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Sligo County Council Arts Service

Sligo County Council

Artist Brief

Public Art Commission: Dromore West & Easkey

as part of "Living Landscapes/ Tírdhreacha Beo 2026 - 2028"

Budget: €76,000, inclusive of all fees, expenses and VAT where applicable.

Closing Date for Submissions: Thursday 26 November 2026 at 4pm: **arts@sligococo.ie**

Deadline for Queries: Thursday 12 November 2026 at 5pm: **rayneboothprojects@gmail.com**

Up to five artists or artist collectives will be shortlisted for Stage 2.
Each shortlisted applicant will receive a proposal development fee of €800

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1. Introduction

Living Landscapes / Tírdhreacha Beo is a programme that will bring major new public art commissions to locations across County Sligo. Funded through the Per Cent for Art Scheme, Sligo County Council is now inviting professional artists and artist collectives working in all artforms submit proposals for Commission 2 in the Dromore West & Easkey areas.

Artists and artist collectives are invited to propose ideas for a community-engaged artwork to be completed over a one-year period. Artworks can be proposed in all artforms and can be permanent or time-based/temporary. Proposed artworks should engage across Dromore West and Easkey, bringing the two communities together in the development of the work.

Located about 7km apart on the coast of west Sligo, the villages of Dromore West and Easkey are closely linked but distinctive communities. New housing developments in both locations have precipitated an opportunity to commission an artwork for the two communities, through the Per Cent for Art Scheme.

This brief has been informed by public consultation undertaken in both Dromore West and Easkey. A summary of the consultation findings is included in the appendix to this brief. Artists

are encouraged to use these themes and reflections as points of inspiration and to bring their own ideas, practices and creative approaches to the development of the commission.

2. Invitation

This commission will be awarded through a two-stage open competition.

This brief relates to Stage 1 and is open to professional artists and artist collectives working in all disciplines, based in Ireland and internationally. Sligo County Council Arts Service welcomes applications from artists at all points of their careers whose practice demonstrates artistic excellence and the capacity to realise an ambitious public art commission.

Stage 1 submissions will be assessed by a panel comprised of independent artists, curators, public representatives from the Sligo Public Participation Network (PPN), Sligo County Council members and staff. A shortlist of no more than five artists or artist collectives will be selected and invited to develop their proposals further (Stage 2).

An updated brief will be issued for the stage 2 shortlist. Each shortlisted artist or collective will receive a proposal development fee of €800 to prepare a detailed Stage 2 submission. Shortlisted artists will have the opportunity to visit the commission area, meet with representatives of Sligo County Council Arts Service and the Project Manager, and receive further contextual information to support the development of their proposals.

The final Stage 2 proposals will be assessed by a selection panel comprised of independent artists, curators, public representatives from the Sligo Public Participation Network (PPN), Sligo County Council members and staff. One artist or collective will be awarded the commission based on the quality of the artistic proposal and its response to the assessment criteria outlined in this brief.

3. Context of the Commission/ Community Priorities

The two neighbouring villages of Dromore West and Easkey are located close to Sligo's west coast. The public consultation process revealed a strong sense of creative community, with many residents of both Dromore West and Easkey being involved in arts and local community development projects. Participants in both areas saw public art as an opportunity to strengthen community life and favoured working together with artists to create work that acknowledges the rich heritage of the area while also supporting community participation and leaving a distinctive legacy that will be unique to their area.

Dromore West and Easkey share a strong community-focused culture, and they have experience of coming together to participate in shared projects. Current community development work in the locality includes experimental theatre, art exhibitions, film clubs, tidy towns groups, and the creation of community resources such as playgrounds, allotments, and a theatre. Communities in Dromore West and Easkey are also strongly connected to the surrounding natural landscape, coastline and network of local rivers.

In Dromore West, the local community centre forms the hub through which a variety of activities such as fitness classes, concerts, arts workshops, theatre performances and community theatre projects, fundraising drives, children's activities etc take place. The community has successfully fundraised to renovate the theatre into a significant venue for touring productions. There is a confidence and ambition as to how the arts could be used to strengthen their community, and a preference to engage an artist who could bring a collaborative approach.

In Easkey, residents have come together around their community centre to develop a host of new resources for their town, including a sensory garden, playground, film nights and plans for community allotments. In both towns there is a strong community of local artists and a strong knowledge of and involvement in arts practice.

