



Tipperary Bealtaine 2026

Open Call to Tipperary artists

Deadline **12 noon** on **Thursday 15 January 2026**

Tipperary Arts Office is issuing an open call to Tipperary artists to submit a written proposal for an engagement project or event targeted at older people, culminating in a showcase during the month of May 2026 as part of the Tipperary Bealtaine Festival.

We would like to hear from professional artists or groups of artists born or based in Tipperary, from across all artforms. Tipperary Arts Office is keen to engage older people as makers and participants as well as audiences for the arts.

For 2026, we are particularly interested in receiving proposals for projects which involve engaging with older people in care settings or community contexts (active retirement groups, family resource centres, community organisations).

Artists who wish to deliver engagement projects will need to demonstrate prior experience of working in a socially engaged way with older people (or an organisation working with older people). They should have a well-formed idea and clear plan for engagement in which they have identified a particular context or physical setting in which older people can actively participate. The selected artist(s) will work closely with the older people in presenting and/or creating the work and developing the showcase event.

The funding available to each project will range from €1,000 to €3,500 depending on size, scale and reach of the proposal.

Artists who are successful in the open call process will be required to attend a networking and capacity-building event (**February/March – date tbc**) which will include topics such as good practice in creative aging, working in participant-led initiatives, evaluation, reflection and will be an opportunity for sharing learning. A small stipend (separate to the project proposal) will be paid for attendance at this event.

Background

Each year in the month of May, Bealtaine is presented as a nationwide festival celebrating the arts and creativity as we age. The festival, which celebrated 30 years in 2025, is an initiative of Age & Opportunity, the national organisation that promotes active and engaged living as we get older. The Bealtaine theme for 2024 to 2026 is *Lust for Life*.

Tipperary Arts Office runs an extensive, interactive programme throughout the county in partnership with Tipperary Libraries.

To date, the Tipperary Bealtaine Festival has featured collaborative socially engaged residencies across all artforms in a range of settings, as well as

exhibitions, concerts, dance events, storytelling, theatre productions, workshops and writers' events. Projects have been delivered in a range of care settings and in organisations in which older people are active or which work with older people, e.g. Active Retired groups, resident's associations, libraries, book clubs, choirs, Men's Sheds, ICA etc.

How to respond to the open call:

The application process is straightforward. We are looking for information about:

1. The proposed project including the planned showcase or output.
2. You: tell us about yourself and your practice, including any previous experience or training in working with older people and why you are interested in working with older people? Please include your CV and examples/samples of relevant practice
3. The budget

Please provide an outline of the proposed project. Some questions have been provided to help with this.

1. The proposed project

- Why are you proposing this project?
- What do you propose to do?
- Where or in what setting do you propose to work, and with whom? Let us know if you have already made contact with the organisation or setting. While this is not essential at this point, the importance of clear communications and agreements with users and host venues regarding expected engagement and outcomes should be recognised.
- In what practical ways will older people be engaged (e.g. as workshop participants, co-creators or audience members)?
- How will you ensure the participation of members and support of host venues?
- What are your timelines? When will your project commence and conclude? While Bealtaine runs throughout the month of May, programmes or residencies often commence before this date
- What are your desired outcomes for the participants/audiences? How will you know they have been met?

Showcase/outputs

- What is the final output of the project likely to be (e.g. a performance, exhibition, creation of a new artwork etc.)? What form will it take and where will this take place?
- Who will attend a final showcase (i.e. will it be for participants only, or will other users of the care setting/organisation, family members and friends or a wider public be invited?)

2. You and your practice

- What is your track record in working in this way? (please provide examples here or ensure your CV shows evidence of your experience)

- Why would this proposal be important for you at this time?
- What do you see as the likely outcomes for your own artistic practice? What impact would receiving this opportunity have on your own work?
- What are your most important development needs in this area?

3. Budget

Please provide a budget in support of your proposal. You should ensure that you include a fee for your own planning and project development time as well as engagement times with your target group.

