

# CREATIVE WEXFORD

*Reviewing Wexford County Council's  
engagement with the arts*



**WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL**



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## *Reviewing Wexford County Council's engagement with the arts*

### Glasshouse Arts & Creative Industries

Researched, directed and written by Marie Brennan MA PG dip, M.IDI  
Consultancy support and research by Eilis Doyle, MA, MBA, ANCAD



## WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

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This report, by Glasshouse Arts & Creative Industries, was researched, directed and written by Marie Brennan MA PG dip, M.IDI with consultancy support and research by Eilis Doyle, MA, MBA, ANCAD

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# Foreword

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Wexford can appropriately lay claim to the title of Ireland's artistic and cultural capital. From internationally renowned writers to emerging artists; from the country's most vibrant amateur drama community to an opera festival that gains global attention; from ancient crafts to digital creativity, we can be proud of our contribution and of our people.

Wexford County Council plays a pivotal role in supporting this activity as well as building the brand identity as a county of the arts and for artists.

This strategy is the first stage in a process of further developing that identity as well as supporting established, emerging and amateur artists and groups.

I want to pay tribute to Glasshouse, the consultancy team that explored in depth the range of the arts in the County, the strengths and weaknesses and most importantly, the opportunities. By understanding where we are now, it gives us a greater capacity to build in the future. It is positive that people in County Wexford are proud of what we have achieved to date. There are difficulties and this report does not shy away from identifying them. That said, the commitment is there to face the challenges. I would also thank the Council's Arts Department staff & Libraries Service for their input into the strategy as well their ongoing support work.

The next stages are looking at an effective structure to implement and manage the changes required to grow the arts in Wexford as well as setting out clear, measurable targets against which success can be evaluated. We should be ambitious. We owe it to ourselves. The arts in Wexford are of enormous social and economic importance. Let's seize the initiative.

*Cllr. Malcolm Byrne*

**Cathaoirleach**

Wexford County Council

2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015



# Commentary

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A detailed review of Wexford County Council's support for the Arts is timely now, when the Council is publishing a new Development Plan that defines its focus and priorities for the next five years.

The Council's Arts Department, twenty years young in 2015, has a strong record of achievement since its inception. Ensuring access to the arts has been one critical, enduring priority. Over the years, a range of programmes across the various arts forms and sometimes targeted at identified sectors has provided opportunities for many to engage in the arts as a vehicle for personal expression, to grow in confidence and in participation in local communities, to learn new skills and to develop an interest that can sustain creativity and personal development, lifelong. Careers in the arts or significantly influenced by the arts have become more visible as realistic options.

Wexford County Council's Arts programming has included initiatives that have achieved excellence & that have offered best practice examples at national level.

The whole has been underpinned by services and structures that support the professional development of artists locally.

The "Creative Wexford" review has revealed a countywide appreciation for the arts and a value placed on the contributions the arts can make at personal and community levels. Consultation has been extensive. As well as intrinsic value, engagement with the arts is sought for expression, for societal cohesion and as one of the drivers towards dynamic community and economic development.

Wexford County Council will work with the Arts Council of Ireland and other agencies to continue to grow its role in Arts development as an agent for

opportunities for all citizens. Wexford's next Arts Plan, 2016 - 2020, will use the research of the "Creative Wexford" review process as an important foundation for a refined approach to arts development locally. As the country's economic situation continues to be challenging, clear priorities and objectives, realistic targets and measurable outcomes are essential. All-council activity, including the Arts, is influenced by and contributes to national policy and strategies such as the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government's *Local and Community Development Programme*<sup>1</sup>, this year's *Working for Job's, Enterprise and Innovation: Strategy Statement to 2017*<sup>2</sup>, tourism's recent *People, Place and Policy – growing tourism to 2025*<sup>3</sup>, and the Arts Council's *Developing the Arts: Arts Council Strategic Statement*<sup>4</sup>, among many.

Operating within and from the Housing and Community Directorate, the Arts Department can collaborate within internal and external, cross-departmental and inter-agency programmes addressing broad cultural services, education, community and economic development. The future holds exciting opportunities for the Arts to develop and prosper in and for County Wexford.

*John Carley,*  
Director of Services  
Housing and Community  
Wexford County Council  
2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015

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1

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Community/LocalCommunityDevelopment/LocalDevelopmentSocialInclusionProgramme/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.djei.ie/publications/corporate/2015/DJEI\\_Statement\\_of\\_Strategy\\_2015-2017.pdf](http://www.djei.ie/publications/corporate/2015/DJEI_Statement_of_Strategy_2015-2017.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.dttas.ie/tourism/publications/english/people-place-and-policy-growing-tourism-2025>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/Developing-the-arts-strategic-statement-2013-english.pdf>

# Introduction

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This report is an independent guidance review to help inform Wexford County Council in the creation of its 2016-2020 Arts Strategy. Since the last strategy was written, the economy has fluctuated, new attitudes have arisen and community needs have changed. There are also large-scale initiatives being planned in which the arts will be a major driver. These include the regional bid for European City of Culture, 2016 Commemorations and the new tourism initiative for the Eastern region of Ireland.

This report is therefore one that offers ideas, suggestions and context in line with national and international policy alongside the views of the County's communities; arts and creative sectors and the general public. The strategy that follows this review will decide upon actions, implement them and undertake feasibility and necessary policy revisions necessary to meet the visions in this document. The information in this report has been gathered from consultation with the general public, community groups and the arts sector alongside local authority staff and attendance at council meetings.

There are three main objectives arising out of the research that the Council needs to consider:

- **LEADERSHIP** – Developing and delivering a vision for the arts and a voice for the arts community
- **SOCIAL INCLUSION** – Ensuring accessibility, enriching lives, allowing marginalised groups to 'find a voice', develop skills, aid quality of life
- **SUSTAINING A CREATIVE COUNTY** – Building the capacity of artists, arts organisations and other creative enterprises to work and reside within the County

This report has responded to the need for County Wexford's Arts provision to review the following areas<sup>5</sup>:

1. Guiding principles, vision, purpose, role & values
2. Promoting County Wexford as a Centre for the arts
3. How artistic excellence can be encouraged
4. How to support and empower emerging and established artists
5. Promoting access to the arts for individuals and groups
6. Detailing necessary resources for implementation
7. An analysis of funding models to enhance partnerships with various stakeholders and recommendations as to how they can be applied to County Wexford

In line with the findings in the research, we have developed four themes, or 'lenses' in which to view the arts programme of the County Council, reflecting comments across the arts, community, local authority and general public surveyed.

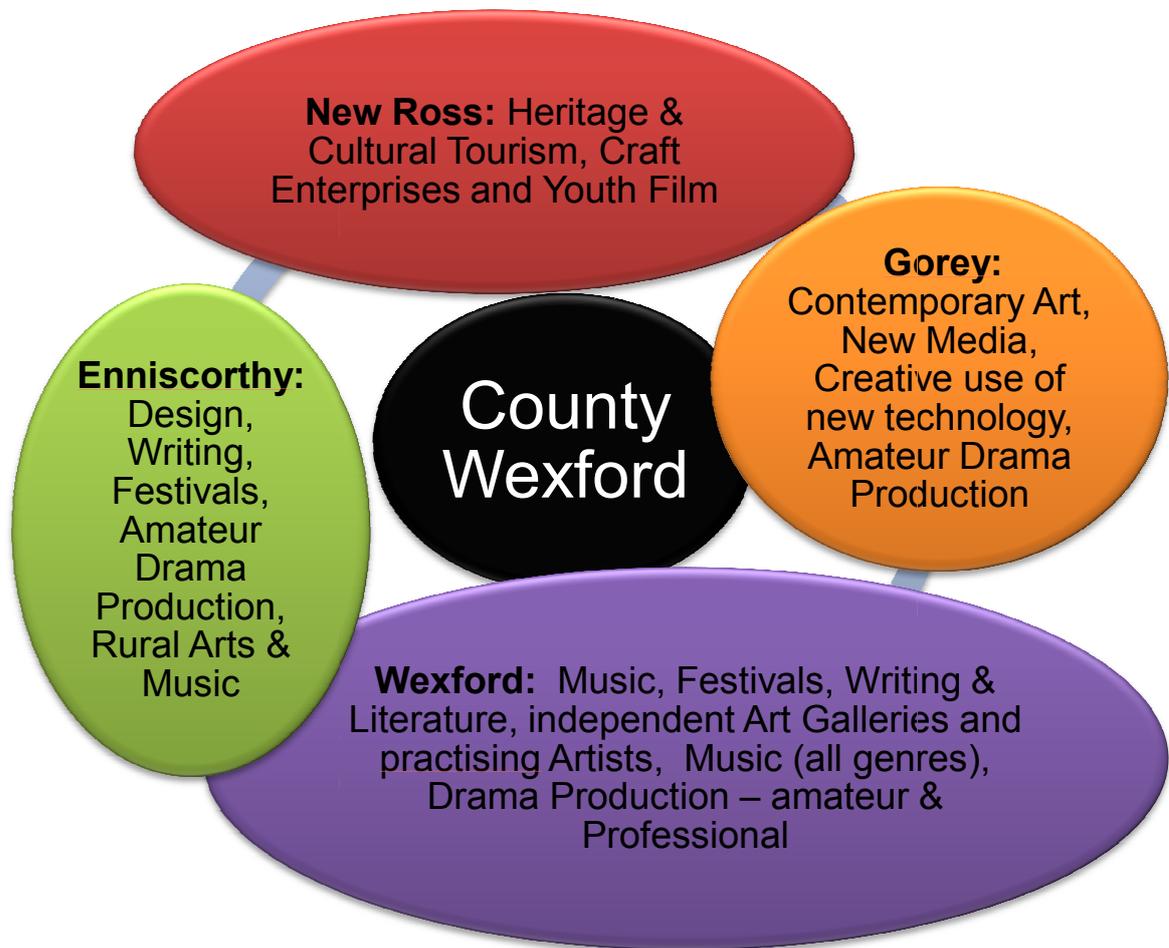
- **Social Inclusion**
- **Education, health and wellbeing**
- **Building a creative economy**
- **Supporting artistic excellence**

Although community arts and artistic practice exist in many forms throughout the County, there is a degree of 'clustering' in each municipal district as demonstrated in the diagram overleaf:

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1. The original RFT also required that we review: *How artistic excellence can be encouraged*. As this emerged in the research as a strong theme we have included this in each area of enquiry. See following pages for details.

## Creative Clusters within the County



# 1.0 Methodology

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To produce this report Glasshouse used a methodology that included:

## 1.1 Desk Research

- Processes and programmes delivered by Wexford County Council
- National and international contexts and strategic plans of key national bodies such as The Arts Council of Ireland
- Reports produced on behalf of the Arts Department at Wexford County Council
- Programmes and policies in the arts from other local authorities
- Reports and policies that either directly related to this review or were consulted as 'best practice' to inform its direction
- Funding potential

## 1.2 Interviews

- Interviews of key players and stakeholders with regard to the arts landscape in County Wexford and regionally, including arts producers, venues, galleries community and educational institutions
- Interviews with key staff in the County Council
- Interviews with community activists and arts organisations not currently funded by the Council
- Private enterprises engaging with arts

## 1.3 Surveys

Three surveys including both quantitative and qualitative results took place between January and March 2015:

- Arts Sector (114 responses)
- Community Sector (59 responses)
- General Public (99 responses)

### 1.3.1 The Arts Sector Survey

The arts sector survey demonstrated a wide range of arts activity with those in the performing arts forming the majority and those working in architecture the minority. The survey also reviewed the level of work undertaken in a variety of settings (such as youth arts, the creative economy, etc.) and the findings revealed that a fair number of artists work in community based artwork. Those in Wexford town, closely followed by Gorey, dominated the survey responses. 114 people responded.

#### Respondents (Arts Sector) described themselves as follows<sup>6</sup>:

1	An artist/creative professional	56 / 59%
2	An amateur artist/group	22 / 23%
3	Other	7 / 7%
4	A patron/advocate of the arts/regular attendee	5 / 5%
5	A community worker/artist	3 / 3%
6	A volunteer/interim in the arts	2 / 2%

#### Respondents revealed that they worked in the following sectors:

Art Form	Number of people who chose this art form
<b>Theatre &amp; Performance</b>	39
<b>Visual Arts</b>	35
<b>Media, Digital Arts &amp; Film</b>	27

<sup>6</sup> Given that artists work on projects and develop 'portfolio' careers, respondents could choose more than one to reflect employment trends in the sector.

<b>Music</b>	21
<b>Literature &amp; Writing</b>	17
<b>Festivals &amp; Creative Events</b>	14
<b>Dance</b>	10
<b>Multi-arts (working in more than one art form)</b>	8
<b>Opera</b>	7
<b>Public Art</b>	5
<b>Architecture &amp; Design</b>	4
<b>Circus &amp; Street Theatre</b>	4
<b>Traditional Arts</b>	4

#### **The location of artists living in the County – Geographic Spread:**

<b>Wexford Town</b>	53%
<b>Gorey</b>	27%
<b>Enniscorthy</b>	9%
<b>New Ross</b>	6%
<b>Another County in Ireland</b>	3%
<b>Overseas</b>	1%

Although the number surveyed is a snap shot and the sample size is small, the difference between the top two areas in County Wexford and the bottom two is significant. It is good to see a small number outside of Wexford still feeling a connection to the arts here.

#### **1.3.2 The Community Sector Survey**

This was perhaps the most reflective and useful given that those taking part represent organisations/groups that have either a body of people in their membership, a number of ‘service users’ or participants. In this regard we are assuming that respondents were undertaking the survey on behalf of their groups and their answers reflect the needs and desires of the people they represent. 59 groups/community workers responded.

### Community Survey respondents completed the survey as:

1	A representative of a community organisation	30 / 51%
2	Other	11 / 19%
3	A professional linked to community work (such as health worker/social worker etc)	9 / 15%
4	As a volunteer	9 / 15%

**54%** had used arts with their groups but a large proportion, **81%** had never used the Artist in the Community Scheme. This suggests scope for change/improvement in this field.

