



Artists Connect Panel: Call for Panel Artists

Wicklow County Council is seeking six professional practicing artists to join the Artists Connect Panel for 2022 into 2023. Professional practicing artists must be currently residing and or/working predominantly in County Wicklow.

Artists Connect Panel was commenced as a pilot in 2020 to assist the Arts Officer in developing services for artists with input from professional practicing artists in the county. The Artist Connect Panel is an Artist/Arts office partnership for enacting Artists Connect. Artists Connect is an artist development initiative of the Arts Office of Wicklow County Council (see below). The panel input into the design of artist supports and services in Wicklow and is supported by Arts Officer Jenny Sherwin in collaboration with Susan Coughlan of [Art of Change](#). Susan is an independent facilitator and coach working with arts and cultural practitioners.

Artists Connect was set up in 2020 to:

- Create a vibrant cross-art form artist ecosystem of connectivity in Wicklow
- Increase awareness amongst artists of artist services provided by the arts office and of other artists living in Wicklow
- Provide good foundations for increasing artist networking, professional exchange, peer friendships, peer learning and collaboration in Wicklow

The Artist Connect Panel is the structure for enacting Artists Connect in a way that is transparent, inclusive and, most importantly, responsive to artist's changing needs. It is underpinned by an action learning approach which means planning together, experimenting, reflecting on learning and adapting as a result. This externally facilitated, process-based developmental approach has served us well, creating a safe space for dialogue and discussion, out of which it's been possible to adapt and respond to artists changing needs relatively.

The panel enables the voice and perspective of diverse artists and a vital feedback loop that together positively impact design and implementation of artist services in Wicklow.

The role of Artist Panel members is to...

- Participate in Artist Panel meetings and events
- Share experience and perspectives
- Champion Artist Connect initiatives

- Show leadership – by hosting, voicing, collaborating, experimenting in relation to new initiatives
- Priorities for the Artists Panel in 2022/2021 are
- In-person artist events
 - Supports in West Wicklow
 - Diversity and inclusion

Pilot Artist Connect Panel

The Artists on the pilot Artists Connect Panel were Sinead O’Loughlin (film), Phillip St John (writer / playwright), Joanna Kidney (visual artist), Paul Gaffney (photography / visual arts), Olivia Fitzsimons (writer), Karen Gleeson (dance). As well as the experience of feeding into the strategic development of artist services in the county these participating artists found the panel a unique and key resource to connect themselves with peers, particularly during the difficult isolating time of Covid-19. As panel members got to know and trust each other well through participation on the panel, other self-directed collaborations and initiatives occurred between panel members which they considered hugely beneficial to their practices.

Examples of the kinds of Artist Connects initiatives the pilot panel supported in 2020/2021 are...

- Design for pilot Funding Clinic in 2020 (which was built upon in 2021)
- Established guidelines & principles for Artist Panel to function effectively e.g. transparency, equality of access, peer networking, artist led, externally facilitated.
- Created identity, logo and profile for Artists Connect
- Trialled in-person artist salon, co-hosted with Outpost Studios, at Mermaid Arts Centre (plans for follow ups in West and East Wicklow were deferred due to Covid)
- Created Covid resilience and wellbeing resource information for artists
- Culture night collaborations
- Established and hosted monthly online Wicklow Creative Network Facebook Group (x to June 2020. Now has over 150 members and is recognised as a valuable resource for artists)
- Informed set up and design of new Digital Funding scheme
- Champion/Ambassador role for breaking down perceived and real barriers to inclusion and connection for other artists in the county.
- Artist Coaching & Mentoring funding scheme - design and promotion

What can panel members expect? Or Artist Perspectives/ Impact

On a personal level, panel members found the experience lessened their sense of isolation, raised morale, gave them valuable insights into the challenges faced by artists in other disciplines and in other parts of Wicklow, opened up conversations about collaborations, and increased their appreciation of the varied and exciting work being done across the county and beyond. Artist Paul Gaffney [shared](#) about how it helped him to push himself to apply for more ambitious funding awards and artist Karen Gleeson described the Panel as ‘a life jacket’ during a difficult transition in her creative practice. Visual artist Joanna Kidney said she ‘put together her strongest proposal ever’ as a direct benefit from an artist coaching session the Panel helped initiate. Following participating on the panel at the pilot Funding Clinic, artist Sinead O’Loughlin was approached by another Wicklow

writer O'Connor to support her application for a Bursary from Wicklow Arts Office to develop a feature film together and they have since received the funding and started collaborating this project.

