of traditional cottages in Ireland. Direct-entry cottages with rope-thatched or quarried-slate roofs epitomise County Donegal's vernacular architecture. Features such as the Donegal hearth, the 'upper room', opposite front and back doors, the bed outshot (cailleach) and the Donegal A-frame roof timbers allude to the utilitarian nature and social history of County Donegal's cottages. As our traditional buildings continue to decline, the attributes of traditional building materials, the use of traditional building skills, the employment opportunities in craftsmanship, the importance of our vernacular built heritage to tourism and the ability of traditional buildings to accommodate modern living have yet to be fully appreciated, understood and realised.

Vernacular Architecture Seminars

The County Donegal Heritage Office continued its successful series of vernacular architecture seminars that included *Hearth & Home* in association with *Cumann Staire Chill Chartha* in Kilcar (October 2012) and *Rural Houses of Donegal* in Carrigart (October 2014). The aims of these seminars were to raise awareness of County Donegal's vernacular architecture; disseminate information on traditional building methods, materials and skills; highlight sources of information on researching your traditional home; promote best conservation practice; and convey the built heritage and cultural significance of our traditional buildings. The highly-popular seminars were an action of the County Donegal Heritage Plan and funded by Donegal County Council and The Heritage Council.

The Everyday Experience
at the RCC in partnership with
The Irish Architecture Foundation

The one-day seminars consisted of guest presentations in the morning from a variety of disciplines addressing different aspects of vernacular architecture in County Donegal. Themes addressed included the importance of retaining our vernacular architecture (Gráinne Shaffrey, Shaffrey Associates); the documentation of traditional buildings and traditional furniture (Rosa Meehan, National Museum of Ireland - Country Life); the current state of thatch and thatching in County Donegal (Dr. Fidelma Mullane, geographer and vernacular architecture specialist); the repair of traditional farm buildings (Duncan McLaren, Dedalus Architecture); the often-overlooked corrugated-iron buildings of County Donegal (Barry O'Reilly, architectural historian and archaeologist); recent research on tar and canvas roofs in Inishowen (Duncan McLaren, Dedalus Architecture); traditional building methods and materials including the use of lime (Edward Byrne, Traditional Lime Company); common problems with vernacular buildings and how to address and repair them (Dermot Nolan, Dermot Nolan & Associates) and the cottages of southwest Donegal as represented by artist Rockwell Kent (Christy Gillespie, author and historian). The owners of traditional buildings (Sean Debney, Bernadette Sansom and Cathal Stephens) also gave short presentations as part of the seminars to emphasise the opportunities that exist for the retention and adaptation of traditional buildings for modern lifestyles and the County Donegal Heritage Officer outlined built heritage funding opportunities.

The All-Ireland Traditional Building Craft Skills report (2009) highlighted the fact that "significant skills and knowledge gaps" still exist as serious challenges to the conservation of our vernacular architecture. In the afternoon, there were several craftsmen demonstrating traditional building skills relating to thatching, the use of lime mortar, quarried-slate roof and traditional stone flag floors demonstrations, sash

window repair and historic paintwork. Participants had the opportunity to visit a thatched cottage and Protected Structure in Kilcar and Teach John Mhicí Bán, a traditional two-storey farmhouse and farmyard in Carrigart.

The events attracted traditional homeowners, heritage groups, historical societies, craftsmen, architects, builders, students, Tidy Towns committees, community groups, local authority staff and people with an interest in local heritage and history. Seminar participants also received a free information pack. Both seminars were fully booked in advance with between 130 and 160 people attending each of the seminars.

Traditional Building Skills Field School

The Ulster Architectural Heritage Society in partnership with Donegal County Council and the Gola Development Committee hosted a Traditional Building Skills Field School on Gola Island in June 2010. Under expert supervision, fifteen participants restored part of Teach Charlie Ned, a vernacular cottage on the island. Those taking part were given instruction on how to dismantle and rebuild fragile chimneys, apply lime mortar to walls, re-slate a roof using natural slates, repair and renew timber sliding sash windows and apply the very latest technology in double-glazing to upgrade existing windows.

Many families left the island in the 1960s but the fine, solid granite buildings they occupied still remain. Over the course of the weekend, almost 200 people participated in free tours of the vernacular architecture of Gola Island which were held to coincide with the field school. The tours emphasised the form and function of vernacular architecture, local building materials, traditional building skills, cultural landscape character and clachan settlements. In the All-Ireland Traditional Building Craft Skills report



in 2009, the National Heritage Training Group identified increased public awareness of the value and importance of traditional buildings and the conservation of vernacular buildings as key measures to creating a sustainable demand for traditional building skills. The Traditional Building Skills' Field School was funded by the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society; the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government; The Heritage Council and Donegal County Council under the County Donegal Heritage Plan.