### Community Groups responding came from the following sectors:

<b>Youth</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Elders 65+</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Not identified/Other</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Village Groups</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Heritage Groups</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Rural Isolation</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Women's Groups</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Schools &amp; Education</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Intellectual Disability</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Mental Health</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Families</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Men's Groups (i.e. men's sheds)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Physical Disability</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Campaign charities and organisations for those suffering with a medical condition (such as cancer, diabetes, arthritis)</b>	<b>1</b>

These respondents felt that the arts were important to their communities and were asked to identify three main benefits to their groups and the top answers were as follows:

Number of groups who felt the arts helped their communities	Issue
36	Building Self Esteem
26	Developing skills that can be used in other areas of life
25	Activities not otherwise available
23	Finding your voice and having it heard
19	Uniting communities
19	Showcasing talents that would otherwise not be seen
18	Creating change in your locality
17	Therapeutic Benefits
14	Creating something of cultural value that is widely appreciated/acclaimed
9	Dealing with societal issues such as bullying, the environment or homelessness
2	Other

### 1.3.3 General Public Survey

This survey was useful in that the answers provided a degree of evidences that arts attendance/support is fairly high. The focus on social inclusion that is recommended throughout the report will help to build activity for these groups of people. Those taking part in the survey revealed a middle income/middle aged demographic overall. Take up in terms of completion was limited. 99 people responded. Overall, the general public survey revealed that people

value the arts and are regular attenders with 73% stating that the last time they went to an arts event was in the past month compared to only 6% saying never/more than a year ago.<sup>7</sup>

61% of respondents were female compared with 37% male and 2% who preferred not to say. This survey is useful when compared to data from the Arts Council report on The Arts in Irish Life (2015):

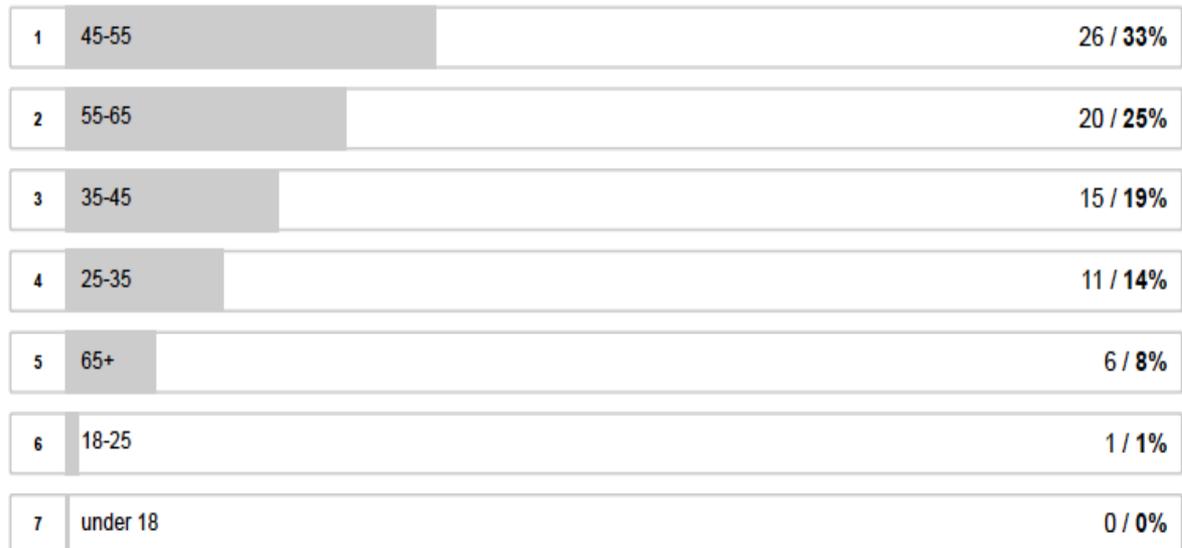
***94% of Irish people have engaged with the arts in the past year: as arts attenders or participants, consumers of arts-related media content, or having talked about the arts. Irish arts attendance levels have also increased (+4.6%) and remain higher than in other markets (64% attended at least one event in the past year in Ireland compared with 51% attendance in Northern Ireland and 48% in Great Britain during the same period). 85% of Irish adults have a favourable attitude towards the arts. This is supported by the 63% of Irish people who identified the 'important and valuable role' the arts plays in a 'modern society such as Ireland'***<sup>8</sup>

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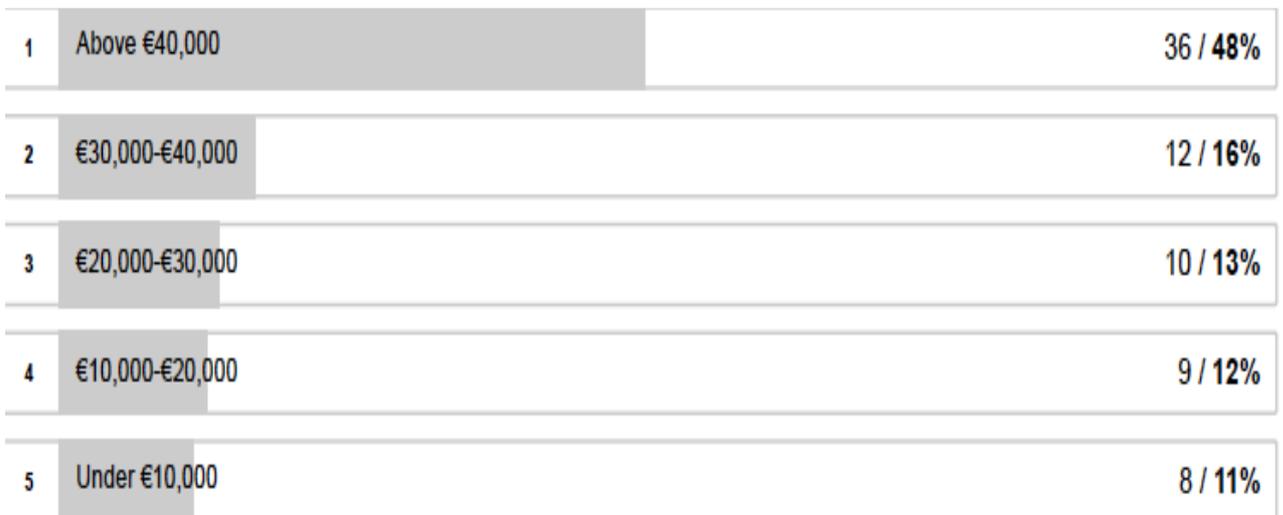
<sup>7</sup> The small number participating should be taken into account when reviewing the data.

<sup>8</sup> The Arts in Irish Life – Audience Studies – Arts Council of Ireland/Kantar Media.

### What is your age?



### What is your household income?



The above income and age profiles are reflected in the answer to the question: **The Arts in County Wexford are for people like me:**



These responses provide some evidence to the claim that the arts in County Wexford are for mainstream audiences. There is more scope to work with both the 18-25 age group and the over 65-age group to provide arts programmes which reflect their respective needs.

#### **1.4 Public Consultation meetings**

In February six consultation meetings were held in Bunclody, Enniscorthy, Gorey, New Ross and two in Wexford town. The meetings were run as focus groups and a suggestions box was provided at each event for anonymous suggestions and comments. The top three priorities at each event follow in the table overleaf, with ambition, space (or lack of) and the use of heritage emerging as common priorities.

The feedback from each of the Consultation meetings is presented in this report in each respective section as *Public Consultation Feedback*. Examples of actual comments from the surveys and the consultation are presented in the respective sections of the report under *Comments from the County* and the tables in each section.

## 1.5 Top Three Priorities for the Arts – Public Consultation Meetings February 2015

Overall, these can be grouped into issues of Leadership and the development of a vision in the arts, Social Inclusion and Sustaining a Creative County.

Location	Number in Attendance	Top Three Arts Priorities
Bunclody	5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strong administrator/ driver (to remove the barriers of administration, such as insurance, from the artists).</li> <li>2. Spaces/ activity/ network unified by an interest in the arts within the community.</li> <li>3. Artists living in the area, being supported and connected.</li> </ol>
Enniscorthy	17	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Arts administrator in the Presentation Centre. Use the centre to its full potential; make it affordable for artists/ community groups.</li> <li>2. Make the most of our heritage of world-class creatives from the area: Eileen Gray, Colm Tobin, Tony O'Malley, Focal Short Story Competition and literary Festival.</li> <li>3. More youth projects for 12 – 17 year olds.</li> </ol>
Gorey	33	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Space - development of an arts centre (for design &amp; crafts/new media and contemporary arts)</li> <li>2. Communication – “umbrella” overview – what’s on and artist database for the events in town and county.</li> <li>3. Public art; youth; lots of local artists; rural hinterland isolation – Needs addressing.</li> </ol>
New Ross	7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. HOME. A space and a programme to go into it – to give it a value. A centre of excellence for the arts – especially community arts and those that can use the distinct location as a gateway for tourism.</li> <li>2. Professional opportunities in the locality; so that artists have the opportunity to develop their own practice as well as work within the community. Professional development; teaching artists the skills they need to source funding, be sole traders, etc.</li> <li>3. Media coverage; Recognition for amateur arts.</li> </ol>
Wexford 1	21	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Museum – develop Wexford’s heritage.</li> <li>2. Ambition – Wexford needs more – coupled with national press coverage</li> <li>3. Space – performance; lower risk for artists in terms of accessibility and affordability of spaces.</li> </ol>
Wexford 2	23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. More even distribution of funding; Affordable spaces/ vacant space (pop-ups; out of the traditional spaces).</li> <li>2. Networking hub – digital, physical, up-to-date!</li> <li>3. Target younger audiences, especially teenagers.</li> </ol>

### 1.5 Other Survey Results:

- The surveys<sup>9</sup> asked respondents to rate how they felt about the following statement:

*The arts in County Wexford are well supported by the Local Authority*



This response, from artists and artists organisations reflects a marginally below “satisfactory” result.

- In comparison, the answer from community groups, to the statement: *Wexford is a very creative county* revealed a more positive outcome overall:



The level to which the general public agreed that *the arts provision in County Wexford empowers communities* revealed an ‘average’ score:



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<sup>9</sup> Arts, Community and Public Surveys respectively

Just about all respondents agreed that *the arts are important to the national and international reputation of County Wexford* revealed that communities and artists feel that the arts have promotional and advocacy benefits for the County<sup>10</sup>:



### **Public Survey – further details.**

We asked people to tell us what they liked to do and choosing from the following activities to pick their top 3. From the 99 people who responded the most popular art forms in order were:

- Music (all kinds)
- Theatre & Drama
- Visual Arts & Painting
- Book Clubs and literature events
- Festivals
- Young People’s arts activities
- Crafts & Design
- Film
- Community arts
- Traditional Arts

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<sup>10</sup> Result from all surveys combined

## 2.0 Internal Considerations

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This section of the report looks at the current position of the Arts Department and contextualises the role of the Arts Department in terms of structural position, work programmes, staffing levels and expenditure. It looks at the arts budget and also Arts Council funding that comes into the County. This Review offers ideas and recommendations for future actions, but is not a strategy document.

An achievable vision for the arts is an important aspect of any local authority Arts Department. The vision for County Wexford needs to take into account the findings in this review, work on the challenges and build on the County's strengths. The vision needs to be carefully planned for in the forthcoming Arts Strategy. A fundamental aspect of this vision is to ensure it is led by the needs of the Arts & Creative Sectors, Communities and Education Practitioners. This will require input from across the County Council and also with external partners to ensure implementation.

### 2.1 Staffing

Current staffing levels are low but are generally in line with other County Councils of similar population size. Since 2009 staffing has dropped from five to three; the permanent post holder took a career break to work at national level.

Arts Department staff		
<b>County Arts Officer*</b>	5-year contract to July 2015, covering a career break of a permanent officer.	Permanent Post Covered by this Contract.
<b>Assistant Staff Officer</b>	14 months in post	Permanent
<b>Clerical Officer</b>	6 years in post	Permanent

This review included a comparison of Arts Office staffing levels. The research included a random selection of Counties: Leitrim, Clare and Offaly alongside neighbouring counties (Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Wicklow) to review staffing levels in the arts.<sup>12</sup> The comparison revealed that staffing levels are generally in line with other counties, with Leitrim benefitting from a high “arts staff to population” ratio.

The post of Arts Officer is nationally set at Grade 7. The Arts Officer role therefore fits into a structure in Wexford County Council that is similar elsewhere.

County	Population 2011 <sup>13</sup>	No. Dedicated arts staff
<b>Leitrim</b>	31,798	2
<b>Clare</b>	117,196	1.5
<b>Offaly</b>	76,687	3.5
<b>Carlow</b>	54,612	2
<b>Waterford (City &amp; County)</b>	113,795	No data (but 2 Arts Officers share the County & The City)
<b>Kilkenny</b>	95,419	3
<b>Wicklow</b>	136,640	1
<b>Wexford</b>	145,320	3

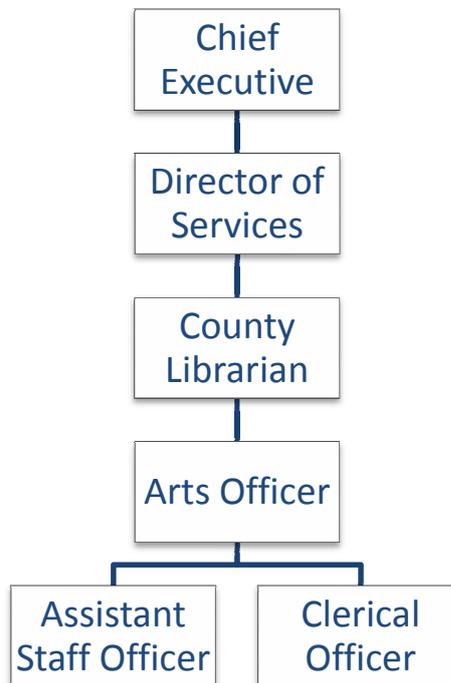
<sup>11</sup> The current contract holder is absent on statutory maternity leave, with no replacement available. A similar situation occurred in 2013 / 2014 resulting in a period of c20 months over the past 2 years with no Arts Officer in situ. Throughout the public consultations, respondents mentioned a lack of visibility of the Arts Department, which may be attributable to the impact of these absences.

<sup>12</sup> Information sourced from the Central Statistics Office Census 2011 and the respective County Council Websites and phone interviews.

<sup>13</sup> Central Statistics Office figures



## Staff Reporting Structure within the Arts Department



### 2.2 Wexford County Council Expenditure on the Arts

In terms of expenditure, according to Independent Public Policy Think Tank PublicPolicy.ie County Wexford Expenditure on the cultural services which includes arts is significantly less than other authorities\*:

County	Wexford	Expenditure	<b>€37.02 per person</b>
Recreation and Amenity - Leisure Services & Libraries			
<b>Average Expenditure of Local Authorities in the Republic of Ireland on Recreation and Amenity - Leisure Services &amp; Libraries</b>			€78.85 per person <sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Publicpolicy.ie.

In terms of benchmarking, County Wexford therefore is similar in cultural services expenditure to Meath, €33.17, Wicklow € 30.09 and Limerick €51.50.