Some of the positive impacts of the pilot panel are:

Increased profile, visibility and understanding of how to engage with Arts Office amongst local artists

- Numbers attending funding clinic doubled from 2020 to 2021
- 100% increase in number of individual artist bursary from 30 in 2020 to 59 in 2021
- Improved quality of applications - 65 – 70% are fundable
- Increase in number of applications from women, new and emerging artists and film makers
- 150 members of Wicklow Creative Network Facebook Group with average of 15 artists attending once a month
- Increase in no of artists registered on newsletter database,
- Increased profile for Wicklow artists nationally - indicators
- Reduced spend on local advertising to inform artists of services
- Increase investment into artist supports

Who Should Apply?

Artists from all disciplines, practices and career stages who are currently residing and or/working predominantly in County Wicklow, are encouraged to apply. A selection panel will ensure that the Artists Connect Panel members are representative of a broad range of experiences and voices within the county who can support the shape of services for peer practicing artists.

Time commitment and Remuneration

The Artists Connect Panel will be convened a minimum of six times per year and will be remunerated at the rate of €40.00 per hour or part thereof for these sessions. Should there be a specific project or more intensive need to support any particular action by the Panel, this will also be remunerated at rates to be agreed dependent on the need which arises.

Meetings can be in person or online or a mix and this can be decided by the new panel at its first meeting. The first meeting date is the 9th December 2021, and then continuing in February, April, June, Sept/Oct and Nov 2022.

How to apply?

Applications can be made through Submittable at the following link:

<https://wicklowcountycouncil.submittable.com/submit/208379/artists-connect-panel-2022>

To apply please upload a brief bio 100 – 150 words and a current CV with a profile picture and answer the following questions in the prompt box – What is your interest in applying for the Artists Connect Panel and how would you like to contribute to the Panel at this time

The closing date for receipt of applications is Monday 22nd November

Artists will be selected by Susan Coughlan and a professional peer, or arts manager. Successful applicants will be informed within one weeks of application and will be required to be available for a minimum of 6 facilitated meetings of approximately 2 hours duration per year. Additional time /

remuneration outside this will be agreed should it arise. The new panel will commence with an introductory meeting on **9th November 2021 10.30am – 12.00pm**. This will be attended by four of the current panel members. This first introductory meeting may be in person, at Mermaid Arts Centre from 10.30am to 12.00pm and will be followed by lunch if Covid 19 Guidelines allow.

CONDITIONS:

1. Appointment of selected artists is final. The panel will endeavour to balance the type of practice, career stages, spatial / residency and quality in the approach to the selection process.
2. Successful artists will be required to sign a Letter of Understanding outlining the objectives of the panel, expectations, confidentiality, remuneration and requirements
3. If successful, applicants must adhere to the specific Government requirements and guidelines on Covid-19 road map
4. Applications must be complete and have all relevant support documentation
5. All applications must adhere to the guidelines set out in this document
6. No emailed applications will be accepted and applicants must apply through our online platform
7. Artists must be from, or currently working predominately, in County Wicklow
8. Wicklow County Council reserves the right to review the Artist Panel Initiative at any time and, as a result, may make any changes necessary to its implementation
9. Applications will be assessed by a panel of professional arts practitioners to include representation from Wicklow County Council.
10. Applicants shall be notified as soon as is practicable, however it is anticipated that the overall process from the submission of applications to the notification of outcomes will take approximately two weeks.
11. Shortlisting is likely to apply
12. Wicklow County Council reserves the right to pursue other processes to select artists if required following this call.
13. An online acknowledgement will be sent to you to confirm receipt of your Application.

Questions about the panel can be directed to Susan Coughlan at susan@artofchange.ie and questions about the application process can be directed to Eileen Fitzgerald at efitzgerald@wicklowcoco.ie