



Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development



Comhairle Contae
Ros Comáin
Roscommon
County Council



KNOCKCROGHERY TOWN & VILLAGE RENEWAL SCHEME PUBLIC ART COMMISSION 2022 ARTIST BRIEF

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Roscommon County Council invites submissions from artists for an artistic installation in Knockcroghery to highlight the history and heritage of the village and surrounding areas. This Public Art Commission is funded under the Department of Rural & Community Development Town & Village Renewal Scheme. The scheme will provide a platform for artists to respond creatively to public space, to the history, heritage and community of Knockcroghery, creating an identity for the village.

This commission may deliver one or more artworks - in the form of sculptures, murals, creative street art installations - and creative signage, in the centre of Knockcroghery village, creating a unique heritage based focal point and highlighting the historical landmarks associated with the village.

The commission is intended to provide opportunities for dialogue with the local community, in particular Knockcroghery Tidy Towns Committee, and increasing public engagement with the arts.

Page 2 and 3 provide the text detail for the creative signage x 5 to be incorporated with the artwork, compiled by the local community. Page 5 and 6 provide additional detail about the village for information.

The value of the commission is **€37,000**. One artist will be commissioned who may sub contract other creatives. The installation must be completed by August 2022.

A panel may also be formed for other public art commissions by Roscommon County Council during 2022-2023.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

4pm, Friday 8th April 2022. The commission will be awarded before the end of April 2022. Late submissions will not be accepted.

QUERIES

Queries regarding the application process can be emailed to artsofficer@roscommoncoco.ie.
Queries regarding the location and context can be emailed to Knockcroghery Tidy Towns c/o gordononoconnor@gmail.com.

TEXT FOR CREATIVE SIGNAGE

Knockcroghery Name (Main Theme)

The name Knockcroghery can be traced back to a time in the village's distant, dark past and linked to a site of execution on the Western end. The name is an anglicisation of Cnoc an Chrocaire which translates to Hangman's Hill. The official Down Survey map records the presence of Cnoc an Chrocaire in 1631. Although on no official records, local lore suggests that during the Cromwellian invasion of Ireland in 1651 Lord Coote attacked nearby Gailey Castle, home of the O'Kellys and that some of the rebels were hanged on Hangman's Hill. While Knockcroghery's infamy emerged as a site of execution it is now synonymous with culture, heritage and sport and lifts of its tapestry are recounted in a comic ballad written by Peadar Kearney "Knockcroghery" who also wrote the Irish national anthem. The opening lines are "Were you ever below on the side of Knockcroghery, Meadows all ripe on a bright summer's day".

A proud GAA history

Knockcroghery has a long and proud association with GAA both on and off the field. The 1940's were the glory years for football in Knockcroghery. In that decade St Patrick's as the club was named at the time, reached nine county finals and won six of them. Five players, Jimmy Murray (Jamesie), his brother Phelim Murray, Liam Gilmartin, Johnny Briens and Jim Brennan from the club made the county panel. As captain, Jimmy Murray led the county team onto Croke Park in five all Ireland finals winning the ultimate prize in 1943 and 1944. This forever sealed Knockcroghery's fate as a sacred place to gather to celebrate each title brought back to the parish and to the county. The club changed its name to St Dominic's in 1973 and is one of the most active clubs in the county fielding teams in football, hurling, camogie, and ladies football. Off the field of play St Dominic's has also brought home numerous County, Connacht and All Ireland titles in singing, dancing, recitation, drama and music from Scór, the cultural dimension of GAA. Handball also comes under the GAA banner and Knockcroghery proudly boasts an All-Ireland champion, Mary Dolan (Fitzgerald) who won seven all Ireland titles and represented Ireland in international handball competitions. The GAA in Knockcroghery is integral to fostering and nurturing a love of traditional sport, music and culture.

The Burning of Knockcroghery 1921

In the early hours of June 21st 1921 terror visited this village when three lorries of masked armed men arrived firing shots, shouting abuse and then proceeding to set fire to the houses. These men were Black and Tans and auxiliaries, part of the armed forces set up to suppress the rising opposition to British rule in Ireland. In an act of retaliation following the killing of General Lambert at an ambush near Glasson, the attackers, following a false line of enquiry, decided the killers had come from Knockcroghery. The villagers left their homes and fled through the fields in their nightshirts as their homes and all they owned went up in flames. Most of the houses had thatched roofs and on this dry hot summer night they blazed as the terrified owners were helpless to resist. The next day only three houses stood standing and the claypipe factories lay in ruins, marking the end of a centuries old industry. The people of Knockcroghery, including different local church leaders, showed their resilience and rallied to support their community. Although many emigrated, the village adapted, has been rebuilt and continues to prosper.