How to apply:

Deadline for Submissions is **12 noon on Thursday 15 January 2026**

Enquiries about eligibility or proposal ideas should be sent to

artsoffice@tipperarycoco.ie.

Submissions should be emailed to artsoffice@tipperarycoco.ie

Submission should be marked Tipperary Bealtaine Open Call 2026 and should include:

- Project proposal
- Artist CV(s)
- Three examples of previous relevant practice (images, videos etc.)
- Budget

Contact the Arts Office if you have any question in advance of the submission date

Assessment of proposals

As there is a limited budget available for this initiative, it may not be possible to support all applications.

All applications will be assessed against a set of priorities or criteria, which include: quality of the proposal; track record of the artist(s) in engaging older people and delivering projects in this way; proposed outcomes for the participants. We are particularly interested in receiving proposals for projects which involve engaging with older people in care settings or community contexts (active retirement groups, family resource centres, community organisations). The assessment may also consider geographic and artform spread to ensure the widest possible engagement across the county.

The assessment process will take place in early January and applicants will be informed of the outcome of this process during the week beginning **Monday 26 January 2026**.

Please note: This open call is for artists born or based in County Tipperary only.

What happens if your application is successful:

- Artists who are successful in the open call process will be required to attend a networking and capacity-building event (**February/March – date tbc**) which will include topics such as good practice in creative

aging, working in participant-led initiatives, evaluation, reflection and will be an opportunity for sharing learning. A small stipend (separate to the project proposal) will be paid for attendance at this event.

- If successful, you will be required to provide publicity materials to support the promotion of the project and your work by **Monday 30 March 2026**. We understand that some projects may not have commenced by that stage. In this case, we will ask for text to explain the project and suitable images for promotion.
- Health & Safety Information: All potential health and safety risks must be fully considered and addressed for all Bealtaine events. Events must take place in accordance with current government health guidelines as well as Tipperary Arts Office's own Health & Safety policies.
- Depending on the setting and participants involved, Garda vetting may be required.
- Successful applicants must have a public liability insurance policy in place.
- Applicants awarded financial support will have to provide specific indemnity to Tipperary County Council on their insurance policy in respect of the project/event(s) and submit to the Arts Office by the deadline specified in letter of offer.

See below for a selection of links to information on the practice of the arts and creativity with older people:

[Arts + Health.ie](#), National website for arts and health in Ireland

[After You Are Two: Exemplary Practice in Participatory Arts with Older People](#), Kate Organ (Baring Foundation, 2013)

[Ageing Artfully: Older people and professional participatory arts in the UK](#), David Cutler (2009)

[Arts & Creativity in Later Life: Implications for Health and Wellbeing in Older Adults: executive summary](#) Institute of Public Health (2021)

[Arts & Dementia: Bringing Professional Arts into Care Settings](#), Collective Encounters, 2011

[Artworks Alliance](#) (the UK's participatory arts network) Online Resource Bank, 2023 [A Toolkit for Arts and Creativity in Care Settings](#), Creative Ireland, 2022 [Collaborative Arts Resource Pack](#), Create 2020

[Creative Activity in the Ageing Population](#), Siobhan Scarlett, Ann Hever, Mark Ward, Rose Anne Kenny (The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing), 2021

[Creative Inquiry Arts & Ageing Resources](#), Age & Opportunity, 2022

[Creativity Matters The Arts & Ageing Toolkit](#)

[Growing the Creative Ageing Movement: International Lessons from the UK](#), Alice Thwaite (2017)

[Outcome Measurement Guide for Local Authority Arts Services & Arts Organisations](#), Quality Matters (The Arts Council), 2022

[Participatory Arts Practice in Healthcare Contexts](#): Guidelines for Good Practice, Durham University / Waterford Healing Arts Trust and HSE South Arts & Health Programme, 2010

[The importance of arts for older people's health and wellbeing](#) , Laura McQuade (Blog, Institute for Public Health), 2020

[The Online Creative Ageing Resource](#), 2023

[The Warwick-Edinburgh Well-being Scale](#)

[Creativity and Ageing: TILDA report explores benefits of creativity in later life](#)



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council

