

Waterford City & County Council Festival & Event Funding Policy 2021



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Waterford City & County Council

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Introduction

Waterford City & County Council's mission from the Corporate Plan and the objective of this policy is that 'Waterford, as the Capital of the South East, will be a vibrant and sustainable place for all its' people who live, work, visit or invest here.'

One of the ways Waterford City & County Council is working to deliver on this is through ongoing support for a wide range of festivals and events across Waterford. In 2021, Waterford City & County Council allocated €1.3m to 70 festivals and events across Waterford that have an economic, tourism, cultural/artistic or community benefit for Waterford. It is an aspiration of Waterford City & County Council to continue supporting festivals and events into the future.

This policy has been prepared jointly by the Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) and the Housing, Community, Culture & Library SPC to ensure a strategic approach is taken in providing support to festivals and events to help them grow, develop and diversify in a sustainable manner and to help achieve the Council's objectives.

In addition to implementing this policy, Waterford City & County Council will provide annual training and support for local festivals and events to help achieve our shared objectives of Waterford as a vibrant and sustainable place.

This policy will be reviewed by the relevant Strategic Policy Committees two years after it has been adopted.

What do we hope to achieve with this policy?

- Ensure that the funding available is successfully used to develop, grow and diversify Waterford's festivals and events over the coming years and to help achieve the Council's mission of Waterford as a vibrant and sustainable place.
- Ensure that Waterford City & County Council achieves value for money in the festivals and events that it invests in and supports annually through the development of appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Festivals and events should be encouraged and supported to become more sustainable across all areas including Energy, Travel & Transport, Materials & Waste, Food & Beverage, Water, Nature & Biodiversity, and Governance¹.
- To achieve the distinct objectives under each of the three categories of funding: Economic, Arts and Community, outlined below, by awarding funding to those events that most closely align with these objectives.
- Provide clarity to all stakeholders on the application and adjudication process by clearly identifying what is eligible/ineligible, through the publication of this policy and provision of associated training.
- To utilise Council funding to compliment and not duplicate (or replace) other local and national investments in the sector including and not limited to Fáilte Ireland, Arts Council, LEADER etc., and private sector sponsorship.
- Create opportunities for new/emerging events by seeking to prioritise at least one new event/festival each year, subject to a suitable standard of application being received.
- To ensure that there is no assumption of continued funding on the basis of previous year's funding, with the exception of flagship/pillar festivals that will be guaranteed funding for a three year period.

¹ This new objective was adopted at the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC Meeting on 20th March 2024.

- Address the perception that flagship events held in Waterford City centre are of no benefit to the wider Waterford. This will be achieved by providing insights into festival/event attendees as part of a market research project with the flagship festivals, which will be subject to funding.
- Recognise the value of flagship (pillar) festivals/events and the necessity to provide ongoing large scale funding to ensure their sustainability, by naming these events, ring fencing funding and committing funding over a minimum of a three year period. This recognises their role in:
 - Supporting the delivery of our Tourism Strategy,
 - Attracting significant footfall to our urban centres,
 - Contributing significantly to the local/regional economy,
 - Raising Waterford's profile nationally and potentially internationally and
 - Contributing to Waterford's cultural positivity.

Current application and adjudication process

The current application and adjudication process was developed in consultation with local festivals and events and this process will continue to operate and be guided by this policy.



Definitions

A **flagship or pillar** festival or event attracts a large audience and participation, and is usually held over at least three days. These events usually have a positive regional and perhaps national profile, achieving widespread media coverage regularly and are often professionally or semi-professionally run. They are specialised events with large elements of originality which encourage people to travel to attend these events. They are usually of a significant scale and/or ambition and contribute significantly to the local economy. The events generally will have been in operation for at least 3 years. The aim of supporting flagship/pillar festivals is to have a calendar of at least three to four events of regional or national scale spread throughout the year.