The Fair Green

The Fair Green at the heart of Knockcroghery Village provides a unique space to cater for the different needs of its community. For hundreds of years it was the scene of one of the largest sheep fairs in Ireland. In the early 1600's James the first of England bestowed a weekly market and yearly fair to Colla O'Kelly. This gave the landowner the right to collect a toll from all who wished to bring sheep to the fair. The tolls were collected at the three entrances to the village, a practice that continued well into the twentieth century. The "old fair" as it was known took place on the 25th of October with other fair days added down through the years. The use of the Green as a space for fairs declined in the 1960s with the arrival of the livestock mart. The Fair Green also proudly boasts a handball alley built in 1860. Originally a three walled alley it hosted handball tournaments as well as being a meeting place where dances were held. In 1934 the back wall was

used for writing political slogans, coming to a head when explosives were used by one faction and part of the alley was blown up. Although its function changed, the Green is a treasured place as it acts as an anchor for community gatherings and a canvas that allows each generation to add its own piece of history to a very rich tapestry.

The Claypipe Industry

For many years the village of Knockcroghery was synonymous with clay pipes. Whilst most pipe making in Ireland took place in large urban centres, the exception was Knockcroghery, a small rural village. The first official mention of clay pipe making in this village was in the Synge Census of 1749 where Thomas Buckley was listed as a pipe maker. The industry grew and by 1832 when Isaac Weld visited Knockcroghery as part of his survey of County Roscommon, he observed “the village is prosperous due to its little manufacture of tobacco pipes which gives employment and brings in a moderate income to several families”. At that time the clay was sourced locally but late in the 1800’s it came from Devon transported by ship and then by rail to Knockcroghery station. The pipes were transported by journeymen to every county in Ireland and they were particularly popular for wakes. The small bowls would be filled with tobacco and after they had been smoked the person attending the wake would break it and say Lord Have Mercy. In the 1911 census the families involved in pipe making were Curley, Fitzgerald, Lyons and Cunnane, most of these families still have descendants living in the area. In June 1921 the burning of the village including the claypipe factories brought the claypipe industry to an end. Already the popularity of the humble clay pipe was in decline due to the rise in popularity of the cigarette so the factories were never rebuilt. Those who depended on the industry for their livelihood were forced to change career or many chose to emigrate. In the 1990’s the traditional method of making clay pipes was revived by Ethel Kelly on the site of the original factory run by Andrew Curley.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Artists with experience of creating external artworks are invited to submit a proposal for works which are:

- Professional and unique contemporary works with local historical significance.
- Made in a manner and from materials suitable for outdoors.
- Works which will require low maintenance.

Artists should provide the following information as part of their submission:

1. CV: submit an up-to-date curriculum vitae and contact information.
2. Documentation of work: submit up to 5 examples of relevant, previous work, including written descriptions, photographs, and where relevant links to videos.
3. Applications will be assessed using the following criteria which should be used as headings in your submission:
 - Your experience of creating original, high quality outdoor artwork and managing such projects incorporating detail of maintenance requirements for such outdoor artwork (500 words max) (30/100);
 - Quality of concept, artistic merit and relevance to the location and historical context of Knockcroghery. Approach to this commission including proposed location of artwork and signage (500 words max) together with visuals of potential outcomes for the artwork in situ – digital images or scaled drawings (30/100);
 - Budget detail - value for money with due consideration to long term value and impact (20/100);
 - Timescale for realisation and projected completion date (deadline August 2022), inclusive of any research period and proposed approach to consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders including the commissioner and the local community (150 words max) (20/100).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ARTIST

All artists must comply with the necessary Health and Safety Legislation in the design, manufacture, supply, delivery and installation of the work paying particular attention to the challenges created by a public outdoor setting. It is the responsibility of the artist(s) to deliver the work on time and on budget.

BUDGET €37,000

Budget is fully inclusive of all costs including fees to the artist(s), any necessary research, production/realisation, installations, groundworks, insurance, documentation, maintenance file and VAT.

INSURANCE

Artists will be required to have Public Liability insurance cover for work they have to undertake on site and Employers Liability insurance cover for any person that they undertake to bring on site as part of the design or implementation phase of the project.

TAX CLEARANCE

The successful artist(s) must provide the Council with a tax clearance certificate.

DETAILS FOR SUBMISSION

Submissions must be emailed to artsofficer@roscommoncoco.ie

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

4pm, Friday 8th April 2022. Commission will be awarded before end April 2022.
Late submissions will not be accepted.