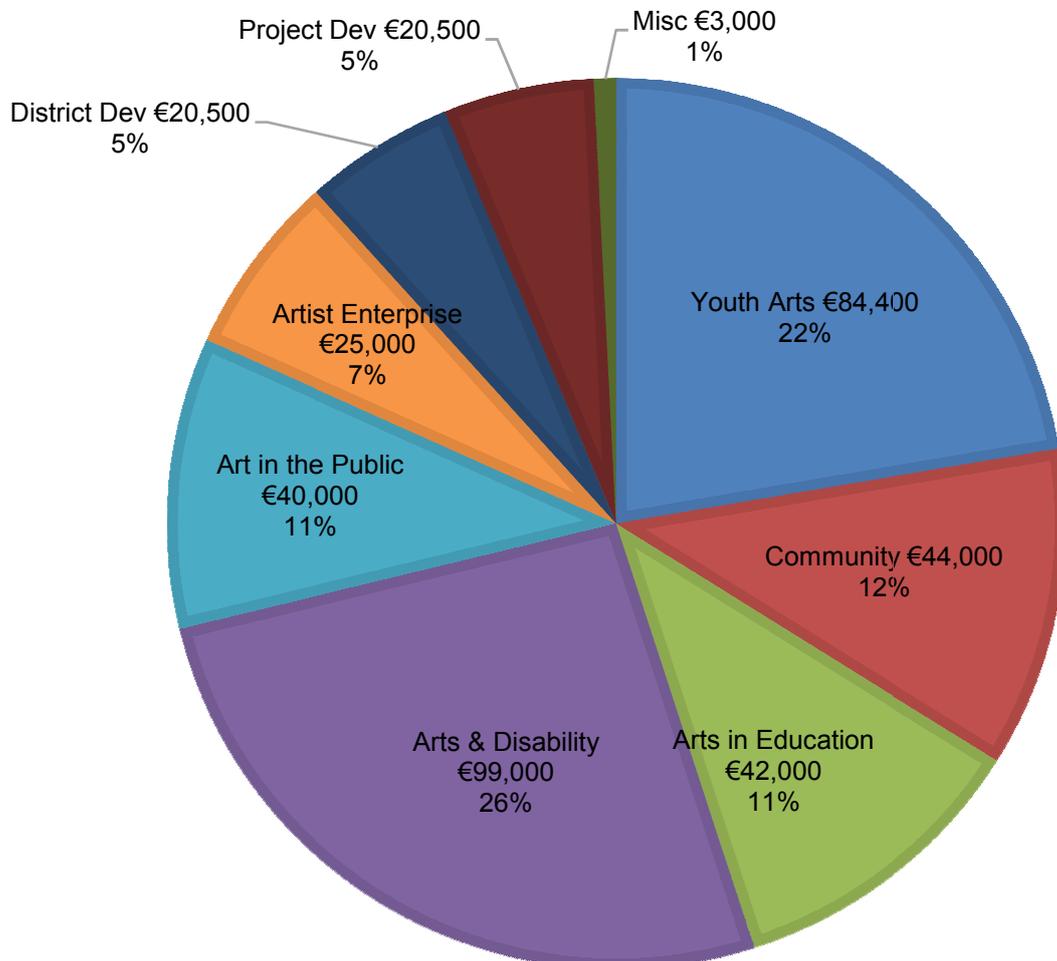
**Out of this overall Amenity, Leisure & Libraries Expenditure the following table shows what was spent directly on arts provision in County Wexford:**

2014	2013	2012
€378,400	€388,500	€387,685

**This expenditure (2014) was broken down as follows:**

- The Council are directly investing €378,400 in the arts in 2014 through the Arts Department, which is down from the €388,500 invested in

### Wexford County Council Expenditure on the Arts



2013 and €387,685 in 2012.

- The funding in terms of the arts directly represents a per capita spends of: €2.6<sup>15</sup> serving a population of 145,320.
- The above relates to Arts Department expenditure and not wider council spending on arts such as marketing, HR., tourism, etc.

### 2.3 Arts Council of Ireland Funding

Arts Council Grants To County Wexford <sup>16</sup>

Organisation	Amount €
Bui Bolg	45,000
<b>Wexford County Council Arts Department</b>	<b>75,820</b>
Wexford Festival Opera	1,420,000
<b>Sub Total (minus Wexford Festival Opera)</b>	<b>120,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,680,820</b>

All Arts Council grants are concentrated in Wexford Town. County Wexford is fortunate in receiving Arts Council funding for the Opera Festival. However, with Wexford Festival Opera taken out of the equation the County receives just **€120,820**.

**This €120,820 compares to neighbouring Counties as follows:**

€210,000 in Wicklow (3 organisations + local authority)

€235,300 in Carlow (2 organisations + local authority)

€712,000 in Waterford (5 organisations + local authority)

€1,040,230 in Kilkenny (6 organisations + local authority)

Regionally, therefore, County Wexford receives the most funding from the Arts Council; however, this funding is based around a smaller number of art

<sup>15</sup> Economic Profile County Wexford 2013/ CSO census 2011

<sup>16</sup> This table refers to Regular funded organisations – there are other funding schemes available to arts organisations and individuals who meet the criteria, such as DEIS – for traditional arts, touring, travel & training, and small and large festivals and events. The figures for these are not available as they go direct to the organization/individual.

forms than other counties. On one hand the presence of the National Opera House and the International Opera Festival provides much needed focus on the arts in the South East of Ireland, it enables the region to be seen as a world class producer of opera and there are economic benefits and spin offs surrounding it. On the other hand, a regional local authority has to assist the development of a National Cultural Institution year round, (The National Opera House) which is something that is usually trusted to the critical mass of a Capital City with a large population and respective economy. The Opera House, therefore, is both an asset and a liability in that it is seen to divert funds from other activity, yet provides an international arts profile for the County.

The Local Authority and the Opera House should be able to work in partnership to develop a strategy that is more community orientated – especially given that a number of respondents during the survey require access to venues/spaces to create, make, produce, rehearse and perform. This will become increasingly important given the regional focus of the EU City of Culture bid currently in preparation. The programming of the Opera House, outside of the Opera season has received criticism within this research process and the Opera House could be working with the Local Authority to ensure a certain number of bookings are reserved for community events, Wexford based talent and new works from across the South East.

Future funding applications to the Arts Council must reflect the changes in strategy that arise out of this report and also County Wexford's rich diversity of arts practice, learning and voluntary endeavour. It would be recommended that senior arts staff work closely with the Arts Council to build a relationship and ask for general advice on the issues surrounding County Wexford's unique position with regard to the arts.

## **Comments from the County – What people told us:**

*The Arts Department should bring existing groups within the community together, broaden our horizons and inspire the public.*

*Working in County Wexford is a good way to see how small amounts of funding can go a long way but at times the same people get the same money for the same projects.*

*I feel there are great things happening in hot spots with interested people who look for it... I do not feel that it is open to everyone. Or that provision is made for rural regions outside of the limited grants given. I also feel that the promotion or communication of activities and grant availability should be more accessible.*

*The visual arts are really vibrant in North Wexford but there is no support from the Arts Department of the Council. I don't even know if the arts officer has ever visited Gorey. But for the support from local Councillors, we would never know what the Council is doing.*

*The Council need to look at supporting the arts in ways that are not just financial.*

*Could the Council create a new brief for every local councillor/ council to adopt/ visit a group within their community to feedback to the council what's happening on the ground?*

*There is great scope for cultural events and sculpture parks at Johnstown Castle – a great place to do like Well's House do and create a courtyard selling local food, artefacts, vintage goods and crafts. Maybe a regular Saturday/Sunday market with live performers<sup>17</sup>.*

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<sup>17</sup> NB Teagasc have just tendered for a Company to run Johnstown Castle as a cultural tourism venue. It would be a perfect opportunity for the Council to advise and work with Teagasc and the new operators to ensure arts and creative industries are included. A Sculpture trail in the woods and grounds would be perfect (see Roche Court and Grizedale Forest in the UK. In addition, the other leisure facilities – such as trails, etc. could be developed in a more imaginative fashion than is usually seen in these places – adventure sports for example, which could bring in new types of arts audiences and tourists to the area.

## 3.0 Guiding Principles & Roles: Developing a vision for the arts

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### 3.1 The Review

This review will be used by Wexford County Council to build on its creative strengths, act on new developments within the arts and help the Council determine future plans, especially with regard to developing the County as a centre for artistic excellence. It offers recommended actions and priorities that the County Council will then act upon accordingly to deliver the next arts strategy (2016 – 2020).

### 3.2 Current Arts Strategy

The current arts strategy includes an overarching vision:

*To improve the quality of life for the citizens of County Wexford by enabling people to engage in high quality arts experiences and by stimulating and supporting standards of excellence among artists in their practice.*

The current arts strategy is applied to a programme, which includes:

1. **Arts in Healthcare Settings**
2. **Arts and Our Young People**
3. **Arts in the Community**
4. **Arts as Business Stimulus / Professional Artist Development**
5. **Music Development**
6. **Municipal District Projects**
7. **Arts in the Public Arena (including street arts)**
8. **Advice and Advocacy**

The Arts Department's programme focus on Arts in Healthcare Settings is

especially strong – which includes mental health and arts and disability programmes. This is reflected in the expenditure. The arts and young people programmes are in most cases delivered by third parties in partnership with the Council. This is a good practice in theory as it enables arts organisations to flourish and to use the specialist expertise that they contain. However, there is a need for a greater level of monitoring, service level agreements and impact surveys required to ensure artistic quality, value for money and suitable delivery of the programme.

An Irish Times Article in 2014 “Are Local Authorities neglecting the arts” was critical of some local authorities but highlighted the **Living Arts Project** a Wexford County Council Arts Office initiative working alongside Wexford Arts Centre <sup>18</sup> as an example of good practice.

With limited staff therefore, the Arts Department has still managed to create work of national significance and/or work that is valuable to certain communities (items 1-3 on the Programmes list see preceding page). However, the programme items (4 – 8) are in need of further development. Throughout the research period, people said that they need a greater visibility of Wexford County Council Arts Department, including a presence at events and across the region, greater involvement with communities and more leadership, support and guidance.

The Arts Department role, (given its capacity has been somewhat reduced over the past few years), has become perceived as primarily one of ‘funder’ and not one as policymaker, practitioner or artistic director/producer. The first step in the new strategy therefore, should be to seek funds and/or redirect funding to ensure a suitable level of staffing to reflect the level of artistic activity, community and creative ambitions across the County and the four municipal districts. This issue was reflected in the Arts Sector Survey too – where the County is seen as one that is creative, but not strongly supported by the County Council.

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<sup>18</sup> An artist-in-residence programme to primary schools in the county, externally curated with an end of year exhibition.

### 3.2 Three Main Objectives

In order to deliver and manage the Arts Programme, the Local Authority needs to work with objectives that suit the needs of the communities they serve. Through the research, surveys, meetings and reviewing the work of other councils – three overarching objectives emerged as to what people require from the local authority with regard to the arts – these three objectives need to be the focus of County Wexford’s Arts Provision in the future.

- **LEADERSHIP** – Developing and delivering a vision for the arts and a voice for the arts community
- **SOCIAL INCLUSION** – Ensuring accessibility, enriching lives, allowing marginalised groups to ‘find a voice’, develop skills, aid quality of life
- **SUSTAINING A CREATIVE COUNTY** – Buildign the capacity of artists, arts organisations and other creative enterprises to work and reside within the County

For most enquiries or projects it would help the Council to ask itself these questions when responding to external partners, stakeholders and communities:

- How is the Arts Department leading this and what approach (type of leadership) is required? How does this meet our vision? What values does it embody?
- Does the project aid quality of life across the County? Is it accessible to the relevant groups (physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally)? Is the project excluding anyone?
- How do Arts Department actions impact on the arts community – what do they need from the Arts Department and how can we support this?

### **Comments from the County:**

*We need the arts department to have people working out in the community.*

*What I need from the Local Authority is greater leadership and support – advice from someone who knows their stuff.*

*We need a countywide network and artist's database.*

*Greater partnerships and regional working with arts officers across County boundaries would help the production of work that has a critical mass and relevance.*

*If The Council could help us with promotion, audience engagement and deliver of complementary programmes – such as education work – we could deliver work that is well attended, popular and of the highest quality.*

### **3.3 Local Policy**

Local Policy from within the Arts Department of Wexford County Council is outlined below. In addition to the current Arts Strategy, Wexford County Council has carried out a number of internal reviews and external evaluations all of which have stated recommendations for future work. These include:

- Internal Review of Arts in Education 2010-2012 (The Living Art Project from 2013) - Sinead Barden, Arts Officer
- A thorough report on the Proposals for Future Development of Music Policy 2011 - Fergus Sheil
- A report on the economic impact of Wexford County Council's support of the Arts (Creative Dividends) 2013 - Dr. Richard Moloney, UCC
- ArtLinks Programme Report 2014 – Annette Clancy
- Artist in the Community Scheme Evaluation, 2012 - 2013 - Susan Murphy, Arts Department,
- Coracle Interreg final report Ireland/Wales - Susan Murphy, Arts Department,
- Internal review on Arts Ability 2010-2012 – Sinead Barden, Arts Officer
- Evaluation Reports on Arts Ability 2010-2012 - Marielle MacLeman
- European Arts Ability Weekend Review 2013 - Susan Murphy, Arts Department,
- Visual Arts Collection Acquisition Plan 2015 - Carissa Farrell

The amount of independent (external) evaluations conducted by the Arts Department is good practice and shows rigour and integrity with regard to the arts programmes. There are however some gaps that should be addressed in order to feed into the next Arts Strategy:

- Engaging with arts audiences in County Wexford. How can the Council help organisations develop audiences?
- A review of dance in the County and how the Council can best support dance
- A review of youth arts and provision for young and emerging artists
- A visual arts/studio guidance document for artists setting up in the area
- Professional bursaries and supports to professional and emerging artists to be reviewed. These include the recording studio bursaries and also the Emerging Visual Artists Award which is administered by Wexford Arts Centre on behalf of the Council
- The new Council HQ Building at Carriglawn as a broad-based gallery/arts space/showcasing arena
- Review of Artists in the Community Scheme
- Development of a Creative Industries policy<sup>19</sup>
- A ‘working spaces’ mapping document showing all the places where artistic production can take place – (available workshops, rehearsal

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<sup>19</sup> Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) part of the UK Government have a helpful definition and refer to Creative Industries as: “...those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent which have a potential for job and wealth creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property” (‘Creative Industries Mapping Document’, DCMS, 2001). DCMS define creative industries as those in the following fields:

- advertising
- architecture
- art and antiques
- computer games
- crafts
- design
- designer fashion
- film and video
- music
- performing arts
- publishing
- software
- TV and radio.

studios, venue hires etc.). This will require working with other Council departments

Given the new structures within local authorities it will be useful to see policies working at a local level that join up with developments outside of the arts – for example for tourism, economic development, community, sports and environment departments to work within the arts and vice versa. In order to develop policy that is relevant to the communities, it would be recommended to set up an advisory committee that includes external partners and stakeholders from artistic, educational, environmental, business and community sectors to support and advise the Arts Department on their needs. This Committee could meet at least once per year, in each municipal area.

#### **Comments from the County:**

*Things are too weighted towards Wexford town. The Council and County need to focus on the local. Think of it as 100 stars that shone in the sky, something that is valued and really touches people. By doing this we take what is perceived to be a weakness (local/ small) and make it our strength.*

*I now live in Ballymitty /Foulksmills area and there doesn't seem to be any artistic activities going on everything seems to revolve around sport.*

*I would like to see a priority placed on giving people of all ages and backgrounds access to different arts and culture initiatives across the county. Keeping the cost to a minimum is also important, as this will encourage people who may never have considered it before to participate in arts events.*

*The singer songwriter sessions in the cafes in Wexford were fantastic but they have stopped - maybe this could be led by the Arts programme?*

*Springtime Arts Festival in Wexford would be great. In October we have the Opera Festival and nothing can beat that but a general arts festival like in Carlow or Kilkenny would be great too.*

### **3.6 The ‘Y’ Factor**

In 2009, Simon Sinek<sup>20</sup> presented an influential Ted Talk regarding business marketing, which is also pertinent for any project or proposal. He suggested that when thinking of a project it is easy to determine the ‘what and the “how” and the “who’ but not the “Why’. Sinek’s approach is developed with the view that “people don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it”. For Wexford County Council this question is important – Why have an arts programme? From this core question a vision and a value system can be put into place. In terms of the arts there are a number of ‘Whys’ which we have developed as four themes.

#### **Why have an arts programme?**

Local Authorities arts provision can, as our themes illustrate, ensure social inclusion and a ‘voice’ for the marginalised, provide a better quality of life and engender feelings of wellbeing and socialisation, help build a healthy creative economy and support artists and organisations to produce work of excellence. They do this by providing expert guidance and advice, partnership and relationship building, policy development, strategic direction and through funding.