The communities are linked by a sense of collaborative action and participation. Other strong themes that artists should take note of emerging from community consultation include:

- Environmental heritage and the water: the local traditions around the sea, the River Easkey, the importance of nature in people's daily lives
- Local History: the clans that existed in the area including the Mac Fhirbhisighs and the O'Dowds. The hidden history of places like Castle Field, the old fair and the workhouse.
- The Rambling House: The tradition of musicians and storytellers moving from house to house in the area, that has now been lost.
- Intergenerational participation: Young people leaving the area and returning, New residents and old coming together to form a true community.
- "A place where stories can happen."- The Public Art commission as a way to create new platforms to support existing community creativity
- Recording, documentation and broadcast: The use of technology to capture and distribute work

These themes are intended as starting points for artists rather than prescribed subject matter. Artists are encouraged to respond in a way that connects most meaningfully with their own practice. Proposals should not be political in nature or convey a political message

4. Artform and Scope of the Commission

Sligo County Council welcomes proposals from professional artists and artist collectives working across all artistic disciplines and media.

There is no prescribed form for the commission. Artists are encouraged to propose the approach they feel is most appropriate in response to the brief, the context of the commission and their own practice. The artwork can be permanent, temporary, time-based, performative, participatory, digital, sound-based, literary etc, and may involve a period of residency or workshop development in the community.

Community engagement may take many forms and should be appropriate to the artist's practice and the development of the proposed work. It may involve research, workshops, collaboration, performance, storytelling, making, recording or other forms of exchange. (NB.

Artists developing proposals should NOT contact any community groups at this stage. Local connections can be developed upon successful completion of the selection process.)

Artists and collectives applying for this commission should also consider the legacy aspect of their proposals; ideally this would involve a structure, methodology or system which can remain in place into the future for the benefit of the community.

The work should take place over a timeframe of one year, including development and delivery of the eventual artwork, commencing March 2027 running until March 2028.

5. Location

Artists are encouraged to consider the relationship between the two communities and the surrounding environment when developing their proposals. No final site has been predetermined, and the location of the artwork will be agreed in consultation with Sligo County Council Arts Service, the appointed Project Manager and relevant stakeholders following the artist's appointment. For stage 1 of this commissioning process, it is not necessary for artists to have identified a final location for the artwork. Where proposed work is time based and/or temporary, full consideration must be paid to how the work will be documented and archived.

6. Service Requirements

The appointed artist or artist collective will work in collaboration with Sligo County Council Arts Service and the appointed Project Manager to develop and deliver the commission from concept through to completion. The successful artist will be expected to:

- Develop the artistic concept and detailed design for the commission.
- With the support of Sligo County Council Arts service, identify locations for the artwork if necessary.
- Develop and deliver the commission in its eventual format.
- Attend meetings with Sligo County Council Arts Service, the Project Manager and other stakeholders as required.
- Undertake any necessary site visits, research and consultation to inform the development of the work.
- Prepare a project programme and identify key milestones for delivery.
- Manage all aspects of fabrication, production and installation where applicable. Including project management of any event or collaborative artistic activities that may take place as part of the commission.
- Appoint and manage any specialist fabricators, contractors or consultants required to realise the commission.
- Ensure that all works and activities comply with relevant health and safety, event planning, accessibility and environmental requirements.
- Ensure that the process of making the artwork and its final outcome are documented sufficiently.
- Liaise with Sligo County Council regarding technical approvals, permissions and installation requirements where necessary.

- Provide maintenance recommendations for the completed work, where applicable.
- Participate in documentation, publicity and evaluation activities associated with the commission.
- Deliver the commission within the agreed budget and timeframe

7. Finance / Budget

The total budget available for this commission is **€76,000** (inclusive of all fees, expenses and VAT where applicable).

Proposals should include a budget document in which all costs associated with the project are covered, including development, production and delivery of the artistic outcome, fees, design development, specialist consultants, fabrication, materials, engineering, transport, installation, insurance, permissions, documentation and any other costs required to complete the commission.

Any costs associated with the preparation of Stage 1 submissions are the responsibility of the applicant. Shortlisted artists invited to Stage 2 will receive a proposal development fee of €800.

8. Form of Response

Artists should submit their proposal in one PDF containing the following:

- Outline of the concept of the proposal; the artistic ideas and themes behind the work, what form will it take, and how it will manifest physically. This should include an outline of how you are thinking about public engagement, who will you work with on this phase, what will you do, how it will support the communities in question (NB. please do not contact any community groups at this stage, we are looking for ideas, local connections can be developed upon successful completion of the selection process.)
- Sketches/drawings/visualisations of the proposed art work, where applicable
- Overview of materials, detailing the resilience and permanence of the work, including how it will be fixed in place, where applicable
- An outline budget detailing a breakdown of the commission, including but not limited to artist's fee/artists' fee, production budget, events budget, documentation, cost of collaborators, any other fees including engineers, designers etc, cost of materials fabrication and insurance
- Up to three examples of relevant previous work, including images
- a CV of no more than three pages.

(Total page limit 10 pages)

Applications must be submitted as one PDF document not exceeding 10MB. The following subject line should be used on submission emails: **"Commission 2 – Stage 1 Application".**

9. Selection Process

The commission will be awarded through a two-stage open competition.

