



“Laois County Council aims to maximise participation in and access to a wide range of artistic experiences across art disciplines and according to the highest standards of excellence. Laois County Council is committed to developing sustainable and progressive contemporary arts programmes that are supportive of artistic ambition.”



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Foreword *by the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, John O'Donoghue TD*

It is a great honour for me to introduce the Laois Arts Plan 2006–2011.

For 16 years, Laois County Council has demonstrated a continued commitment to arts development.

The results of this long-term commitment are manifold: the Laois School of Music, the county's youth theatres, Dunamais Arts Centre and numerous Arts Office led programmes all visibly support and maximise participation in the arts. Significantly, Laois County Council has fastened its investment in the arts with a firm dedication to evaluation and forward, strategic planning. The Laois Arts Plan 2006–2011 recognises that Laois is at a significant point in artistic development, and, cognisant of the local authority's achievements to date, sets out a strategic road map for future development.

The Plan reflects the tremendous growth of the arts in Ireland over the life of the Laois Arts Office. Since the first Laois Arts Officer was appointed in 1989, significant gains have been made countrywide in developing a vibrant arts infrastructure, in supporting the professional careers of artists and in extending and deepening people's experiences of the arts.

Local authorities have played a vital role in this development. Local authority expenditure in the arts has risen considerably in recent years, demonstrating a growing commitment to providing for the arts.

Local authorities are now offering leadership in numerous areas, paving the way with innovative programmes of public art, youth theatre, traditional arts and arts in education.

In parallel with the growth of the local arts sector, recent legislative changes have dictated a more strategic approach to arts planning and policy development. The 2003 Arts Act requires local authorities to prepare and implement plans for arts development in their areas, indicating that arts planning is now an integral part of local government planning. Laois County Council has been a few steps ahead of the 2003 Act, as this is the local authority's third arts plan.

Government values its partnership with local authorities in developing the arts and sees this relationship as being vital to allowing participation by all. A shared commitment to promoting participation in the arts and supporting the work of artists indicates that Laois County Council will continue to be a key partner to Government and others in the years to come.

Laois' plan focuses on consolidating successful programmes and instigating new ones, particularly new and innovative supports for individual artists. In its plan, Laois County Council has expertly balanced issues relating to social inclusion, community regeneration, education and young people, with a commitment to

high artistic standards, support for the individual artist and openness to innovative and challenging artistic work. The development of this plan has come about as a result of a comprehensive consultation process and ongoing interaction between the artistic community in Laois and Laois County Council, supported throughout by the Arts Council. The collaboration with the sector and the local authority's partner organisations is evident and the citizens of Laois are visible contributors to the content of the plan.

In conclusion, I want to congratulate all those who have put so much effort into producing this Arts Plan. These are Larry Kavanagh (Cathaoirleach) and the members of Laois County Council, Peter Carey (County Manager), Mr. Declan Byrne and the Housing Social and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee, Bridie Keenan, Patsy Lynch and Nuala Kelly of the Arts Office and of course the Arts Officer Muireann Ni Chonail.

I am confident that the achievements of this plan will be profound, impacting positively on the lives of those in County Laois and beyond.

John O'Donoghue TD *Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism*



Preface

The Arts Plan 2006–2011 sets out our policy for supporting, promoting and developing the Arts in County Laois over the next five years. Laois County Council recognises the positive contribution of the Arts to the ongoing economic, social and cultural development of the County.

The Arts Plan reviews the significant progress made to date and provides a framework, within which Laois County Council will continue to develop an integrated, effective and responsive contemporary Arts Programme.

The development and fostering of key partnerships with the various stakeholders will be a critical part of the new plan and we look forward to a positive response from all parties concerned.

I would like to thank all those who contributed to the plan, particularly our Arts Officer, Muireann Ní Chonaill and the staff in the Arts Department. I also want to acknowledge the input of the elected members of the Council who have been very supportive of the Arts.

I am confident that this plan will facilitate the ongoing development of the Arts in County Laois and maintain the very high standards we have achieved to date.

Peter Carey *County Manager*

The Laois Arts Plan 2006–2011 is the Third Arts Plan to be implemented by Laois County Council. It brings the county to a significant point in artistic development and one where it is possible to evaluate what has been achieved over the last sixteen years.

The Laois Arts Plan 2006–2011 strengthens our commitment to supporting existing arts programmes and infrastructure and in particular Laois School of Music, the county Youth Theatres, the Dunamaise Arts Centre and programmes that support and maximise participation in the arts. As a local authority we are committed to social inclusion and we believe that all members of our community can contribute and benefit from access to the arts, both physically and ideologically.