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<sup>20</sup> Sinek, Simon. Start With Why – How Great Leaders inspire everyone to take action 2007 USA

THEME	WHAT THIS MEANS?
<b>Ensure Social Inclusion</b>	<p>This means helping create programmes that are relevant to communities.</p> <p>Allowing for creative and cultural diversity.</p> <p>Bringing untapped talent to the fore</p> <p>Allowing a voice and a means of expression for those marginalised in society.</p> <p>Building community cohesion and pride.</p>
<b>Provide For Education, Health And Wellbeing</b>	<p>This means integrating rich artistic experiences both in and outside the formal school curriculum at every level. Attempting to bridge the divide between the disciplines of science and art through multidisciplinary and design projects and competitions.</p> <p>Developing lifelong learning opportunities in the arts.</p> <p>Recognising and producing work that has therapeutic benefits.</p> <p>Recognising disabled people as artists and arts audiences as well as participants on programmes.</p> <p>Recognising the value of the arts on our quality of life.</p> <p>Distraction from anti-social behaviour (thereby saving money in other areas).</p>

<p><b>Build A Creative Economy</b></p>	<p>Cultural Tourism – The attraction of visitors and businesses</p> <p>Development of skills and expertise.</p> <p>Attracting enterprise through clusters, hubs and networks.</p> <p>Retaining talented people in the area.</p> <p>Regeneration activity and bringing places to life.</p> <p>Improving the ‘quality of life’ for its inhabitants – making an area attractive places to live and work.</p> <p>Supporting diversity.</p> <p>Helping find sustainable and meaningful employment.</p> <p>Adding vibrancy and life to a range of locations.</p> <p>‘Knock on’ effects via business-to-business services (accountancy, advertising, legal services etc.).</p>
<p><b>Support Artistic Excellence</b></p>	<p>This means assisting County Wexford arts organisations and individuals to access the right tools and skills to develop technique.</p> <p>Supporting them in developing careers and profiles.</p> <p>Ensuring sustainability and well-being of the artist and arts organisations.</p> <p>Helping the organisation/individual to innovate and present work that is vibrant, engaging and life enhancing.</p>

## **Comments from the County:**

*I believe emotional intelligence; cultural diversity and artistic skills play a huge role in breaking down cultural barriers within our community.*

*Great Community Art happens when the Community trusts that the Artist is there to unleash the creativity that already exists with the group. If an Artist can empower a group to create from within themselves then that will be the best Art. Giving a group great quality materials to work with, a warm space to work in and a quality space to perform or exhibit the final work also empowers a Community and makes them feel like what they are doing matters. If it matters to the people creating the work then that will spill out into the Community and the Community will care about the Art. Otherwise it's just something to do to pass the time.*

*I would like less focus on the economic benefits of the arts and more on their contribution to well-being, inclusiveness, creativity, and community spirit.*

*I would like artists to be taken more seriously as professional, intelligent, ambitious individuals.*

*I would welcome affordable studio spaces for artists to work from (I would like one myself). I approached the arts office ages ago to see if there were any plans to allow artists work from currently empty buildings for minimal rent but there were none at the time anyway. This is a shame as it is a model that works well elsewhere.*

*County Wexford Youth Theatre (CWYT) is now one of the most prolific and largest Youth Theatres in Ireland. Staging over 30 productions in 10 years both in Wexford and around Ireland and Europe.*

*Our main problem used to be rehearsal space...but it's now performance space. Wexford Opera House is too expensive to rent, the Arts Centre is too busy with its own programme, and the Dun Mhuire Theatre is sewn up by local Amateur Dramatic groups, which leaves us nowhere to showcase CWYT's work locally! It's a strange situation in that theatres and venues in other towns and cities in Ireland are more accessible to us! So, if we had a proper municipal theatre in town that would really help!*

*I would like to see recognition of artists/arts organisations as social entrepreneurs by local/ national enterprise, support with funds for enterprise development and for Wexford Chamber/council encourage and help gain approaches to local business sponsorship for arts organisations and arts projects.*

*I was in a theatre company many years ago. It was great to be part of the activities and to meet like-minded people.*

*I believe the greatest challenge to local drama groups in Wexford is the lack of suitable venues. The Arts centre is too small; Dun Mhuire is too big and technically poor. The opera house is very good but FAR TOO EXPENSIVE!!! Surely something can be done to allow local theatre groups to stage productions in the Opera House both stages at a reduced subsidised rate. After all the people own it, we paid to build it.*

*There should be a commission of an opera about William Marshal's adventures in Ireland. This should be commissioned and performed in the National Opera House to support the development of tourism in the South East with a focus on the French Market. The background to this is Waterford, Wexford and Kilkenny County Councils are working together on a number of initiatives to become European Capital of Culture for 2020). The 3 counties are linked by the Norman era when many of today's visitor attractions were founded. But one Norman, William Marshall (Lord of Leinster) stands out as he founded/granted/built: Tintern Abbey, Hook Lighthouse, New Ross Town, St Marys, Jerpoint Abbey, Kilkenny Castle, Black Abbey, Duiske Abbey in Graiguenamanagh, St Canice's Cathedral, Ferns Castle, to mention but a few. Many French tourists would be interested in this shared background.*

*A centre for design needs to be established to build on the heritage of Eileen Gray. This view was echoed by the following comment:*

*'Create a national creative centre in the old St. Senan's Hospital, Enniscorthy – and call it: The Eileen Gray Centre for the Arts'<sup>21</sup>*

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<sup>21</sup> Summary of longer proposition sent by a member of the public by email

## 4.0 Promoting County Wexford as a centre for the arts.

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County Wexford is an extremely creative County. The quantity and quality of artistic work produced by professionals, amateurs, in education settings and in communities and healthcare should be acknowledged at national level – and it is recommended that the County Council create an identity for County Wexford, promoting its image as a national centre of excellence for creativity and the arts.<sup>22</sup>

There are a number of high profile visual artists such as Michael Warren and writers such as Colm Tóibín, Eoin Colfer and John Banville, alongside playwright Billy Roche. There were repeated requests from across the County for the development of literature or film *and* literature initiatives to celebrate Wexford's literary success. The new tourism initiative, *Ireland's Ancient East* will also offer scope to develop a cultural profile from its heritage – building on the success of such initiatives as The Ros Tapestry and the planned crafts centre at Colclough Gardens/Tintern Abbey. The role of heritage offers enormous scope for the development of activities that merge art and history into a unique cultural landscape. A key aspect of promoting County Wexford as a centre for the arts is to ensure that the Council support and encourage artistic excellence. This may mean recruiting Wexford based artists as informal ambassadors for the Creative branding of the County.

### 4.1 Arts & the Economy

***“Great places have a good balance. They are alive and vibrant; yet provide spaces for calm and tranquillity. They are dense and encourage mixing, yet also create room for separateness and privacy. Much in them is ordinary, yet interspersed with some extraordinary features”.***<sup>23</sup>

The arts and creative industries in County Wexford are very broad for a population of its size and indeed, the quote above from the recognised world

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<sup>22</sup> This means recognizing the County as a Cultural Centre as a whole.

<sup>23</sup> Charles Landry [www.charleslandry.com](http://www.charleslandry.com)

authority on place making and creative cities shows that County Wexford has all the right ingredients to be seen as a 'great place'. The arts in general have been and usually are the first victim of funding cuts in the public sector. It is true that many arts organisations have developed a practice that exists only through grant aid. For some organisations this is a good investment, for other organisations it would be pertinent for them to look at different models of finance – such as social entrepreneurship, to ensure a greater level of sustainability.

There is scope for rural creative industries to act as regenerators of rural areas – 'keeping the lights on' in sparsely populated areas. With many small rural buildings in disrepair, the role of artists and creatives moving in to these buildings would serve a dual purpose – keeping heritage alive while revitalising 'cottage industries' for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. An example of this is the Cowhouse Studios in Rathnure, Enniscorthy that has received support from the Arts Department in the past. Cowhouse provides a unique facility offering training and studio space for artists based on a working farm. Cowhouse Studios is a good model demonstrating agricultural diversification. As Cowhouse demonstrates, there is much scope for using buildings for creative purposes.

The development of low rent short-term business tenancies for artists' studios is now a growing movement. The benefits that accrue for areas that assist artists to find suitable spaces to work include creating a sense of vibrancy and civic pride in seeing these buildings used. 'Pop Up' events, inclusive architectural schemes and creative use of buildings are very effective in developing a link between artist and community. The Ice Hotel and the Tree Hotel in Sweden are good examples of this.<sup>24</sup>

***“After the sudden recession in 2008, Ireland faced an abundance of empty buildings and spaces. These disused buildings lacked function and so contributed to an identity of place that reflected the landscape of post-recession Ireland, becoming landmarks that represented the end of the construction boom. Recently renewed development has begun to take place***

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.icehotel.com/art-and-design/this-years-artists/> <http://treehotel.se/>

*across Ireland, and in this climate the role of changing identities of many of these buildings will come into question. These spaces, which function as urban landmarks, are prime locations for place-making artist-led initiatives”<sup>25</sup>*

Design and Crafts provision are an important indicator of an area’s creativity and although at times different to ‘fine arts’ (where the primary focus is intellectual rather than economic) in the public’s eye they are often indistinguishable. Many local authorities now support these activities (such as Wicklow Craft Trail and Leitrim Design House) alongside grant aided community work.<sup>26</sup> The sector could be greater supported through recognition of the design sector in County Wexford.

*“Wexford is very strong in terms of numbers of craft enterprises and has potential for growth and further development”<sup>27</sup>*

#### **4. 2 Wexford – the contemporary heart of Irish Design**

Historically the County is recognised as the home of the influential 20<sup>th</sup> Century Modernist designer Eileen Gray<sup>28</sup> and the County is growing in reputation as a centre for design:

- Wexford based international fashion designer **Richard Malone** – winner of the 2014 **LVMH** (Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy) Young Fashion Designer of the Year prize. This prize is one of the most coveted globally in the world of fashion.
- NCAD fashion graduate from Gorey, Co Wexford, **Michael Power** jointly won the 2014 Award for **Best Collection** London Fashion Week 2014

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<sup>25</sup> Irish Journal of arts management and cultural policy Volume 2 Transient Places: The Public Benefits of Short-Term Artist- Led Spaces Shane Finan Autumn 2014,

<sup>26</sup> It would be advised to support these creative businesses through mentoring, guidance, places to work and assistance with promotion rather than grant aiding them apart from where there work helps to deliver at least three of the four themes.

<sup>27</sup> The Economic Significance and Potential of the Crafts Sector in Ireland Indecon Economic Consultants 2010

<sup>28</sup> There is a collection of Eileen Gray Designs in the Museum of Decorative Arts – National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, and at Enniscorthy Castle. The global rights to reproduction of Eileen Gray’s design reside with a design and architecture company Aram Associates in London [www.aram.co.uk](http://www.aram.co.uk)

- **Bláithín Ennis** won **Jewellery Designer of the Year in 2014** and has been selected to take part in 'Design Island 2015' an exhibition at Dublin Airport to celebrate Year of Design 2015
- **Ceadogán Rugs** This specialist craft business has created rugs for the top hotels in the country – including County Wexford's Kelly's Hotel in Rosslare and the Monart Spa near Enniscorthy, alongside commissions to provide rugs for Irish embassies the world over. Their work with the Mainie Jellet Collection echoes the modernism of this painter's work and is complementary to the design aesthetic of Eileen Gray.

### 4.3 County Wexford's Creative Assets

As well as strengths in design, there are many other creative assets recognised as good practice nationally<sup>29</sup> that are either directly created by the County Council Arts Department or are produced by external arts organisations or individuals.

- Well supported amateur arts activity especially in drama
- Visual Artists working at National and International level
- The National Opera House
- The International Opera Festival
- The work of Greenacres Gallery and Lantern events (Speigeltent producers) as private sector arts producers
- The Wexford Arts Centre and its potential to act as a county wide hub
- Ros Tapestry as an example of community endeavour, heritage and tourism working hand in hand
- The New Ross Piano Festival a niche festival that is internationally renowned
- Many heritage sites and gardens throughout the County, a diverse heritage offering

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<sup>29</sup> Through press recognition, peer admiration, impact and reputation. Inclusion in this list is for illustration purposes and does not infer future support or recommendation from the Council. This review also recognizes that there are many more talented people and organisations in the County who are too plentiful to name here – but the recommendation that WCC create a database may help recognize talent in the future wherever it may be found.

- Contemporary and digital arts from the Gorey School of Arts – creating a ‘hub’ in terms of digital media, film, installation and conceptual arts through the ‘peripheries’ programme
- A history of contemporary dance – the legacy of which is now being upheld by 2 Many Dance Moves in New Ross (This company also run youth dance events and dance events in community settings) and Killealy based dancer Vivian Boucher Hayes who trained in New York
- Film and Media - “The Search for Wi-Fi” by County Wexford Film Project, Wexford received a ‘special judges mention’ in the Young Irish Film maker - Fresh Film Awards in March 2015, the County Wexford Youth Film Project
- A developed public library service
- The County Wexford Art Collection

#### **4.4 PROMOTING COUNTY WEXFORD AS A CENTRE FOR THE ARTS.**

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Opera Festival.</li> <li>• Reputation as a musical county.</li> <li>• Visual Artists working at national and international level.</li> <li>• Heritage.</li> <li>• Contemporary arts provision in Gorey</li> <li>• Amateur arts provision.</li> <li>• Arts and disability programmes.</li> <li>• Knowledge and skills in public art.</li> <li>• Good level of arts programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera House/Festival attract a lot of funding.</li> <li>• Lack of artists’ database.</li> <li>• Lack of networking opportunities.</li> <li>• Visibility of arts department/officer across the County requires attention.</li> <li>• Lack of national media focussed on a broad range of arts.</li> <li>• Signage to key arts venues is variable.</li> <li>• Spread of arts activity is</li> </ul>

<p>for young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crafts.</li> <li>• Emerging designers with international reputations.</li> <li>• County Wexford Arts Collection.</li> <li>• Third Level Institutions offering courses to PG level in the arts and knowledge industries.</li> <li>• Good private arts sector (galleries and concert promoters for example).</li> <li>• Literature/ writers.</li> </ul>	<p>focussed on Wexford town.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not addressing barriers to access – including physical access (disability friendliness, lack of public transport), economic (costs), social (the arts are “<i>not for people like me</i>”), educational (feeling that ‘the arts’ are for “<i>people more educated than me</i>”).</li> <li>• Lack of support to high potential emerging artists.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ‘brand’ County Wexford as a national centre for creativity.</li> <li>• Opera Festival Fringe to be used more to celebrate local arts – both professional and amateur.</li> <li>• Greater community use of the National Opera House.</li> <li>• Review use of empty/old buildings for artistic use.</li> <li>• Greater partnership opportunities within Higher Education establishments.</li> <li>• Build on presence of companies like <i>Done Deal</i> to promote digital and high tech creative media businesses.</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further funding could be diverted to the Opera House/Festival.</li> <li>• Artists not supported move away.</li> <li>• Arts audiences become harder to engage with.</li> <li>• Art funding and/or support only given to the artists/organisations that ‘shout the loudest’ rather than those that most fit the strategic aims of the County.</li> <li>• Not enough artists, schemes or organisations putting themselves forward for national awards – resulting in a</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County-wide remit for Wexford Arts Centre.</li> <li>• Development of contemporary arts in Gorey region.</li> <li>• Development of heritage arts in New Ross Region.</li> <li>• Further development of youth arts in Enniscorthy.</li> <li>• European funding and partnerships.</li> <li>• Firm up partnership agreements, funding and evaluation requirements to monitor quality and impact of community arts projects.</li> </ul>	<p>lack of exposure for County Wexford's arts sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If external funding is not sought – other areas could poach audiences, as their programmes will be better resourced.</li> <li>• Uncertainty of regional 'ArtsLinks' service in the future.</li> </ul>
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## 4.5 PROMOTING COUNTY WEXFORD AS A CENTRE FOR THE ARTS – PUBLIC CONSULTATION FEEDBACK FEBRUARY 2015