A separate line item will be created in the annual budget for Flagship/Pillar events to ring fence funding for these festivals/events. The level of funding awarded to flagship festivals will be based on an initial assessment of their application and the final amount will be adopted by the Elected Members at the Plenary Council. These events will be guaranteed funding for a minimum of three years at this level, after which the funding will be reviewed and the event organisers will be required to make a new application.

Flagship/ Pillar Festivals and Events in Waterford		
Event	Overall Festival Cost 2021	WCCC Contribution
Winterval	€429,000	€429,000
West Waterford Festival of Food	€240,000	€50,000
Spraoi	€406,000	€70,000
Waterford Walls	€160,000	€35,000
Blackwater Opera Festival	€483,000	€7,000

Requirements of flagship festivals

- Subject to funding being available, flagship festivals will be required to work with Waterford City & County Council on the development of a series of practical KPIs upon which future performance can be measured and which will help inform future funding decisions.
- Flagship festivals will be required to demonstrate that they are in receipt of, or actively pursuing, alternative public and/or private sector funding.
- Flagship festivals will be required to assist Waterford City & County Council in the preparation of an annual report on the events which will include a summary Income and Expenditure and relevant KPIs.
- Flagship festivals in receipt of €25,000 or more in funding will be requested to present their festival programme to the relevant SPC (for information purposes only).

Development of future flagship/pillar festivals

Waterford City & County Council will provide training to festivals and events to grow their event to reach a larger audience and potentially become flagship events. New events with the potential to develop into flagship festivals can be considered annually.

An event is defined as a celebration, activity, and exhibition or staged performance that is open to the general public for a limited time not necessarily free of charge.

A festival is defined as a coming together of a collection of similar events that celebrate a single or general theme and are promoted as one within this theme, and occur within a defined timeframe.

Occasional Events happen on a one-off basis and meet the objectives of Waterford City & County Council plans and strategies – e.g. the 1916 Centenary Celebrations, The Gathering or a future Day of Remembrance for Covid etc.,.

Nascent/Emerging Events are new or emerging events that show signs of future potential to develop and can demonstrate that they link in with the objectives of the Council. It is important that these events are supported as they will promote and encourage innovation and creativity and may have the potential to scale up over time to become premier events. Waterford City & County Council will seek to prioritise at least one new festival each year.

Other

Funding for Waterford City St Patrick's Day Parade and Festive Lighting is to be removed from general festival/event funding and be a separate line item in the budget.

Overview of festival and events funding

There are three categories of funding each with their own goals and objectives:

1. Arts (does not include Arts Practice or Arts Venues Grants)
2. Community
3. Economic

General eligibility criteria for all categories of festivals:

- Have a committee of at least three members: the chairperson, the secretary and the treasurer in place.
- Have an insurance cover to the value of €6.5m for festival activities. A letter from the insurance company indemnifying Waterford City & County Council from any claim should accompany this.
- Have a valid Tax Clearance Certificate.

Arts Festivals

Definition

Waterford City and County Council's Arts Festivals Grants Scheme aims to promote and support a diverse range of arts festivals throughout Waterford City and County. Festivals should be of high artistic quality that are innovative and have a strong emphasis on public engagement, delivering quality arts experiences for audiences, to contribute to the development of artform practices, to creatively and imaginatively engage audiences, and to increase opportunities for public engagement. As the local authority works in partnership with the Arts Council, it has aligned this policy closely with their national Festivals framework.

Goals and Objectives relating to Arts Festivals

We will prioritise applications that:

- Express an overarching artistic vision that resonates with the nature of the proposed activities and demonstrates artistic excellence
- Demonstrate high artistic quality and vision (artists and programme)
- Support the development of individual artforms/arts practices and develop capacity among artists and practitioners.
- Demonstrate a high level of integration with local resources, and produce evidence of supports from a diverse range of partners
- Show an understanding of the context/place the festival is being presented in, and evidence of value to the immediate community
- Clearly show that their programme is engaged with, and relevant to, the local community
- Demonstrate an awareness of artists living in the region, and how the festival is working to support their development
- Demonstrate strategies for strong public engagement with, and broad access to, audiences, locally and regionally.
- Demonstrates sound and effective festival and financial management, and proposed delivery to a high standard, ensuring the project proposed is feasible
- Which take into consideration the arts and cultural landscape of the area and the relevant policies and strategies of Waterford City and County Council

Process

- This grant scheme is open to organisers of arts festivals which have a clear artistic purpose and takes place during the relevant calendar year.
- Applications will be via an online process and recommendations will go to Council for approval.