The Arts Plan 2006–2011 is an inclusive and participative working document and invites others to work with us in a strategic way to strengthen and develop the arts in the County, building on partnerships with a number of agencies and funding bodies including: Laois County Council, the Arts Council, the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (*Per Cent for Art* schemes), the National Roads Authority (NRA – *Percent for Art* schemes), the VEC, Health Services Executive, Midlands Region, The County Development Board and County Community Forum and other agencies. I welcome the publishing of this Arts Plan and I look forward to welcoming others to join us on our journey of greater arts development in County Laois.

Declan Byrne *Director of Housing Social and Cultural*

Cathaoirleach's Statement

Laois is a progressive county, conscious of a central location in the country which supports development in a range of areas that includes the economic, social and cultural. Strategically located nationally and regionally, with intersections on all major routes and in close proximity to Dublin city, Laois is an attractive county to which to relocate. Traditionally a mainly agricultural community, it is moving forward, embracing progressive technologies and methods of communication to provide new opportunities for its people.

The modernisation of its economy brings fresh challenges to Laois to ensure that it becomes a county of opportunities for all, with a focus of social inclusion. The Council, at the forefront of confronting these challenges, is one of two local authorities in Ireland to be awarded funding recently to develop an anti-poverty strategy for the county.

Recent years have also seen an increase in cultural diversity in the county, with increased numbers of non-nationals making their home here. There is a culture of welcome in the county and considerable work has been implemented in integrating this new population, which has added richness and artistic expression to the county. The challenges and opportunities presented by a constantly and rapidly changing environment provide a rich and variant platform for artistic contributions and expression. Creative energy makes wide-ranging contributions to a county, particularly at a time of considerable change and growth and also during the lifetime of our third Arts Plan. We value this energy and wish to build on it.

Larry Kavanagh *Cathaoirleach, Laois County Council*



Context

Laois Arts Plan 2006–2011 is the Third Arts Plan to be implemented by Laois County Council. It brings the county to a significant point in its artistic history and development, one where it is possible to evaluate what has been achieved over the last sixteen years.

During this period Laois County Council has been to the forefront of local arts development and Laois was one of the first local authorities to appoint an arts officer in 1989.

Significant achievements include:

- *the development of a county-wide arts service and extensive arts programme;*
- *the establishment of Dunamais Arts Centre (1999) and Laois School of Music, (2001);*
- *investment in various artistic programmes that focus on young people and children and the place of the arts in education.*

The Arts Plan 2006–2011 sets out our future programme of work for the following five years and clearly identifies Laois County Council's commitment to strengthening and sustaining contemporary arts development.

New initiatives include:

- *the establishment of a County Arts Website and the MIDLAND NETWORK;*
- *a Patronage Award for Laois artists;*
- *two new schemes, one supporting socially engaged arts practice within marginalised communities, and the other, a revised residency scheme, which will support artist-led initiatives.*

We will also explore, with the Planning and Development Departments, creative ways of supporting artists who may be interested in relocating to live in Laois.

We will continue to work with others to strengthen existing arts programmes and infrastructure and in particular Laois School of Music, the county Youth Theatres, Dunamais Arts Centre and programmes that support and maximise participation in the arts.

The Arts Plan is built around seven core programmes. Underpinning these programmes is our belief in the contribution the arts can make to the vitality of contemporary society. As a local authority we are committed to social inclusion and believe that all members of our community can contribute and benefit from access to the arts, both physically and ideologically.

We value the role of the artist and the creative contributions they make in a variety of ways to our society. Therefore we are committed to supporting artistic ambition across *all* art disciplines. In delivering the programmes we do not work alone but in partnership with others – locally, regionally and nationally – and we value the opportunity of working with others towards common and overlapping aims.

The Arts Plan 2006–2011 is supported and resourced through partnerships with a number of agencies and funding bodies including: Laois County Council, the Arts Council, the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (*Per Cent for Art* schemes), the National Roads Authority (NRA – *Percent for Art* schemes), the VEC, Health Services Executive, Midlands Region, the County Development Board and County Community Forum and other local agencies.

Objectives

- To sustain and strengthen the existing arts infrastructure.
- To sustain and strengthen artistic programmes that invest in young people and children.
- To encourage and extend peoples' interest and active participation in the arts across all sections of our society.
- To support artistic programmes which encourage social inclusion.
- To sustain and strengthen existing partnership programmes and to build new partnerships within the county and regionally.
- To support artistic ambition.
- To support as appropriate the use of Irish and the Irish language through all art forms.



Summer Arts Programme

Consultation

The process of developing the Arts Plan has involved a series of consultation meetings along with evaluation of previous arts plans.¹ Consultation sessions were held in four electoral areas and included input from the arts sector including: artists, art groups, drama groups, Youth Theatres, Dunamaise Arts Centre, Laois School of Music, local authority officials, elected members, and the general public.

Separate meetings were held with the Arts Council's Development Unit and with the Arts Council's Public Art Specialist. The Arts plan is informed by the Arts Council's *National Strategy for the Arts*, The Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism, *General National Guidelines on Public Art and The Per Cent for Art Scheme* and by Laois County Development Board Strategy.