### SOCIAL INCLUSION

GOREY	ENNISCORTHY	WEXFORD	BUNCLODY	NEW ROSS
<p>Gorey needs its own Arts Centre.</p> <p>A new strategy, for everyone, not just artists.</p> <p>Bring existing groups within the community together.</p> <p><i>Love Gorey</i> website can be used to promote all groups.</p> <p>Create funding for social inclusion arts schemes.</p> <p>CBS old school Potential to be used as an arts space.</p>	<p>Forum for interactive activities with audiences; more interactive public art.</p> <p>More funding for community based projects within schools.</p> <p>Promote existing schemes, i.e. artists in the community scheme to marginalised groups.</p> <p>More Council staff working out in the field as community workers to spread the word and support communities.</p> <p>Very important to get things visible seen and out there.</p> <p>Use the arts to boost Regeneration, which is much needed.</p>	<p>Graffiti wall; skate park; raft of youth facilities. More public art.</p> <p>Supporting Artists to work within the community expands people's lifestyles.</p> <p>Feeling heard – listen to what people are saying.</p> <p>Support good mental health through the arts promoting well-being.</p> <p>Acknowledge historic Wexford and shared culture of the town.</p> <p>Lots of new communities and new people in the town with lots of new energy and that should be built upon and welcomed.</p>	<p>Variety of spaces e.g. empty shops/buildings, pop-ups.</p> <p>Training for groups/individuals.</p> <p>Focus on the local; 100 stars that shone in the sky; something that touches people.</p> <p>Big amateur drama scene in Bunclody.</p>	<p>Bring the arts out into the community.</p> <p>Develop existing film and drama to make it more inclusive.</p> <p>Use existing spaces for community groups – there is a lack of good spaces.</p> <p>Good example is the Ros Tapestry.</p> <p>More recognition for amateur and community endeavour such as pipe bands.</p>

		Diversity is easy to programme in festivals like Zorrofest.		
PROVIDE FOR EDUCATION, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING				
GOREY	ENNISCORTHY	WEXFORD	BUNCLODY	NEW ROSS
<p>Art &amp; fun in the park to encourage children.</p> <p>Promote the arts through the schools.</p> <p>Variety of Arts in schools should be encouraged.</p> <p>Use the <i>Educate Together</i> model – parents doing workshops in schools; educate the parents.</p> <p>Funding is needed to spread availability of classes to all socio-economic groups.</p> <p>Amateur arts are well catered for</p>	<p>More support financially and publically for youth groups interested in various art forms.</p> <p>Opportunity to showcase/ perform: Youth Arts Festival in Co Wexford.</p> <p>Pop-up literary events.</p> <p>Active and engaging public spaces; schools; centre of town.</p> <p>More funding for community based projects within schools</p> <p>Non-formal education: rehearsal space, expertise and advice, studio space, collaboration between young people and experts.</p>	<p>Arts ability programme continued support and development.</p> <p>Supporting the early identification and nurturing of creativity and skills in schools.</p> <p>Schools packages for opera tickets.</p> <p>Bring diverse communities together.</p> <p>Physical and mental fitness starts with the arts.</p> <p>Arts Centre can be used as a county wide hub – doing work across the county to help reach those who can't get to Wexford town.</p>	<p>A lot of drama and music in the schools in the area – needs to move out into the community.</p> <p>Film- Youth Film (linking in with New Ross). Film Club/ Cinemobile with themed films – specific interest areas e.g. bike scrambling, mountain climbing, etc.</p> <p>Need organised art classes in the area.</p> <p>Lack of activities for young people.</p>	<p>Support Barrack Lane, home to Ross Arts &amp; Music Project (RAMP).</p> <p>Develop the existing after schools and well-being through dance and arts projects.</p> <p>Use of arts in the school curriculum.</p> <p>Amateur arts scene brings people together.</p> <p>Youth film project was very enjoyable.</p> <p>New Ross needs community identity through the arts and not a Kennedy statue!</p>

	<p>Get the schools involved and encourage parental support for youth arts.</p> <p>Presentation Centre is not a great space but at least it was used, not now that the staff have gone. It needs dedicated staff to help and promote.</p>			
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**CREATIVE ECONOMY**

<b>GOREY</b>	<b>ENNISCORTHY</b>	<b>WEXFORD</b>	<b>BUNCLODY</b>	<b>NEW ROSS</b>
<p>Invest in young people; encourage their artistic enterprise.</p> <p>Art auctions where percentages of the work sold goes to building an arts centre. Support small local festivals.</p> <p>Access to electronic booking for theatre and other events locally.</p> <p>New and contemporary media/digital</p>	<p>Support with VAT and property rates for artists.</p> <p>Eileen Gray, Brownswood – school/ workshops on Eileen Gray/ Design.</p> <p>Mark town trails e.g. craft trail; literary trail; design trail; film trail/ Festival (3 films made in town); river walk (with sculptures) and create trail map.</p> <p>Link existing infrastructure and the arts.</p>	<p>Research global development with a view to acknowledging the importance of the arts.</p> <p>Educating the audience e.g. educating business community on the arts and the potential for collaboration and success.</p> <p>Could the Council be a conduit between commercial and artistic initiatives?</p> <p>Why not include the</p>	<p>Craft – garden trail, craft trail, needs a venue/ vehicle behind it.</p> <p>Employ artists and businesses do well; brings a vibrancy to the area – e.g. artist in the community scheme.</p> <p>Artists’ network: make local artists aware of each other.</p> <p>5 year plan</p>	<p>Build on existing infrastructure: Dunbrody Famine Ship, Ross Tapestry, Kennedy Homestead.</p> <p>Lots of small businesses in creative world could be exhibited in the various tourism centres – Cultural Tourism.</p>

<p>arts could be a strength in Gorey.</p> <p>Designers and artists live in Gorey yet work in Dublin – need to bring them home.</p> <p>Professional practice programme and peer mentoring. Regular meetings and talks by artists and creative people inspiring us with their work.</p>	<p>Use the legacy of Eileen Gray to sow the seeds that Enniscorthy is a creative place.</p> <p>Literature Festival could link industry, education and community.</p> <p>Better promotion and advertising.</p>	<p>wind industries and have a kite sailing/ inflatable's/ kite surfing festival?</p> <p>Use of spaces that are underutilised by the Town could be used as places to make – print workshops, framing rooms etc.</p> <p>Need to be able to find support when setting up a new business – better supports in other Counties.</p>	<p>for Bunclody.</p>	
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### SUPPORT ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

<b>GOREY</b>	<b>ENNISCORTHY</b>	<b>WEXFORD</b>	<b>BUNCLODY</b>	<b>NEW ROSS</b>
<p>Support artists working in niche areas.</p> <p>Music &amp; Arts Festival, large scale, for Gorey.</p> <p>A literature event/ weekend/ festival; stand alone or as part of an existing festival; e.g.</p>	<p>Set up international standard literature centre to promote and recognise Wexford writers; i.e. Colm Tobin, Billy Roche.</p> <p>Support Plein Air as it is the biggest international arts festival in Europe.</p> <p>Space</p>	<p>Space/ a variety of spaces e.g. empty shops/ buildings, pop-ups.</p> <p>Look at how the money is being spent.</p> <p>Countywide 'dry-run' for 2020; strategy; different approach to other festivals.</p>	<p>Create funding streams for existing artists working within the community. E.g. dance companies, drama, large bands, and visual artists through the artist in the community scheme.</p>	<p>Create funding streams for existing artists working within the community. E.g. dance companies, drama, large bands, and visual artists through the artist in the community scheme.</p>

<p>Gap Arts Festival.</p> <p>Provide courses on local/ traditional crafts, supported by the Council; need to be supported and exhibited.</p> <p>Bring back the arts festival as it was and use it in a contemporary way.</p> <p>More advertising, and create a 'what's on' guide for the whole County.</p>	<p>opportunities for the Opera Fringe Festival in Enniscorthy.</p> <p>Artist exchanges from other parts of Ireland.</p>	<p>Seed money for artistic enterprises.</p> <p>Bring back materials grant.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for developing professional standards of practice.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for developing professional standards of practice.</p>
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**4.6 PROMOTING COUNTY WEXFORD AS A CENTRE FOR THE ARTS**

**ACTIONS**

**THEME MEETING THE CHALLENGE**

**ENSURING SOCIAL INCLUSION**

- Develop a policy for access as a condition of funding.
- Create ongoing support to community groups wanting to/currently using artist in the community scheme.
- Work on residency schemes – placing artists in communities.
- Ensure a relevant county wide spread of arts provision.

**PROVIDING FOR EDUCATION, HEALTH & WELLBEING**

- Lead policy innovations in the areas of arts and early school leaving prevention.
- Offer careers guidance to schools regarding a career in the arts.
- Build on the current arts and education programmes delivered by the Arts Department.
- Offer a music led ‘Living Arts’ Programme. E.g. collaborate with Music Generation/ other experts.
- Separate arts and health from arts and disability programmes.
- Develop ambassador schemes to engage communities, students and others as audiences.
- Develop arts collection for further education usage.
- Develop loan scheme for artworks in hospitals and community settings.

**BUILDING A CREATIVE ECONOMY**

Work with Third Level Institutions to attract high achieving under graduates and retain talented graduates.

Promote bursaries and support programmes for creative businesses  
Offer regular creative enterprise networking events.

Look into the use of rural and urban infrastructure such as using disused/underused buildings and spaces for creative purposes, from short-term 'pop up' events to longer-term rentals and incubation centres. – Rates reductions for creative start-ups.

Help promote the creative industries in the County.

Work with Higher Education, SOLAS (An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) and Local Enterprise Office to deliver specific training to arts organisations and artists.

**SUPPORTING ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE**

Support promotion of arts events.

Develop a database of artists.

Develop/ improve an 'arts based' *Wexford What's on Guide* with

partner institutions, e.g. Fáilte Ireland.

Recognise that excellence happens in the amateur and professional sectors and map this. Provide a creative 'ted talks' type event regularly to share the most innovative of creative practice (see also Do Lectures in rural West Wales).

Assist artists and others with promotion and exposure.

Build national press relations.

Use the International Opera Festival Fringe to programme a curated series of artistic events offering the very best Wexford artists opportunities to participate. The Arts Department could lead on this and bring in guest curators of repute and standing.

Ensure a large-scale community event at each International Opera Fringe Festival.

Develop the Presentation Centre to promote education and careers in design, utilising the strong international legacy of Enniscorthy as the birthplace of Eileen Gray; building links with Paris and the Companies

who own the rights to her designs (e.g. Aram Design in London).

Review County led bursaries and/or deliver a scheme to develop progression for amateur, emerging and established artists of international reach; such as that in County Laois, where an award of **€7,000** is offered to an artist with proven needs, working to a high standard.

## 5.0 Support and empower emerging and established artists

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This category is very closely related to the promotion of County Wexford as a Creative County and encouraging Artistic Excellence. If the County is promoted as a creative and cultural 'brand,' that in itself helps the promotion of its artists and creative enterprises.

### 5.1 Employment in the Arts & Crafts Sector

Although creative industries themselves are thriving, quite often individual artists, sole traders and micro businesses are sometimes barely surviving – with some earning less than €10,000 per year. Visual Artists Ireland state that in 2009 a nationwide survey revealed that 67 per cent of respondents earned less than €10,000 annually from creative work in 2008. This rose to 83 per cent by 2013. By 2013, the Survey revealed that 64 per cent of visual artists earned less than €10,000 for both creative AND non-creative work.<sup>30</sup>

The crafts sector in County Wexford, made up of many micro and SME businesses, overlaps with the arts sector quite considerably and according to a 2013 report is strong<sup>31</sup>. The arts sector therefore could learn a lot from how Craft is produced, with very little in terms of grant aid. In 2013, the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland commissioned a report by Indecon to map the crafts sector. Indecon examined Limerick, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Cork and Wexford. In Wexford, the report revealed that there were 151 Design and Crafts Council of Ireland registered crafts organisations/people in 2013 that as a whole employed 530 people. This made up 13.9% of the labour force of the five counties used in the study.

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<sup>30</sup> Visual Arts Ireland The Social, Economic & Fiscal Status of the Visual Artist in Ireland 2008/09 Plus update Irish Times 4.4.15

<sup>31</sup> Indecon Report 2013 – Mapping The Crafts Sector in Southern Ireland. DCCOI

***“In today’s interconnected world, culture’s power to transform societies is clear. Its diverse manifestations – from our cherished historic monuments and museums to traditional practices and contemporary art forms – enrich our everyday lives in countless ways. Heritage constitutes a source of identity and cohesion for communities disrupted by bewildering change and economic instability. Creativity contributes to building open, inclusive and pluralistic societies. Both heritage and creativity lay the foundations for vibrant, innovative and prosperous knowledge societies”.***<sup>32</sup>

The arts sector, as part of the creative economy, offers a range of employment opportunities within the County Wexford area. Alongside this, there are also a large number of self-employed artists and SME creative businesses.<sup>33</sup>

The growth of Creative Industries<sup>34</sup> in the area has strong potential and supports could be developed for the sector taking a multi-agency approach “Applying the direct economic value of €6.73 million...it is estimated that the [Arts] sector employs 70.8 FTE jobs which were directly linked to the arts sector in 2012. A further 29.7 FTE jobs are supported indirectly”.

#### **Comments from the County:**

*We feel that despite Wexford’s strong cultural identity and wealth of artistic and creative talent, that there is a gap between decision makers, policy shapers, communities and artists.*

*We feel that frequently artists are an afterthought and are therefore not brought in on the process throughout. This needs to be addressed if artists are to be recognised and valued as having an important role to play in our society. The afterthought approach leaves artists very unempowered and meaningless, especially when their role is merely seen as cosmetic so as to create a photo for the forthcoming brochure. This does not value the artist or give them any room for creative integrity or delivery. It also leaves artists*

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<sup>32</sup> World Heritage & Cultural Diversity – UNESCO - World Heritage and Cultural Diversity Dieter Offenhäuser

<sup>33</sup> Wexford Local Enterprise Office

<sup>34</sup> Creative Dividends: The economic impact of Wexford County Council’s Support of the Arts Sector Moloney, R. and Barden, S.