Following the closing date, eligible Stage 1 applications will be assessed by a panel which will comprise of independent artists, curators; public representatives from the Sligo Public Participation Network (PPN); Sligo County Council members and staff. The type of commission will determine the selectors on the assessment panel based on: experience, professional practice, creative discipline and artistic expertise.

Eligible Stage 1 applications will be assessed against the following criteria

- Artistic quality, originality and ambition, including the quality and relevance of the proposed artistic idea. (40%)
- How the proposal addresses the brief, its emphasis on relationship to place, landscape and communities of Dromore West and Easkey. This includes the potential of the proposal to create a meaningful and lasting contribution to the two communities. (30%)
- Feasibility, including demonstrated experience, skills and capacity to deliver a commission of this scale, and the ability to manage the project within the available budget and timeframe. (20%)
- Consideration of environmental sustainability, durability and future maintenance, where applicable. Consideration towards full documentation of work that is time based or temporary. (10%)

The 3-5 highest-scoring applicants will be shortlisted and invited to progress to Stage 2.

Shortlisted artists or artist teams will receive a Stage 2 Brief containing stage 2 criteria and any additional information required to develop their proposals. Each shortlisted artist or artist team will receive a proposal development fee of €800 (inclusive of VAT where applicable). During the development phase for stage 2, shortlisted artists will have the opportunity to submit queries and a briefing site visit will be arranged for all shortlisted artists.

The Stage 2 assessment process will be undertaken by the Selection Panel, which will recommend one artist or artist collective for appointment. Shortlisted artists may be called for interview at this stage.

In both stages, Sligo County Council reserves the right not to appoint if no submission is considered to meet the required standard.

10. Timescale

The deadline for Stage 1: **Thursday 26th November 2026** at 4pm. All applications will be assessed a shortlist of no more than five artists or collectives will be confirmed by mid **December 2026**.

Shortlisted artists will then be invited to develop and submit a Stage 2 proposal. Deadline for stage 2 will be set for mid January 2027. Shortlisted Artists/teams may be called for interview in late January, and the commission will be awarded to the selected artist or artist team in early February 2027.

Following appointment, the successful artist /team will work with Sligo County Council Arts Service and the appointed Project Manager to develop the commission, with work being completed and in place by **Spring 2028**.

Please note that this timetable is indicative and may be subject to change.

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11. Submissions

- Closing date for Stage 1 applications is **Thursday 26th November 2026 at 4pm**
- Applications should be submitted by email to **arts@sligococo.ie**
- Applications received after the closing date and time will not be considered.
- Applications must be submitted as one PDF document not exceeding 10MB. The following subject line should be used on submission emails: **"Commission 2 – Stage 1 Application".**
- Applicants will receive an acknowledgement confirming receipt of their submission.
- Queries can be addressed to **rayneboothprojects@gmail.com** before Thursday 12th November 2026 at 5pm.

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12. Terms and Conditions

Data Protection:
Personal data submitted as part of this competition will be processed by Sligo County Council for the purposes of administering and assessing the competition and, where applicable, managing the resulting commission. Personal data will be processed in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and Sligo County Council's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Statements.

Insurance:
The successful artist/artist team will be required to have appropriate insurance cover in place prior to commencement of the commission. The specific insurance requirements will be confirmed by Sligo County Council and set out in the contract with the successful artist.

Contract:
The successful artist/artist team will be required to enter into a formal contract with Sligo County Council prior to commencement of the commission. The contract will set out the agreed scope of work, programme, payment schedule and relevant terms and conditions.

Tax Clearance:
The successful artist/artist team will be required to hold valid Tax Clearance Certification prior to entering into the contract.

Freedom of Information:
Information submitted may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2014. Applicants should clearly identify any information they consider confidential or commercially sensitive.

Retention of Submissions:

Stage 1 applications will be accepted by email only. Posted applications will not be accepted. Late applications will not be accepted. Stage 1 applications will be kept for six months for the purpose of documenting the selection process and ensuring transparency of the selection process. Stage 1 proposals, including designs, will be deleted after six months.

Appendices

A. Community Consultation Report

Living Landscapes / Tírdhreacha Beo

Community Consultation Report, Commission 2: Dromore West & Easkey Areas

The consultation meetings in Dromore West and Easkey revealed two closely linked communities with a largely consistent vision for what this commission could become.

Participants saw public art not only as the creation of an art object, but as an opportunity to strengthen community life. People in Easkey and Dromore West want to work together with artists to create a work that acknowledges the rich heritage of the area while also reflecting contemporary life, supporting community participation, and leaving a lasting legacy for future generations.

Themes raised in Easkey and Dromore West:

The Rambling House, Past, Present and Future

Participants spoke about the wealth of stories, memories and local knowledge that exist within both communities, while expressing concern that much of this knowledge risks being lost if it is not actively gathered and shared. Older generations were recognised as important custodians of local history, with the Young at Heart group in Dromore West highlighted as a particularly valuable source of stories, photographs and lived experience.