- Applications will be assessed on the quality and ambition of the proposed activities, the feasibility of the events and the completeness of applications.
- Applications promoting cross disciplinary artistic collaborations and experimentation will be considered.
- This is a competitive scheme that offers funding to support the staging of festivals on a non-recurring basis. It is important to note that funding under this programme is offered on a once-off basis and must be reapplied for annually on a competitive basis in the context of available funding.

Other Considerations

- This scheme will take account of the county wide spread of arts activity, and may prioritise festivals taking place in areas where relatively little arts activity currently occurs over those that are already served by arts activity, including the work of other organisations in receipt of Arts funding.
- As a Gaeltacht county, priority will be given to festivals based within the Gaeltacht or who deliver their festival through Irish which conform to the other conditions of this scheme.
- In line with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, the local authority is committed to ensuring that it takes positive policy measures to promote equality of opportunity for all those living in Ireland, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, civil or family status, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller Community.
- Furthermore, we note the ground of socio-economic background as a further basis for which equality of opportunity must be guaranteed. We welcome applications that are representative of the diversity of Irish society, including but not limited to any of the characteristics outlined above.

Ineligible for this Scheme

- Commercial festivals and organisations
- Proposals that are linked events (e.g. a quarterly or monthly music or literature series, seasonal tourist based performance concerts)
- Summer Schools
- Workshops series, ongoing classes or one-off events
- Funding to a third party from this scheme in the form of fundraising events linked to or during the festival cannot be considered.
- Applications from outside the administrative area of Waterford City and County Council
- Organisations that have applied to the local authority under a different scheme to undertake the same programme of activity
- Organisations whose proposed activities would be better suited to another local authority funding scheme
- Organisations who make more than one application under this scheme in a calendar year even if it for a different festival

Community Festivals and Events

Definition

Waterford City and County Council's Community Festivals and Events Grants Scheme aims to promote and support a diverse range of Community festivals and events throughout Waterford City and County. Festivals and events should have a strong emphasis on public engagement, and preferably have reach into the wider community.

Goals and Objectives relating to Community Festivals and Events

We will prioritise applications that:

- Clearly show that the programme is engaged with, and relevant to, the local community

- Have a strong community focus and provide evidence of support from the wider community
- Have programmes which are family-focused with events open to all
- Have a social inclusion focus with particular emphasis on the inclusion of marginalised and minority groups
- Demonstrate sound and effective festival and financial management, and proposed delivery to a high standard, ensuring the festival/event proposed is feasible
- Add to the reputational value of Waterford as a tourist destination

Process

- This grant scheme is open to organisers of Community festivals and events which have a clear Community purpose and take place during the relevant calendar year.
- Applications will be via an online process and recommendations will go to Council for approval.
- Applications will be assessed on the strength of the 'Community' element of the festival/event including how inclusive the festival/event would be; the quality of the proposed programme; the proposed management of the festival/event; and the track record of the applicant/s.
- This is a competitive scheme that offers funding to support the staging of festivals and events. It is important to note that funding under this scheme is offered on a once-off basis and must be reapplied for annually on a competitive basis in the context of available funding.

Other Considerations

- This grant scheme will take account of the need to have a city/county wide spread of Community festivals and events and decisions on festival/events will be made accordingly. As a Gaeltacht county, priority will be given to Festivals/events based within the Gaeltacht or which deliver their festival through Irish and comply with the other conditions of this scheme.
- In line with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, the local authority is committed to ensuring that it takes positive policy measures to promote equality of opportunity for all those living in Ireland, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, civil or family status, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller Community.
- Furthermore, we note the ground of socio-economic background as a further basis for which equality of opportunity must be guaranteed. We welcome applications that are representative of the diversity of Irish society, including but not limited to any of the characteristics outlined above.