*resenting being forced to work with communities who have not really engaged with them as thinking human beings.*

*We would like to see artists being given a role on policy committees, being asked to contribute to community endeavour at the start of a project rather than at the end and being paid appropriately for their time, ideas and efforts. It is proven that arts projects that are delivered collectively can deliver huge social change, build self-esteem, encourage positive constructive behaviour and overall transform a community through expression and empowerment. Embed it, enjoy it, appreciate it and nurture it. Artists can and will deliver for our communities if they are encouraged to blossom and are respected.*

## **5.2 SUPPORT AND EMPOWER EMERGING AND ESTABLISHED ARTISTS**

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent galleries.</li> <li>• Artists of national repute.</li> <li>• Private-sector arts provide vibrancy.</li> <li>• Volunteering in the arts.</li> <li>• International opera artists visit every year.</li> <li>• Good opportunities to work in arts and health, education and disability arts in the past.</li> <li>• Current programme has been set up to support the artist as entrepreneur with bursaries.</li> <li>• Amateur and Voluntary sector offer good opportunities for building skills and experiences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of entrepreneurial and business skills in the sector (and often resistance to gaining them).</li> <li>• Lack of meaningful opportunities to produce.</li> <li>• Stagnancy – the same artists getting funding.</li> <li>• Arts Education at third level is marginalised.</li> <li>• Third level activity with regard to development of incubator schemes and lack of initiatives to retain gifted creative sector graduates.</li> <li>• Arts education activity at third level lacks promotion.</li> </ul>

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop peer-mentoring scheme.
- Develop with third level institutions a flagship postgraduate course in arts to retain and attract (national/international) graduates.
- Develop creative industries business training initiatives.
- Develop more opportunities for Wexford artists to work on a regional basis – developing critical mass (particularly in dance and performance).
- Create a cross-departmental and multi-agency “Wexford Promotions” project to act as a development agency for all creative activity in the County.
- Develop the support for artists scheme.
- Scope to cultivate the Artist in the Community Scheme
- Engage with Arts & Disability Ireland/Arts Council Arts and Disability Connect (ADC) a new scheme for artists with disabilities. This scheme is designed to support artists make new and ambitious work.

## THREATS

- Creative people give up working in the sector due to lack of funds.
- Creative people move out of the area.
- ‘Non-networked’ arts such as traditional music, storytelling and dance become excluded or shut down as community leaders face other pressures.
- Lack of support to artists with high potential and working to a high standard, but with limited means may have to give up their practice.
- Talented students take up courses outside of County Wexford and never return.
- Lack of national media coverage across the range of arts, culture and creative sectors in County Wexford creates a perception of stagnancy.

**5.3 SUPPORT & EMPOWER EMERGING & ESTABLISHED ARTISTS – PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESULTS FEBRUARY 2015**

**ENSURE SOCIAL INCLUSION**

<b>GOREY</b>	<b>ENNISCORTHY</b>	<b>WEXFORD</b>	<b>BUNCLODY</b>	<b>NEW ROSS</b>
Platform to promote, display and sell healing arts and to volunteer for gigs/ events as a civic act of caring; online platform.	It is essential to have an arts administrator based here in the Presentation Centre, Enniscorthy to work with artists/ writers and community groups.  Find out who the artists are!	Maximise Wexford’s maritime culture. Get sea faring communities involved with arts projects.  Break down perceptions via Culture based programmes on the radio etc.	Needs to be awareness about what is going on in the arts in Bunclody.  People "not working together" has come from the top down (i.e. Council) we need something to get people working together.	Physical arts & mind – we have the training but it’s not being used; provides ownership; mental health.

**PROVIDE FOR EDUCATION, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

<b>GOREY</b>	<b>ENNISCORTHY</b>	<b>WEXFORD</b>	<b>BUNCLODY</b>	<b>NEW ROSS</b>
Community School benefits from professional artists as teachers; strong theatre influence.  Very important to have the arts as an influence from 14-16, i.e. It is a vulnerable age. Start	Support Street Rhythms Festival – more funding needed.  Develop Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)/ third level courses in design – linking with Eileen Gray and IT Carlow.  Artists, writers and Room to Record project go into schools	Feedback to artists is important for identity and confidence.  “Twin town” exchange, culture, art, sport and interaction.  Support “living” art spaces.	Space/ a variety of spaces e.g. empty shops/ buildings, pop-ups.  Needs an administrative structure to support it.  Support current successful projects	Build on the existing youth programme with the Ross Arts & Music Project (RAMP).

music younger - age 4?	<p>– expand the Living Arts Project to include literature and music.</p> <p>Photography – resident photographer to reside here and document life in the town.</p>		like music and drama through the schools.	
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### CREATIVE ECONOMY

<b>GOREY</b>	<b>ENNISCORTHY</b>	<b>WEXFORD</b>	<b>BUNCLODY</b>	<b>NEW ROSS</b>
<p>Artists are underpaid if paid at all. Create opportunities to exhibit and promote artistic enterprise.</p> <p>Can Gorey town be a work of art?</p> <p>A choral festival annually.</p>	<p>Literary Festival; Choral Festival building on current choral society.</p> <p>Tour music events/ performances to Wexford and beyond. Tour/ loan the Wexford Arts Collection.</p>	<p>Europort and closeness to a main route into Ireland is underutilised; no signs into 'Historic and Cultural Wexford'. Perfect for French and UK visitors to extend their stay in Wexford</p> <p>Develop 'Wexford All In' cultural visitor package to attract outside audience.</p> <p>Consumer and creator benefits; value products.</p> <p>Intergrated NRA/ Iamnród Éireann/ local</p>	<p>Cross-border engagement with neighbouring regions/ counties.</p> <p>Employ artists – e.g. artist in the community scheme.</p> <p>Support local craft makers and develop a craft trail.</p> <p>Support successful local amateur drama – we employ people and need a space to perform.</p>	<p>Create a spatial strategy for the town as New Ross is poorly positioned.</p> <p>See the town as a gateway into Wexford and brand via heritage arts.</p>

		authority thinking and planning to build infrastructure.		
<b>SUPPORT ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE</b>				
<b>GOREY</b>	<b>ENNISCORTHY</b>	<b>WEXFORD</b>	<b>BUNCLODY</b>	<b>NEW ROSS</b>
Artist studio spaces at low cost; access to equipment etc.  Studio space for visiting artists.	Have a weekly 'Show and Tell Meeting' for artists and writers – this needs to be at national level by inviting Visual Artists Ireland (VAI) for example.  Cross fertilisation of ideas and art forms; links are the resource required.  Connect local artists with National Galleries and studios for collaboration, networking, professional support and development.	Promoting arts journalism within Wexford.  Encouraging investment and ownership of art.  More professional and amateur collaborations.  National Opera House, not accessible to local artists due to cost. Devise an access programme.	Support current festivals locally.  Collaborate with local arts groups e.g. visual artists based at Newtownbarry House.  Create a network/ hub for local artists to share and interact.	Media coverage; 'Artist of the Week'.  Artists need support/ opportunities to develop their professional practice.

**Comments from the County:**

*We need professional opportunities in the locality so that artists can develop their own practice as well as work within the community. Professional*

*development could include teaching artists the skills they need to source funding, be sole traders, etc.*

*We need facilitation and support from the council to network, meaningful support, not just communication about funding.*

*Much of the arts activities are directed more at children and families, not a huge amount for my age group (25-35).*

*More emphasis on artists, rather than arts administrators. More partnerships and networks rather than stand-alone facilities. More emphasis on activities rather than facilities.*

*In terms of best practice, could we send or sponsor people from within our community to go and learn from within a discipline from experts in the field (e.g. opera/ mentoring programme) and bring that knowledge back to the region.*

**5.4 SUPPORT AND EMPOWER  
EMERGING AND ESTABLISHED  
ARTISTS**

**ACTIONS**

**THEME** **MEETING THE CHALLENGE**

**ENSURING SOCIAL INCLUSION**

Assign arts ambassadors to each region of county Wexford to programme events, promote the arts locally, support and remove access barriers so that communities can flourish.

Create opportunities for individual and collaborative projects for artists that allow them to develop their own professional practice as well as opportunities to practice within community settings.

Allow opportunities for lifelong learning and amateur artists to showcase their work and build the number of Wexford based artists entering work in national and international competitions/awards.

**PROVIDING FOR EDUCATION,  
HEALTH & WELLBEING**

Train and support teachers and artists wishing to engage with the arts  
Promote bursaries and CPD to help the professional careers and well-being of artists.

Provide mentoring and regular talks/seminars for local artists and opportunities to network from a broader base.

**BUILDING A CREATIVE ECONOMY**

Support 3<sup>rd</sup> level graduates with incubation studio space, council bursary awards, community based practice positions as part of an existing scheme such as the arts ability/ arts and health/ artists in schools projects.

Ensure a mixed creative economy with opportunities for a broad base of arts – recognising that some holding more cultural than economic value.

**SUPPORTING ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE**

Create a network and centralised meeting point for established artists facilitating them to collaborate and communicate as individuals or in groups.

Empower emerging and established artists by facilitating workshops as a means of networking/ socialising and professional development.

Provide loans/grants for artists to visit international exhibitions to expose them to work of substantial quality.

Provide training for artists to develop entrepreneurial confidence to enable them to reach a reasonable standard of living.

Mentor and support artists, including peer mentoring schemes.

Develop national and international press contacts and events.

Determine what success means in a Community arts setting.

Develop mechanisms for evaluation and assessing value.

## 6. Promoting access to the arts for individuals and groups.

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This aspect of local authority arts delivery is perhaps the most important. The delivery of community and inclusive arts practices like The Artist in the Community Scheme, Youth Arts and Arts in Healthcare Settings that are conducted by the Council not only allow for a greater level of quality of life, but also aid society, offering marginalised groups a voice and space to exhibit their own cultures, but also offer chances to develop skills useful in other areas of life, provide alternative methods of learning and socialisation as well as, particularly in the case of vulnerable young people, distract them from anti-social activity.

***“The leisure-based arts sector is usually art form driven by the desire of participants to practice and enjoy their chosen arts. Many leisure groups are not aspirational but are content to build a community around the processes of creative production. Typically, arts-based leisure groups pay little heed to wider policy agendas, as long as they are able to practice and serve their community of interest. In other words, they are focused around experimentation, survival and sustainability, rather than status and the search for prestige”<sup>35</sup>***

### 6.1 Socially Inclusive Arts Practice with Young People

Youth Arts are particularly effective when they offer some form of adventure/risk. Young people as they test their boundaries are naturally drawn to risky behaviour, sometimes unhealthily experimenting with alcohol, sex and drugs<sup>36</sup>. This desire for ‘risk’ can be healthily channelled in controlled environments through arts activity such as Parkour<sup>37</sup>, circus skills and the use of arts that come from within youth culture interests – film, gaming, dance, digital media, music and fashion to name a few. A good example of this is the level of engagement in education contexts with national ‘upcycling’ fashion event Junk Couture and the popularity of youth schemes in Bui Bolg.

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<sup>35</sup> Arts Professional Journal At your leisure – article Marie Brennan 2007

<sup>36</sup> Irish Journal of Psychology, self-esteem and health-risk behaviours: E Mullan & S NicGabhainn

<sup>37</sup> For Parkour dance references, refer to <http://parkourdance.co.uk/> & <http://www.danceireland.ie/events/parkour>

***“The core benefits of the arts are their impact on people individually and collectively. For individuals the arts provide (or enhance) internal congruence self-understanding, self-acceptance, identity, and pleasure to name a few. Between individuals, the arts aid relational alignment facilitating relationship building and understanding. In the community/society context, the arts foster social capital—both bonding among people of similar interests and backgrounds and bridging across lines of difference.”<sup>38</sup>***

## **6.2 Arts in Education**

There is a growing interest in the role of creativity within mainstream education and the Council should be mindful of the Arts in Education Charter 2012. The Charter developed by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht alongside The Department of Education and skills recommends that school children visit a National Cultural Institution each year and that the Arts Council develop a scheme called ARIS for schools that are rich in artistic learning.

***“The nature of the Irish economy and the paradigm shift which it experienced in recent years underscores the need for economic and social policies that are underpinned by an education system that fosters and nourishes creativity. We accept that creativity is neither a skill nor a stand-alone intellectual process. It is an aptitude whose presence (or absence) has profound implications for personal wellbeing”.*<sup>39</sup>**

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<sup>38</sup> Doug Borwick Engaging Matters USA (blog) Benefits of the Arts 2013

<sup>39</sup> Arts in Education Charter 2012

## **Comments from the County:**

*Arts are for real people, real people are the best arts practitioners and the most dedicated and sustainable. When you connect with community through your creativity you are espousing the two best values of humanity and society.*

*I would like to see Wexford Arts provision pioneer socially engaged art projects working to best international levels of excellence, and I would be excited to be involved in that process.*

*I have been working over 10 years with Arts Ability in New Ross and am aware of the need for an inclusive Arts Centre in New Ross. The benefits to the local community would far outweigh the cost of the initial start-up and in time would generate funds to support its activities.*

*I would like to see the arts funding extended to involve smaller villages e.g. Taghmon, Wellingtonbridge, so 'everything' is not in Wexford town. I would like to see new actors involved more and given a chance to get on stage, and new writing encouraged and developed. More help is needed to get the arts out into the community and not just locate everything in 'the town'.*

*I don't like driving at night and so won't go out unless the arts I want to see are exciting and ground-breaking. I don't just mean big things like Opera – I mean edgy, new, envelope pushing stuff. The best arts are usually found in festivals. I want to see better town planning, better architecture and more vibrant streetscapes.*

*With regard to arts in community settings, I would recommend that care is given to provide better informed artists – maybe a group dedicated to community skill building such as my work with Alzheimer's groups – music and singing from their perspective – the artist should not dictate but facilitate.*

*Good community arts practice helps to combat loneliness and isolation and a sense of belonging in older people.*

*Crossing the age barrier and connecting the young with the elderly would be a good thing.*

*A civic theatre in all large towns, and access to performances in the Wexford Opera House at a reasonable price.*

*Arts Education should begin at age 4.*

## 6.3 PROMOTING ACCESS TO THE ARTS FOR INDIVIDUALS & GROUPS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disability arts.</li><li>• Aspects of the Artist in the Community Scheme.</li><li>• Committed community artists and groups.</li><li>• Committed Arts Department staff.</li><li>• Enthusiasm to engage with social inclusion.</li><li>• Co-operation and relationships with groups and organisations.</li><li>• Informal and formal arts developed.</li><li>• Councillors recognise the benefits of arts in their communities.</li><li>• Living Art Scheme.</li><li>• Arts and Health (particularly mental health) projects.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Artist in the Community Scheme</i> is used by a limited number of groups and artists.</li><li>• Development of the arts in community settings.</li><li>• Lack of monitoring of service level agreements (youth arts, dance etc.).</li><li>• Little flexibility so reacting to need is not possible.</li><li>• Very little issue based work to help deal with societal issues (cyber bullying, environmental issues, cultural diversity etc.).</li><li>• Lack of capacity and resources to develop community arts.</li></ul>

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Arts and elders.
- Arts in rural areas.
- Review youth organisations that could benefit from arts programmes.
- Arts and the use of empty commercial spaces – aiding regeneration.
- Develop accessible lifelong learning – building on current strengths.
- Facilitating an accessible model of community arts funding.
- Mapping private sector activity (festivals, events) and their potential for working with different communities.
- Promote what is available to more communities and groups.
- Expand the Living Arts Scheme to include music (through Music Generation), literature, drama, and film.
- Work within a broader range of creativity – textiles, photography, art and landscape.
- Greater support for volunteers and amateurs.
- Develop and reinvigorate the Artist in the Community

## THREATS

- Lack of accessible places to perform (amateur arts) could mean community and voluntary endeavour breaks down.
- Groups decide not to work with arts as they find it difficult to access support.
- Potential new artists and new programmes are not given priority, as although they fit the strategic aims, they don't fit the current structure.
- The good work from the Arts Department in recent years in community development is not sustained – leaving a gap in provision and unrealistically raised expectations.
- Non-networked groups may not get access or issues don't get addressed.

Scheme – more artists, more groups more recognition.