Public Art Office – *The Happy Prince*

Ireland, and particularly Donegal is known for its creativity. Donegal County Council Cultural Services Public Art Programme is committed to commissioning new, original artwork and in 2011 decided to commission a Donegal adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*, to be performed by Donegal Youth Orchestra.

The Happy Prince is a beautiful story of the friendship between a statue of a prince and a little swallow and explores timeless themes of love, friendship, selflessness and compassion. Its themes and messages are as relevant today as when Wilde first wrote the story over 100 years ago. For this project, The Public Art Office wanted to embrace and showcase the creative strengths in Donegal, which include music, storytelling and performance and give this new commission a unique Donegal twist.

The Happy Prince Project was funded through the Per Cent for Art Scheme and was developed in partnership with Donegal Music Education partnership (DMEP) who deliver instrumental and vocal tuition on a wide range of instruments in numerous centres across the County and who are also responsible for the Development of Donegal Youth Orchestra.

Images from The Happy Prince
Multi Disciplinary Project
(www.donegalpublicart.ie)
(Photo Credit Paul Mc Guckian)

The project was very privileged to have the creative genius of both Donegal based writer, actor, storyteller and musician Little John Nee and the prolific and talented composer Vincent Kennedy, who was also the director/conductor of The Donegal Youth Orchestra.

Using the original *The Happy Prince* story as a starting point, Kennedy and Nee spent time at The Tyrone Guthrie Centre at Annamakerrig to have uninterrupted time and space to develop and complete the work.

"I was so moved when I heard the piece for the first time" says the Public Art Manager and "I felt very proud to be part of the commissioning. I knew that something very special and magical had been achieved and it was an honour to hear it and to be part of it".

The Happy Prince became one of the key events of Donegal Gathering 2012, which was organised to encourage Donegal Diaspora to come back to the county for a series of gathering events.

The Public Art Office also worked with the Tourism sector to promote Cultural Tourism and put together a tourism package with The Radisson Blu Hotel, Letterkenny and Glenveagh National Park.

The Youth Orchestra worked hard in rehearsals which began in late 2011. Raymond Keane from Barabbas Theatre worked with Little John Nee on elements of direction and excitement built for the world premiere at An Grianán Theatre in April 2012 which was followed with performances in Ballyshannon later that month.

The Public Art Office wanted to bring the exquisite work to a national audience and were delighted when RTÉjr Radio invited the participants to their Dublin Studios to do a live broadcast & video cast of *The Happy Prince* on Friday 18 May 2012.

As a legacy, the score and script are now available at The Contemporary Music Centre (CMC) which is Ireland's archive and resource centre for new music, supporting the work of composers throughout the Republic and Northern Ireland. We hope that at some point in the future, an International Youth Orchestra might decide to include it in their repertoire.

"It is the combination of Little John's words, Vincent's music & orchestra and the singing of the choir that truly bring the story to life. Close your eyes early on and the score allows you to see the snowfall on arrival that Little John describes. The music paints audio pictures of the flight of the swallow, the people of the village, even of happiness and pain. In an era of near constant visual stimulation, it's a treat for the audience to have their imagination put to such use" Carolyn Farrar, Donegal Democrat.

Vincent Kennedy solo piece
as part of The Happy Prince
Commission



List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Festivals and Events organised by or supported by Cultural Services

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Appendix 3: Library Service Indicators

Appendix 4: Map

Appendix 1: Festivals and Events organised by or supported by Cultural Services

January

Letterkenny Trad Week, Letterkenny

March

Seachtain na Gaeilge, venues countywide

Inishowen International Folksong and Ballad Seminar, Ballyliffin/Clonmany

May

Bealtaine Festival – celebrating creativity as we age, venues countywide

Distorted Perspectives Festival, Letterkenny

Remote Photo Festival

Fleadh Ceoil Chondae Dhún na nGall/Donegal County Fleadh

Mícheál Ó Cléirigh Summer School, Rossnowlagh,

Cup of Tae Festival, Ardara

June

Rory Gallagher Festival, Ballyshannon

Mick, Michael and Patrick Carr Memorial Traditional Music Weekend, Mí n An Aoire, An Carraig.