Ineligible for this Scheme

- Commercial festivals and organisations
- Funding to a third party from this scheme in the form of fundraising events linked to or during the festival cannot be considered.
- Workshops series, ongoing classes or one-off events
- Applications from outside the administrative area of Waterford City and County Council
- Applications from organisations whose proposed activities would be better suited to another local authority funding scheme

Economic Festivals & Events

Definition

Economic festivals and events should be of a scale to attract (regional/national) footfall to our urban centres and generate economic benefit in the form of increased expenditure in the local economy, increased bed nights and raise the profile of Waterford nationally.

Goals and objectives of economic festivals and events

- To contribute to Waterford City & County Council's mission as outlined in the Corporate Plan 'Waterford, as the capital of the South East, will be a vibrant and sustainable place for all its' people who live, work, visit or invest here'.
- Align with the Corporate Plan aims and goals of Fáilte Ireland and Visit Waterford to promote Waterford as a world class visitor destination
- Promote Waterford as a 'green' destination.
- Support increased bed nights
- Have a number of key events of scale (Pillar Festivals) and a number of other events of scale which provide a year round programme of events for Waterford
- Raise the profile of Waterford nationally and/or internationally
- Generate increased expenditure in the local economy
- Increased footfall in our urban centres including into the evening-night time to support our night time economy

Process

- This grant scheme is open to organisers of festivals and events which have a clear economic purpose and take place during the relevant calendar year.
- Applications will be via an online process and recommendations will go to Council for approval.
- This is a competitive scheme that offers funding to support the staging of festivals and events. It is important to note that funding under this scheme is offered on a once-off basis and must be reapplied for annually on a competitive basis in the context of available funding.

Other Considerations

- This grant scheme will take account of the need to have a city/county wide spread of events with a focus on the key urban areas of Waterford City centre, Dungarvan and Tramore.
- Consideration will also be given to the dates of proposed events to ensure that there is co-ordination by events and to help facilitate a year round programme of events.
- Events which animate urban centres in off peak/shoulder season will also be considered.

Ineligible for this Scheme

- Wholly commercial (profit making) events with no free access to the general public or which do not contribute to the local economy in terms of attracting regional, national or international visitors etc.,
- Events focused on the sale of alcohol or primarily based in venues selling alcohol or whose primary (named) sponsor is alcohol related.
- Sporting events/ celebrations not supported by the relevant National Governing Body. Sporting events/celebrations must provide proof of bed nights, international media coverage and clear benefits to Waterford's profile or local economy. Costs related to travel or hospitality will not be considered.
- Clan gatherings

- Funding to a third party from this scheme in the form of fundraising events linked to or during the festival cannot be considered.
- Events which fail to demonstrate their capacity to achieve the goals outlined above.

Development of KPIs for festival and events

The metrics used to measure the impact of festivals and events will vary depending on the focus of the event. Some metrics can be more subjective and difficult to measure. For example KPIs for community based events may focus on community engagement or raising awareness of a community. Arts/Culture events may focus on number of attendees but equally raising awareness of the arts or specific art forms, particularly niche arts, may be equally important. Economic focused events value footfall, bed nights, attendee geography, positive media coverage at national or international level etc.

While metrics provide a valuable tool to assist Waterford City & County Council in assessing whether value for money has been achieved from investment in festivals and events, it is acknowledged that the effort in collecting this data should be proportionate to the amount of funding allocated by Waterford City & County Council and should not put an unnecessary burden on smaller events to gather and present this data.

Subject to funding being available in 2022, Waterford City & County Council will initially work with the identified flagship festivals and a market research company to develop a suite of useful KPIs and which data can be captured relatively easily and cost effectively on an ongoing basis to provide a measure of the impact of each of these events.