- Develop residencies and community initiatives (such as ...choirs, orchestras and bands) to build social cohesion
- Open Museum/Gallery allowing County Wexford Arts Collection to be loaned to and tour to different groups.<sup>40</sup>
- Build the confidence of local artists and students to enter major competitions including RDS National Craft Awards and Student Arts Awards, Rising Stars and RDS Music Bursary.
- Art and the environment to raise awareness and spread the message of sustainability.

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<sup>40</sup> This schemes is an interesting example:  
[http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/leisure\\_tourism/museums/open\\_museum/artworks.htm](http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/leisure_tourism/museums/open_museum/artworks.htm)

## 6.4 PROMOTING ACCESS TO THE ARTS FOR INDIVIDUALS & GROUPS – CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

### ENSURE SOCIAL INCLUSION

GOREY	ENNISCORTHY	WEXFORD	BUNCLODY	NEW ROSS
<p>Multicultural input.</p> <p>Integrate special needs groups/ art therapy/ mental health.</p> <p>Hard for low-income families to participate – even if it's free.</p> <p>Something accessible for young mothers with childcare facilities or where young children are welcome.</p>	<p>People need a structure to 'plug-in-to' organisational and infrastructural; could be electronic;</p> <p>Need an arts administrator based in Presentation Centre to develop a connection with the community.</p> <p>Re-open and staff Presentation Centre.</p> <p>Promote existing schemes, i.e. artists in the community scheme.</p> <p>Attendees: women's groups/ active retired; Non-attendees: Young people.</p>	<p>Encourage community cohesion through arts education.</p> <p>Using oral history to include minority groups.</p> <p>Radical inclusion; Community based; Community funded. Artists in the community need to meet everyone, more partnerships.</p>	<p>Create spaces for activities such as pop-ups, empty buildings;</p> <p>Driver – person to lead, administer the promotion of the arts.</p> <p>Need media publicity for the arts.</p> <p>Amateur drama needs financial/ administrative support.</p>	<p>Arts based community development; Responding to the needs of existing groups.</p> <p>Café/ Centre for youth arts – programme already exists.</p> <p>Physical arts &amp; mind; mental health – we have the training but it's not being used.</p>

## PROVIDE FOR EDUCATION, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

GOREY	ENNISCORTHY	WEXFORD	BUNCLODY	NEW ROSS
<p>Public sculpture – Art out in the open, element of surprise, creates interest!</p> <p>Support existing infrastructure: The Gap Arts Festival (Summer); Cuisle Cheoil Festival (February); Gorey Musical Society; Gorey Little Theatre Group.</p> <p>Education through workshops/ contemporary collaboration.</p> <p>Why is the Skate park closed? Cultural &amp; social activities, inspiration &amp; investment in young people.</p>	<p>Inter school projects/ international collaborations; involved in education arts festivals abroad.</p> <p>Discounts for students to attend arts events; Transport costs support.</p> <p>Active and engaging public spaces; schools; centre of town.</p> <p>Showcase; Develop more exciting Strawberry Fair.</p>	<p>Integrated arts events in schools programmes for the year with studio visits.</p> <p>Create a dedicated Youth Centre with initiatives for groups to devise solutions for local social problems.</p> <p>Promote and use the Wexford General Hospital collection.</p> <p>Bring art forms together in schools, libraries, public spaces.</p>	<p>A lot of drama and music in the schools– not moving out into the community.</p> <p>Needs to be more family workshops and arts for young people.</p> <p>Reluctance among people; art is not for me.</p> <p>New mentality: local is important – artists and administrators taken the burden away.</p>	<p>Develop current film and drama projects.</p> <p>Wexford should follow Kilkenny’s great lead of encouraging creative writing.</p> <p>Provide support for Barrack Lane, home to Ross Arts &amp; Music Project (RAMP).</p> <p>Create projects/ workshops around appreciation of environment and architecture in the area.</p>

**CREATIVE ECONOMY**

<b>GOREY</b>	<b>ENNISCORTHY</b>	<b>WEXFORD</b>	<b>BUNCLODY</b>	<b>NEW ROSS</b>
<p>An Arts Centre needed we are 20 miles from an arts centre!</p> <p>Recognition of existing infrastructure. Support GSA.</p> <p>Need an up-to-date online and hard copy events guide for the area;</p> <p>Arts/ local craft area where artists can practice and tourists can stop by; drink a cup of coffee etc.</p>	<p>Arts markets; Create spaces at tourist locations and festivals.</p> <p>Raising awareness; Social media awareness of arts events; Art specific newsletter.</p> <p>National and international collaborations, projects.</p> <p>Support more groups to come together to do arts projects.</p>	<p>International conferences – Cultural get-together; brainstorm.</p> <p>Acknowledgement of income generated/ spin-offs from creative endeavour.</p> <p>More publicity and support from the local newspapers.</p> <p>Collaboration with Wexford Enterprise Board; non-profits/ business to arts/ long term investments; enterprise needs support; grants and sponsorship</p>	<p>Craft – garden trail, craft trail.</p> <p>Improve Wexford’s arts profile. This is crucial to an area when international companies are deciding where to locate.</p> <p>Employ artists, businesses do well, brings vibrancy to the area.</p> <p>Artists network; make local artists aware of each other</p>	<p>Build on existing infrastructure: Dunbrody (festival), Ross tapestry, Arboretum, Kennedy homestead;</p> <p>Work with existing local talent; work together.</p> <p>Create spaces – 3 old primary schools are empty in the town.</p>

**SUPPORT ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE**

<b>GOREY</b>	<b>ENNISCORTHY</b>	<b>WEXFORD</b>	<b>BUNCLODY</b>	<b>NEW ROSS</b>
<p>The Arts Department should broaden our horizons; reseed; stop</p>	<p>VAT &amp; rates for artists – spaces/ studios; tax breaks for artists that</p>	<p>More public art.</p> <p>Free tasters for audience development.</p>	<p>Training for groups/ individuals.</p> <p>New mentality:</p>	<p>Improve media coverage to create an awareness of professionalism in the arts.</p>

<p>detachment; generate work spaces; Arts centre.</p> <p>Support for writers in rural areas</p> <p>Gorey School of Art (GSA) has established networks. Need more opportunities for participation.</p> <p>Paul Funge Arts Festival needs to be reinvigorated – a longer festival that can incorporate world class and edgy arts with the community it was much loved – look what Kilkenny has and that could be a similar event in Gorey.</p> <p>Opportunities for world class public art that are based on local issues – such as agriculture.</p>	<p>take over empty spaces.</p> <p>Create new artistic ecosystem; niche areas could be linked together. E.g. food, design, literature, music, visual arts; events calendar with a strong Internet presence.</p> <p>Promote artists at a national/ international level, i.e. Colm Tobin, Brooklyn; promote the short story competition. Eileen Gray link.</p> <p>Organise a residency centre for writers/ artists similar to Tyrone Guthrie Centre.</p>	<p>Social ambassadors during the festival from different areas of the community.</p> <p>Affordable Opera prices and rates for audience attending and artists exhibiting.</p> <p>More opportunities for those making work to perform it.</p> <p>Artistic excellence is in the process and the product – a small community event can be excellent too let's not forget.</p>	<p>local is important – artists and administrators taken the burden away.</p> <p>Countywide 'dry-run' for 2020; strategy; different approach to other festivals.</p> <p>Things are too weighted towards Wexford town; focus on the local; 100 stars that shone in the sky; something that touches people, valued; take what is perceived to be a weakness and make it our strength.</p>	<p>Building for the arts possibly to collaborate and support existing arts activities.</p> <p>Artist hub – bringing together of the diverse groups in the Community.</p> <p>Artist in the Community Scheme – too much paperwork (hard copies).</p>
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**6.4 PROMOTING ACCESS TO THE  
ARTS FOR INDIVIDUALS &  
GROUPS**

**ACTIONS**

**THEME**

**MEETING THE CHALLENGE**

**ENSURING SOCIAL INCLUSION**

Create open access to the arts for the young and vulnerable people of Wexford by creating channels of access and expression; e.g. culture cards allowing free access to cultural events and buildings; annual events where young people can come together and showcase the arts that are already happening within communities across the county.

Support and promote amateur, lifelong learning and hobby based arts activity.

Support art developed at local and community level – offering guidance and support where necessary.

Review the impact and range of the Artist in the Community Scheme and the type of community organisations using it and why others don't.

Review communities that are targeted in order to ensure cultural diversity and arts opportunities for as broad a range of people as possible.

	<p>Review youth arts provision – ensuring it is reflecting contemporary practice in the field.</p>
<p><b>PROVIDING FOR EDUCATION, HEALTH &amp; WELLBEING</b></p>	<p>Support artists in schools by incentivising schools to engage with local artists.</p> <p>Engage with specific groups through existing programmes such as the Bealtaine Festival for creativity as we age.</p> <p>Develop a platform for arts ability and arts and health practitioners to exhibit and perform on a wider platform within the county and beyond linking in with national bodies such as: NDA, CREATE, Waterford Healing Arts Trust, Amateur Drama Organisations, Arts Council, Fáilte Ireland, Design and Crafts Council of Ireland, Visual Artists Ireland, Theatre Forum etc. NB the Local Authority Arts Officer Network (AOLAAO) will be most useful in this context.</p> <p>Advocate, monitor and measure impact on health and well-being of arts programmes.</p>

<p><b>BUILDING A CREATIVE ECONOMY</b></p>	<p>Ensure visibility and access to showcases, marketing and promotional activity.</p> <p>Ensure linkages with tourism are maximised.</p> <p>Create a Council directory of arts, artists and creative organisations/individuals advocating on behalf of the sector.</p> <p>Develop ‘quality control’ methods to ensure validation, quality and recognition of arts access throughout the County.</p> <p>Develop a curated County Wide Fringe Festival for local artists as part of the International Opera Festival that is open and accessible in terms of participation and reception across the county.</p>
<p><b>SUPPORTING ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE</b></p>	<p>Develop an ambassador scheme. Assign voluntary community led arts ambassadors to each region of county Wexford to promote the arts locally.</p> <p>Remove administrative barriers so that creative projects can flourish.</p>

Review artistic excellence across all sectors of the arts, recognising that the measurement will be different in community arts to work of a national stature.

Develop audience development and engagement programmes to support arts organisations.

Ensure Arts Department staff are given enough time to visit work of 'good practice' nationally and are given time to develop partnerships internationally that can help lever funds and boost new types of art work, new audiences and escalate the quality of work produced within the County.

### **Comments from the County:**

*The arts are not a 'non-profit' endeavour. They are vital. They are what Irish people do best. Government policy re-funding completely betrays and undermines this.*

*Still no proper disabled access to Wexford Arts Centre after 40 years.*

*I would dearly love to attend the Drama in my area – Kilmuckridge – the K.M.H. This has been placed way past my means. Arts at this level should be for folk like myself" IE - On social welfare and on the bread line.*

*There is (sic) not enough arts initiated by the local authority - it's important for them to be seen in the community - being active, attending things and commissioning work that otherwise we wouldn't get to see.*

# 7.0 Resources required for implementation

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The key issues with regard to resources are:

- Staffing and staff training
- A greater level of expenditure to ensure artistic excellence and social inclusion
- Generating Funds with European Partners
- Supporting artists and organisations to be more enterprising where appropriate

It is perhaps not possible for the Council to restructure the post and the department, but the expert voice of the Arts Department requires a greater level of authority in terms of delivering policy and planning for cultural provision.

## 7.1 The Arts Officer role

The grade of Arts Officer post is set by central government. The Director of Services represents the Arts at Senior Management Level in the Local Authority and as is the case with other areas, is informed by the Arts Officer who is *an advisory officer*. Other officers, working in parallel disciplines at Arts Officer grade, operate at a county or higher levels and work on EU projects and that level of activity is expected and is achieved at the Arts Officer's current grading. This is also reflected in the role of Arts Officer in other Counties, where the arts officer not only advises but directs arts projects in a broad range of settings while also seeking and developing bids for external funding nationally and internationally.

The issues that were discovered during this report process are not unique to County Wexford but demonstrate a shift globally with regard to public sector arts administration as outlined in the 2014 International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies – IFACCA 2014): *Arts Panorama: International Overview of Issues for Public Arts Administration*

It would be ideal to create a new post of Arts in the Community Development Officer, line managed by the Arts Officer. The post would enable a more decentralised model working out in the community, thereby providing greater visibility in developing grass roots level programmes and providing a Council presence at County Wexford arts events.

This person's role would involve working 'out in the field' – working out of hours in the evening, at weekends and also promoting audience development, building a team of voluntary ambassadors and recruiting sessional artists, running training courses for professional and amateur groups while advising groups on funding, they can also assist with understanding barriers to engagement – and in some cases work with others to help overcome these barriers. The effect this would have would be to enrich and empower the arts and communities across the whole County, addressing issues of funding (ensuring a good spread of funds across the County) while building capacity for further development and bringing the Arts Department out into the Community. It would be beneficial to measure the impact of this post in terms of Social Return on Investment (see page 86) and also economically, to set targets for this post holder to bring in an agreed number of funds across an agreed number of projects.

## 7.1 The Arts Department – structure recommended for delivery

In an ideal world it would be helpful to have roles that encompass the following:



If this is not possible at the moment, funding should be sought for project based staffing and to build this level of infrastructure over a period of five years. As a Local Authority with a National Cultural Institution to support, the level of staffing should reflect the status of the County and offset the costs of the Opera House by supplying assistance that helps other sectors grow and develop in the arts – while ensuring social inclusion and building closer relations with the Opera Festival and the Opera House. Without this level of staffing, the County will continue to miss out on funding opportunities.

## **7.2 Development of Arts Ambassador Schemes**

Most of the respondents working in arts venues or promoting events, exhibitions and education programmes cited they need help with audience development. A tried and tested method that is active and proven is the use of arts ambassador schemes. These allow members of a particular group (such as people of a certain age, ethnicity or from a specific geographic location) to work as ‘go between’ with their community and the arts sector.

***An ambassador, or diplomat, acts as a communication bridge between two parties. In this guide, the term arts ambassador is used to mean: ‘A community networker with the objective of spreading the word about arts and cultural events and/or representing the views and aspirations of a target community’. The word audience is used to refer to attenders, visitors, readers, purchasers, viewers and participants. What’s so special about ambassadors?***

***Usually, an arts ambassador is representative of a target audience or is closely connected to a specific community. They are often employed to stimulate positive word of mouth and to listen to audience feedback in order to generate greater audiences. Increasing attendances is not always the core objective: ambassadors are also valued for their ability to broaden audience types, promote good public relations, gain market information and see things differently. These days, word of mouth also includes ‘word of mouse’ (email) and text messaging. Whatever the medium, the message is passed on in a personalised way and the ambassador is motivated out of genuine personal enthusiasm, even when paid to do so. It is this personal endorsement that gives the ambassador technique its effectiveness, offering an immediate, live and direct form of communication<sup>41</sup>.***

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<sup>41</sup> A practical guide to working with arts ambassadors – Arts Council of England 2003

## 8.0 Funding

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Wexford County Council should develop a strong vision that could lever funding from elsewhere, the potential for European Funding (Interreg – Northern Periphery Funding, EACEA Creative Europe Funding are just two examples).