Knockcroghery

Population (2016) – c. 351

Village Location/Accessibility:

Knockcroghery village is situated approximately 10km south east of Roscommon Town and 20km north of Athlone Town. The village has largely developed in a linear manner, either side of the N61 National Secondary Route, which stretches from Athlone to Sligo. A number of local roads also converge in the village including the Srah Road (L2003), Corboley Road (L2004) & Galey Road (L2001).



The village nestles at the foot of a stony ridge which accounts for the original name of the village 'An Creagán', meaning stony hill. There is a running stream (Ballyglass River) just to the north of the village, which provides for a tranquil and scenic area to walk and relax. The village lies just west of Lough Ree, which forms part of the River Shannon water network.

Until the late 20th century, the village contained a number of shops, a butchers, a chemist, a florist, a petrol station, a post office, four public houses, a railway station and a Garda Station. With the rise of the private motor car and the associated convenient access to larger towns, many of these businesses and services have closed. Today, there remain three public houses, a post office and a hairdressers.

Places of Interest close to Knockcroghery

Nearby at Galey Bay on the shore of Lough Ree stands Galey Castle, seat of the Ó Ceallaigh clan and built in 1348. Galey Bay was the location of a regatta held annually from the 1870s till the late 1920s. The regattas were run by Lord Crofton of Mote Park.

Out in Lough Ree is the island of Inchcleraun named after a sister of Queen Maeve, Clothra. Queen Maeve is said to have been killed here by an enemy while she was bathing. In recent centuries, the island has been nicknamed Quaker Island and the remains of seven churches can be seen on the island to this day. Roscommon Swift Survey 2020 found that swifts are often seen flying between Athlone and Roscommon and going to hunt over the insect covered waters of Lough Ree. The survey identified 2 x swift nest sites in Knockcroghery – both in Murrays pub premises. Swifts are a small species of bird that visit Ireland to breed during the spring and summer seasons. These birds arrive in early May and usually depart as soon as chicks have flown their nest by early August. Swifts live most of their lives "on the wing", where they have adapted to feed, drink, mate and sleep in flight, landing only when they enter a nest site to breed.

Portrun is the local lakeside resort, and is popular with tourists and locals alike in the summer months.

Also in the area stands Scregg House, seat of the Kelly family from the 18th century onwards. On the grounds of the house are some excellent examples of Sheela na Gigs. The building itself is an example of a 3-storey 5-bay mid-18th-century country house.

Culleen Hall is located 1 km south of Knockcroghery, and is used as a venue for concerts and local events, as well as a local pre-school.

The Clay Pipe Visitors' Centre is located on the site of the former clay pipe factory. Visitors can witness the manufacturing of clay pipes by traditional methods and learn about the history of the industry.

Beside the Post Office at the northern end of the village is a picnic area on the bank of a stream.

Architecture

Much of the architecture of the village centre dates from the 1920s, when the village was rebuilt after the burning by the Black and Tans. Some buildings, such as the church, the community centre, the parochial house, Murray's and the Widow Pat's, predate this.

The village's Anglican church was dismantled in the 1970's, the stone being reused to build a church elsewhere. The site formerly occupied by the Anglican church was subsequently occupied by a petrol station. The former rectory associated with the Anglican church remains standing, opposite the post office.

St. Patrick's Catholic Church is an example of late nineteenth-century ecclesiastical design. The stained glass windows on the Eastern side of the church depict the history of the church in Ireland, including the old thatched church in Ballymurray.

Events and culture

Knockcroghery Fair was a festival held annually, generally on the third weekend of September, until 2013.

The Galey Bay Regatta, an annual yachting regatta, was held from 1872 until 1913 by the Lords Crofton, who owned a boathouse on Galey Bay of Lough Ree adjoining Galey castle.

The traditional Irish phrase, "fáilte Uí Cheallaigh" (an O'Kelly welcome) dates from December 1351 when Uilliam Buí Ó Ceallaigh (the Taoiseach of Uí Mháine, a kingdom that roughly covered what is now East County Galway and South County Roscommon) invited the poets, writers and artists of Ireland to a great feast at his home, Galey Castle. The feast reportedly lasted for a month. It was during this feast that the famous poet, Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh, wrote the poem, Filidh Éireann go hAointeach, which remembers the great feast.

Transport

Knockcroghery railway station opened on 13 February 1860 and finally closed on 17 June 1963. Roscommon railway station is now the nearest station and is located 10 km from Knockcroghery village. It is on the Westport-Dublin line, also serving indirect routes to Ballina, Galway and Ennis.

Knockcroghery is served by Bus Éireann's Route 21 (Westport-Athlone), with indirect routes to Galway, Dublin and other towns. The village is situated on the main N61 road between Athlone and Roscommon towns, and near the M6 Galway-Dublin motorway.