As one participant observed: "When the stories are gone, they're gone forever."

However, participants were clear that storytelling should not become an exercise in nostalgia. There was a strong feeling that heritage should remain alive by connecting past, present and future, and not getting too' stuck in the past' but looking towards the future and what is coming next. In Dromore West technology was seen as a good way to blend the past and present together.

Across both meetings, participants referenced projects that successfully bring history into contemporary life. The immersive theatre production 'The Bucks and the Thrashers', developed for the Easkey and Dromore West area by local playwright Niamh McGrath, was repeatedly cited as an inspiring example of community participation rooted in local history, as well as being a project that has already happened successfully between the two communities.

Edwina Guckian's Door Project, the Dúchas Archive, and more recent community initiatives were also identified as examples of creative ways to gather, interpret and share local knowledge.

In Easkey, storytelling was closely connected to the tradition of the rambling house, with McGowan's Pub remembered as a place where stories, music, song and spoken word were regularly exchanged. Participants welcomed current efforts to revive these traditions and suggested that a future commission could create new opportunities for storytelling in the tradition of the Rambling House to continue.

In Dromore West people referenced local histories including the Barony of Tireragh, stories of the Mac Firbhisighs, the O'Dowds, Castle Field, the old fair, the workhouse, Thomas Crofton, Leckan Forest and other sites that continue to shape local identity but are rarely interpreted publicly. Participants described the area as "still kind of a secret place" and felt this hidden quality was something worth protecting.

Landscape, Water and the Natural Environment

Landscape emerged as a defining characteristic of both communities. Participants spoke about it as something lived rather than simply observed.

In Dromore West, discussion returned repeatedly to the Atlantic coastline, rivers, waterfalls, mountains, fishing traditions and surfing culture. Water represents movement, continuity, return and connection. Participants suggested that these qualities could inspire artwork that is responsive, interactive and continually evolving rather than static.

In Easkey, the River Easkey became a central focus of discussion. Participants reflected on the stories embedded within the river itself, particularly the many named fishing pools on the river such as the Laundry Pool, whose histories remain part of local memory. The coastline, shoreline, sea, fishing industry, lime kilns and seaweed traditions were all identified as significant parts of the area's identity.

Participants agreed that any selected artist would need to understand the close relationship between environment, work, memory and community life. Sound, movement and technological frameworks were all discussed as possible artistic responses. In Dromore West there was a discussion around the use of technology as a repository of stories and heritage. Participants were excited by the idea of broadcast, using technology such as QR codes to widely sharing the artwork that will be made.

Participation and Community Ownership

“The community is like a pot – you get out what you put into it.”

Both Dromore West and Easkey have very strong community projects in which people work together to achieve their goals. In Dromore West this is centred on the arts, community theatre and music and around the development of a new performance space in the Community Centre, for which the group have secured significant funding. In Easkey, a strong group of local residents have formed a number of community groups to develop projects including a sensory garden, community film screening nights, and a children’s play area. They also have plans for community allotments.

In both communities there is a feeling that they contain a huge amount of artistic talent and drive, and that any artistic commission would need to recognise and complement this. There was agreement that artists should spend time within the locality, build relationships, undertake research and work collaboratively.

Participants from both areas reflected on demographic change and recognised the importance of creating shared experiences that bring together long-term residents, newer arrivals and younger generations. The lack of affordable housing for young people was highlighted as an issue but it was agreed that, even if young people emigrate they will be drawn back by the intangible quality and beauty of the area.

Creativity and the Arts

"A place where stories can happen."

Both consultations revealed communities with vibrant creative cultures that participants felt are often overlooked. Music, storytelling, theatre, performance, photography, film, dance and community arts were all identified as important aspects of everyday cultural life. Participants highlighted local artists who live in the area and emphasised that commissioned artists should engage not only with historical traditions but also with the considerable creative activity already taking place across both communities.

Examples included Dromore West Sings, local theatre productions, music schools, community performances, film screenings, photography projects and environmental initiatives. There are extensive plans for the expansion of Dromore West Community Centre, including the development of a new performance space, and the community would like to find a way to highlight and develop this work and to encourage passing traffic and commuters to spend time in the community and experience the cultural life of the place. Participants felt the commission should recognise this existing creative capacity and build upon it.

A recurring aspiration throughout both consultations was the creation of opportunities for people to come together. Rather than focusing solely on monuments or standalone artworks, participants imagined projects that generate activity and encourage participation over time. Music, storytelling, workshops, performances, digital platforms and informal gathering spaces were all discussed as ways of strengthening community life.

Similarly, participants in Dromore West spoke about creating focal points that encourage conversation, participation and exchange while strengthening local identity and pride of place.