Funding opportunities possibly exist via partnership working – in particular with education partners and partnerships with the HSE. Carlow IT (Wexford Campus), Wexford Arts Centre, Bui Bolg and the Local Authority took part in an Interreg programme in the past - CORACLE, which was developed to provide additional higher-level skills to the creative and cultural sector. The project aimed to maximise the economic, social and cultural value of the creative and cultural arts to the regions of South West Wales and South East Ireland. The scheme ran from 2007 – 2013. Since then, individual artists organisations and policy makers from the County have been working in Sweden with Kultivera on an exchange programme. The level of international partnerships could be developed further from programme ideas that are devised by and led by the County Council.

Additionally, the Council should be advising arts organisations and individuals about available funds and assisting them to apply – therefore building capacity and bringing new finance into the arts in the area. This is important for a complex County such as Wexford with a diverse arts sector. The Local Authority cannot fund everything, even when the Council would like to support activity. This new approach would enable greater access to the arts without placing further strain on the Arts Department budgets.

Closer relationships with the Local Enterprise Office could be made to enable/co-produce a programme of business supports/financing options for artists and arts organisations as happens in the cross border

programme (Leitrim, Fermanagh and Tyrone) *Harnessing Creativity* which offers practical and insightful professional development training to enhance & connect the creative and business talent in and the surrounding region, with the aim of revitalizing the border region economically. *Harnessing Creativity* has a strong vision and ethos based on a belief in the value and potential of creativity. It aims to catalyse a creative economy to make a significant impact in the region at a time when confidence and economic vibrancy are low. The programme sees businesses and creatives coming together to assist each other's enterprises and is a good model in terms of creative economy development. Overall, the survey for the arts sector and the community sector revealed a perspective that funding is not evenly split throughout the County. The survey for the community sector revealed that many community groups are not engaging with the Artist in the Community Scheme. This creates a dilemma as those that use it value it, but the scope is not broad enough to ensure strong social inclusion.

### **8.1 A new funding strategy for the Arts in County Wexford**

It would be recommended that the County Council review its funding strategy and combine current programmes into larger thematic headings and therefore open out the funding to more groups. This sees expenditure rise from 2012 currently on taking into account:

- Improved economy
- More external funding researched and bids written
- New focus on thematic work – improves flexibility and response to need
- Bringing the spending in line with programmes in other Authorities

However, all those seeking funding will need to provide information on how they match the strategic objectives of the Arts Department, and/or how they meet the priorities of the Four Themes.

## 8.2 Social Return on Investment

This approach is fairly new and although a bank of data is being collected in Scotland, there is no bank of data currently being evaluated in Ireland. Nevertheless, the approach is very useful to Local Authorities and full details can be found on Voluntary Arts Ireland Briefing Notes (131. 2009). There is also scope for Wexford County Council's Arts Department to work with a University on a Knowledge Exchange Partnership (perhaps Carlow IT/Wexford Campus if they have a suitable research programme) to begin the process of monitoring social return on investment.

***“One of the more talked about methods at the moment is ‘Social Return on Investment’ (SROI). This is a tool that can be used to measure and demonstrate the changes and improvements that happen to people’s lives as a result of being involved in your project. At the end of an SROI report, you are left with a ‘bottom line ratio’, such as 1: 4, which means that for every £1 invested in your project, the return to society is £4. This figure is calculated via a number of ‘indicators’, such as the cost of prescriptions used, social work input needed and money spent on healthcare before your project began, and the money ploughed back into the economy as a result of it taking place.***

***It may seem impossible to put a price tag on happiness or find a financial value for contentment or confidence – things often achieved by arts participation. As SROI proves, however, if you dig a little deeper, you can often attribute costs to seemingly intangible things. For example, prior to 68-year-old Elizabeth joining her local knitting circle, she was lonely and depressed. Now she has a new group of friends, and a sense of purpose, sending baby clothes to her local hospital, and is feeling far happier. Consequently she has stopped taking anti-depressants, has more of an appetite so buys more food, and has started swimming again – thus reducing costs to the NHS and contributing to the local economy. You can also project forward and work out what could potentially happen if your activity takes place, and the costs associated with that.’<sup>42</sup>***

The Arts Department, along with other community organisations, arts delivery organisations/individuals can begin to monitor the success of their programmes via developing their own system for monitoring the impact of the arts using this framework.

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<sup>42</sup> Voluntary Arts Ireland – briefing Paper. Community Benefit measuring the impact of arts and crafts activity. 2009

### 8.3 Funding Opportunities in Europe

There have been a number of EU funds that County Wexford Arts and Culture sectors would have benefitted from over the past few years. However, this would have required significant staff time in bid writing, researching and devising projects and building European Networks. In order to be ready for the next tranche of funding Wexford County Council needs to be working at a principal or senior level at the Council to ensure funding is applied for, alongside European Partner Organisations and to be aware that it is usual for a match funding element in each case. In other cases, the Local Authority would not be eligible, but County Wexford based enterprise are, and the Arts Department could be offering expertise and motivating relevant businesses/organisations/groups/individuals to apply.

The most obvious place to look for funding for arts projects is the EACEA (Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency). It runs a number of funding calls – with a different focus up until 2020. One fund – The Co-Operation Funds would be particularly suitable. Currently it is closed but it will re-open in autumn 2015 and it would be recommended that Wexford County Council register for alerts via the EU website. Co-operation Projects are based on developing work in partnership across the EU – usually on a thematic basis (such as arts and social inclusion, arts and the environment or young people). There is usually a need to show some innovation and development of work with the arts in new technologies.<sup>43</sup>

EU funding for the Cultural sector in general are provided for projects that:

- foster the development of skills, competences and know-how, including adaptation to digital technologies
- test innovative approaches to audience development
- test new business and management models

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<sup>43</sup> For smaller scale cooperation projects, the maximum EU grant available is €200.000 representing a maximum of 60% of the total eligible budget. For larger scale cooperation projects, the maximum EU grant available is EUR €2,000.000 representing a maximum of 50% of the total eligible budget.

- enable international cooperation and career development in the EU and beyond
- Facilitate access to professional opportunities
- Allow for greater mobility between cultural players from different EU countries
- Develop educational and volunteering opportunities (Erasmus)
- Support SME communities (Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs and COSME – Competitiveness for Small & Medium sized enterprises)

#### **8.4 Trusts and Grant Giving Organisations**

As a Local Authority the amount of grant aid that can be sought from charitable trusts and grant-giving organisations is often limited (as they tend to support only voluntary, not for profit, or organisations with charitable status). However, it would be useful for the Local Authority to create a database of these grants, an outline of the requirements and deadlines for applications. If the Arts Department could give regular funding ‘clinics’ it can help organisations in the County boost capacity by assisting funds to come into County Wexford. This could also significantly reduce the strain on the Arts Department as it could provide more ‘match funding’ than total funding for projects, festivals and events.

Examples of these trusts include:

**The Ireland Funds.** A philanthropic organisation who work globally with donors to support innovative Irish projects within Ireland and overseas.

*[www.theirelandfunds.org](http://www.theirelandfunds.org)*

**Calouste Gulbenkian Arts Impact Fund** (expressions of interest required now before funding application process opens on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June). This organisation requires applicants to show their Social Return on Investment as above. They fund UK and Republic of Ireland arts organisations that demonstrate strong social impact and the highest of artistic standards:

*[www.gulbenkian.org](http://www.gulbenkian.org)*

**Katherine Howard Foundation** (Children and parenting) will fund projects that support socio-economically disadvantaged families in Ireland. Not arts focussed but has supported arts in the past [www.khf.ie](http://www.khf.ie)

**The Wellcome Trust** fund arts projects that help engage the public with biomedical science. The process is very competitive and tends towards intellectual, work of exacting standards tending toward 'high culture' projects. It is open to Irish applicants. [www.wellcome.ac.uk](http://www.wellcome.ac.uk).

### **8.5 National Funds**

Arts Council programmes are rarely available to local authorities, which receive the Local Arts Grant to assist with their work. The Arts Council is also undergoing a review at this time and policy may change. However, Wexford County Council can be proactive in this field and it is recommended that they assist and advise arts organisations and individuals on broader funding availability and suitability. This could be done by hosting regular seminars and funding clinics to ensure funds come into County Wexford. One fund for Traditional Arts would very much suit the profile of County Wexford's strength in traditional Irish music, storytelling and dancing. This fund, Deis is a scheme established under the Arts Council's Traditional Arts Initiative, and is aimed at encouraging and facilitating the traditional arts community to seek funding from the Arts Council for a range of projects. Where the Council is ineligible, the Arts Department should always be promoting and assisting organisations to apply where appropriate in order to help build the arts sector across all art forms and communities within the County.

**Create - The National Development Agency for Collaborative Arts** provide guidance in a range of issues including funding.

**Music Network and Music Generation** This national initiative has funding, instrument banks and supports and guidance for music education and development in Ireland.

## **8.6 Supporting Enterprise in the arts and creative sectors**

Building an entrepreneurial mind-set so artists can develop sales and promotions to offset more edgy, less commercial work, is an important foundation of creative production. Working with the Local Enterprise Office and others to help artists, amateur groups and organisations develop income-generating streams is a useful approach to develop creative enterprises. Similarly, in a lot of cases across the County, the arts could be considered good examples of Social Entrepreneurship, blending grant aid, sponsorship and generated income to develop educational or community initiatives. Social Entrepreneurship is a business model with primarily social, environmental and economic objectives, where generated surplus income is reinvested to meet these objectives, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners.<sup>44</sup> Social enterprises quite typically have a mixed financial profile of grant aid and income generation.

## **8.7 Supporting Philanthropy**

Seeking funds from high net worth individuals and Wexford 'alumni' (much the same way that Universities raise funds) could be a strong methodology to raise funds, or develop in kind support for County Wexford on a Projects basis. The Amateur Arts Sector is particularly skilled in this regard and its expertise in philanthropy and sponsorship is often overlooked; yet the arts sector and publicly funded organisations can learn a lot from it. Project sponsorship works best when the values inherent in the project are matched by the organisation approached for sponsorship – it would, for example, be counterproductive to have a youth dance event addressing childhood obesity sponsored by an ice cream company. Sponsorship benefits need to be foregrounded to the 'funder' so they can see what is in it for it. In some cases it may be to help the funder be seen by a certain target market, others may be working to create a profile with the Business In The Community ([www.bitci.com](http://www.bitci.com)) Quality Mark "Business Working Responsibly" which is a new award launched

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<sup>44</sup> Marie Brennan & Garry Churchill – Arts Council of England –Enterprising Arts, socio-economic impact survey of social enterprises in the arts 2006.

in 2011 for businesses that are committed to sustainable and ethical working practices. For Charities working with sponsors, the sponsor can claim back tax. Others may genuinely have an interest in the cause or location and want to get involved.

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## 9.0 Conclusions

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Wexford is a very diverse and rich county when it comes to artistic and creative endeavour. This is evidenced by the amount of voluntary and amateur work coupled with the number of independent galleries, production companies, individual artists of international repute and major venues and festivals. There is much scope for developing the arts with external partnerships that may help lever funding and also for internal reflection on how the Arts Department is managed. The branding of County Wexford as a Creative County will enrich its appeal to businesses wishing to relocate as well as offering creative ‘clustering’ of artistic practices. The area has a rich heritage and traditions based on agriculture and maritime industries. These industries could be added to by a cultural tourism brand for the County that encompasses all of these themes. As a ‘gateway’ to Ireland with the Port at Rosslare, the arts will attract many visitors (UK and France in particular – given that is where the ferries come from) and will provide more opportunities for them to stay longer in this area.

### **SOCIAL INCLUSION**

- The council need to employ more staff – particularly in terms of arts and community – to ensure visibility
- Develop an Ambassador scheme
- Create a more dynamic and interactive form of dialogue with communities (such as the film made by Fingal County Council Arts Department). This includes developing a more vibrant and discursive physical and social media presence. Those wishing to work with the arts and arts organisations themselves would benefit from the expertise in the Council.
- Seek out and build relations with partners

## **EDUCATION, HEALTH & WELLBEING**

- Look at funding programmes – especially Artist in the Community Scheme to see if they are meeting the needs of Communities, the Council, The Arts Strategy and addressing societal need
- The Council has produced work of national repute in the areas of disability arts and arts in education – this needs to be communicated
- Develop a cultural access programme for schools, Primary and Secondary, third level students and young adults living in Wexford
- Develop an incubation programme with Third Level Institutions

## **BUILDING A CREATIVE ECONOMY**

- Build a programme to assist creative industries alongside funded arts
- Create a database of artists/events via a dedicated web portal
- Devise a programme that has scope to be delivered across the county with European Partners
- Review other Council's approaches to artists use of empty buildings (this could also be an EU project)
- Provide regular funding clinics to ensure funding opportunities for arts organisations in the County are maximised.

## **SUPPORTING ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE**

- The County Wexford Arts infrastructure is unique
- Address any perceived issues of lack of leadership
- Develop a 'creative imagination' lecture series for anyone interested in ideas, arts and culture – this can be run as part of a wider networking programming or a standalone event series, showing work in process, bringing in guest speakers and offering opportunities for regular discussion
- Support artists wishing to attend awards ceremonies – so that they can take on wider ambassadorial roles for Creative Wexford – for example The Rabbit And The Teasel a short film set and made in Duncormick

By Els Dietvorst Nominated For International Competition Visions Du Reel – International Film Festival Nyon 2015

- Provide support to build audiences

### **Timeframe, Priorities and Next Steps**

This report has shown that there is need for significant changes in the way County Wexford engages with the arts. This level of change will not happen overnight and not all the ideas presented will be viable. However, there are perhaps some immediate priorities to put into place straight away:

- Develop a vision and leadership presence for the arts
- Ensure that the Opera House is benefitting a wide section of the Community
- Engage with Creative industries and creative practices outside of the usual arts definitions
- Review how arts and communities can work effectively to address issues that communities are facing
- Develop supports and recognition/networking for the strong amateur arts traditions in the County

Decision-making in arts is complex and the intangible, often-transient nature of the arts is difficult for local authorities to deal with, as they need to measure, serve and provide evidence. By assessing artistic risk this allows for some flexibility. The ideas in this review are based on long term cultural planning and the next Arts Strategy should be developed with a strong implementable vision and a sustainable agenda for the arts in the future. What needs to be done now is to look at what is and will be important for an arts programme that offers access, freshness, excellence and sustainability across the amateur, community, education based and professional arts. Ideally these groups working together to build networks and lasting partnerships, brokered by the Council Arts Department.

It would be important for the Council to *risk assess artistically and socially*.

The Council need to ask more questions such as: What happens if we produce this work? Deliver this programme, Work with that community? Fund that particular organisation? Perhaps, more importantly ask: *What happens if we don't?*

Finally, there is much evidence of good practice in the Arts throughout County Wexford, in all sectors of society and in a range of art forms and creative industries. It would be highly recommended that the County Council build on the strengths of the arts sector to develop a positive framework for County Wexford to be acknowledged as a Cultural Centre within Ireland, offering best practice in delivering artistic excellence in professional, education, community and amateur arts sectors. This can then offer a framework for a sustainable strategy that can truly develop an 'arts for everyone' remit.

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# Glasshouse Arts & Creative Industries

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Glasshouse is a specialist consultancy firm, working within arts, culture, place making and the creative industries. The name "Glasshouse" was chosen as it creates a visual image of clarity and open-ness, a warm and welcome space for ideas to grow. This is the Glasshouse ethos. Glasshouse is dedicated to delivering projects of high quality to ensure client satisfaction. It is important to glasshouse that any reviews and evaluations we conduct are actionable, realistic and relevant.

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