Donegal Chamber Music Festival, Glenveagh National Park

Colgan Heritage Weekend, Carndonagh

Féile Grianán Ailigh, Burt, Inishowen

Féile Ghabhla/Gola Island Festival

Féile Ealaíne agus Chultúrtha na Seanbheairice, An Fál Carrach

Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Festival

Laghey Blast, Laghey

Sea Sessions, Bundoran

Melting Pot Festival, Ardara

July

Earagail Arts Festival, North and West Donegal

MacGill Summer School, Glenties

Donegal Summer School of Music, Letterkenny

Swell Festival of Music and Arts, Oileán Árainn Mhór

Aonach Jack, Mí n na Leice, Croithlí

Bundoran Carnival Weekend, Bundoran

Fleadh Chill Chartha, Cill Chartha

Churchill Fair, Churchill

Lennon Festival, Rathmullan

Mary from Dungloe, Dungloe

Burtonport Summer Festival, Burtonport

Songs For A Summer Evening/Mountcharles Opera Festival, Mountcharles

Ceol na Coille Summer School, Letterkenny

Donegal Fiddle Summer School, Gleann Cholm Cille

August

National Heritage Week, various venues countywide

Lughnasa International Friel Festival, Inishowen/Letterkenny/
Glenties

Ballyshannon Folk and Traditional Music Festival,
Ballyshannon

Luinneóg Lúnasa, Gaoth Dobhair

Féile Carraig Arts and Culture, Carrigart

Féile an Earagail, Dún Lúiche

Ceol na gCruach, Greenans, Glenties

Kildarragh Fair, Dunfanaghy

September

Donegal Bay and Blue Stacks Festival, South and South West
Donegal

Johnny Doherty Music and Dancing Festival, Ardara

Harvest Fair, Glenties

Tip O'Neill Weekend, Buncrana

Dunfanaghy Jazz and Blues Festival, Dunfanaghy

Culture Night, Letterkenny and An Gaeltacht

October

Wainfest Arts and Books Festival For Children, venues
countywide

Donegal Fiddlers Gathering, Glenties

Peadar O'Donnell Weekend, Dungloe

Social Inclusion Week, venues countywide

November

Science Week, venues countywide

Ramelton Storytelling Festival, Ramelton

Scoil Gheimhridh Ghaoth Dobhair, Gaoth Dobhair

Allingham Arts Festival, Ballyshannon

Appendix 2: Public Consultation Document



Donegal County Council Cultural Services
Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020: Public Consultation

Donegal's unique and varied culture is a source of immense pride. Our county and its culture have always been intertwined as an all encompassing, evolving force that helps us express and celebrate who we are as a diverse, traditional and modern people. The Cultural Services Division of Donegal County Council provides services to the public in the area of Public Libraries, County Arts Service, Regional Cultural Centre, Public Art Programme, County Museum & Archive Service and is preparing its 5 Year Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020

“By 2020, we want Donegal's reputation as a leader in culture to be strengthened by our commitment to its development. Donegal County Council believes that to invest in arts, culture, heritage and language is a commitment to a healthier, more fulfilled, prosperous, successful county”
Seamus Neely, Chief Executive, Donegal County Council

We have set out our vision under six main goals as follows

1. Public Engagement
2. Life Long learning and Social Inclusion
3. Supporting Artists & Arts Organisations
4. Conserve and promote Cultural Inheritance
5. Building relationships with stakeholders and partners
6. Sustainable, high quality Cultural Service

In developing the Cultural Services Strategic Plan, we would like to hear your views and ideas.

- What cultural issues and challenges do you, your community, your organisation and/or your sector face at this point in time?
- How do you think Cultural Services could realistically address or support these issues and challenges?
- What do you think Cultural Services should focus on as key priority areas from 2016 to 2020?

Deadline date for making submissions

The deadline for receipt of submissions to the Cultural Services Plan is Wednesday 4th May 2016

to: Eileen Burgess

Ireland 2016 Donegal Co-ordinator,
County Librarian/Divisional Manager Cultural Services,
Donegal County Council,
Rosemount Lane,
Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
Email: eburgess@donegalcoco.ie

Appendix 3: Library Service Indicators

Opening Hours per week (end of 2015)	
Central	37.5
Milford	36.5
Buncrana	36
Carndonagh	36
Moville	14
Ballyshannon	11
Bundoran	36
Donegal Town	14
Ballybofey	32.5
Lifford	21
Raphoe	13.5
Gaoth Dobhair	37
Na Rosa	41
Total Hours p/w	366

Active Membership	
2011	17,415
2012	16,085
2013	15,560
2014	14,332
2015	13,708

Number of Visits	
2011	363,548
2012	354,851
2013	341,282
2014	339,990
2015	346,979

Number of Issues	
2011	363,701
2012	371,571
2013	345,415
2014	322,567
2015	330,750

Two stone carved figures located at Carrer Drive Housing Estate, Ballyshannon by the late artist Fred Conlon are based on The Parchment, the story of the first Irish inhabitants who are said to have lived on the tiny island of Inis Carrer, Erne Estuary, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal.

Appendix 4: Donegal County Council Cultural Services Infrastructure