1. Ruairi Ó Cuiv *Evaluation of the Laois Arts Plan 2001–2003*, January 2004

The Programmes

The Programmes are presented as the main themes, which we consider to be the best way forward for developing and supporting the arts in the county over the following five years. The programmes are not to be read in isolation but may be viewed generally as interdependent.

1. The Arts Service
2. Artists
3. Public Art and the Per Cent for Art Scheme
4. Education: Young People and Children
5. Active Participation: Community and Amateur Arts
6. Venues and Other Spaces
7. Plan Free Zone





1. The Arts Service

Policy

To provide and develop a quality arts service for the county, positioning the Arts Office as an important conduit for arts development and information within the county.

The arts are an area of growth for local authorities and also an area of greater complexity as their potential to contribute to differing aspects of society is continually being recognised. As a result our responsibility is to consider how best we can support artistic ambition and the artist as well as advocating a ‘cultural democracy’, which makes the arts accessible to all and gives consideration to all forms of artistic expression, inclusive of traditional, hybrid, new media and more popular forms.

Our work has increased over the years and will continue to do so during the life of this plan. In order to realise a range of programmes and services and information, we will invest in our website providing up-to-date information service on our work, services, grants and schemes, as well as providing links to other relevant arts bodies and resource agencies.

The website is to be used as an information resource in which to document our work across a range of areas such as public art commissions, residencies, educational programmes etc.

We will make evaluation an integral and on-going part of the Arts Plan, building it in from the start. Evaluation will be designed to assist us in monitoring, reviewing and improving our work.

We will work co-operatively with other departments in the local authority such as Heritage, Sports, Planning,

Development and Community, encouraging the potential to develop shared and relevant artistic programmes that can evolve and benefit from interdisciplinary approaches.

Implementation

- ▶ To oversee, manage and implement the Arts Plan. 2006–2011 (reference other strategies within this document).
- ▶ To develop the Arts Website and ensure that it is regularly up-dated with current information.
- ▶ To commission an evaluation of the Arts Plan. This will assist in defining performance indicators for each programme of work and enable us to review and evaluate our work in progress. The evaluation will also assist us considering improvements along the way, taking into account feedback from a range of sources – artists, public, local authority, partners.





2. Artists

Policy

Laois County Council recognises the importance of creating an environment which supports the artist and artistic ambition and the creative development of individual artists.

MIDLAND NETWORK

We will explore the possibility of establishing the MIDLAND NETWORK with our neighbouring counties of Offaly, Westmeath and Longford County Councils. The MIDLAND NETWORK would provide an inter-county forum, which will act as an artists' network for sharing projects/programmes and knowledge. It would have responsibility for investigating the best mechanism for information and knowledge exchange between artists and between artists and audiences, and initiate programmes for professional development practice for artists. It would have the capacity to develop joint contemporary arts programmes across art disciplines and in interdisciplinary practice.

PATRONAGE AWARD

Laois County Council will instigate an Artists' Patronage Award. The Award will give financial support to an artist, giving him/her time to focus on their practice. The Award will be open to artists from, living or working in, or who have connections to the county. It will be open to more established artists, with proven track records, and to emerging artists whose current work shows potential.

Criteria for the award will take account of the Arts Council's *The Artist and Local Authority* and will seek peer assessment of applications. The Patronage Award scheme will be awarded on an annual basis.

RESIDENCIES

Laois County Council has over the years supported artists through a programme of residencies. In general these residencies have asked the artist to undertake work in collaboration with communities, schools and groups. We will revise this programme and instigate a new programme that supports an artists-in-residence programme that focuses on the making of new work.

The scope for proposals remains open – it might for instance support an artist making new work – to be presented/performed or exhibited in the county or it may support an artist working with others in developing his/her ideas towards the creation of a new work.

The critical issue is that the artist leads and has freedom to choose an approach that suits his/her practice. The programme is open to all art disciplines and will target specific art form areas each year.

LIVING IN LAOIS

Working with the Planning and Development Departments and taking into account the County Development Plan 2002–2012, we would aim to explore imaginative ways of attracting artists to relocate here. We will focus this scheme on towns to the South and Centre of the county, outside the commuter-belt zones, where there has been less development but which clearly have much to offer artists as a base for living and working. (see also under Venues and Other Spaces, Programme 7).

EXHIBITION PROGRAMME Áras an Chontae

We will restructure the current programme of exhibitions in Áras an Chontae, limiting the number to three per annum. We will also review the benefit of this programme, and potential for improvements during the course of the plan.

THE LAOIS MINI BIENNIAL

The Laois Mini Biennial is a proposal for a modest and experimental arts event, to take place every 2 years and which has evolved out of Laois Artists' Symposium 2005. The Laois Biennial will focus on *new work made in situ* by selected or invited artists. While this programme focuses primarily on Visual Arts, its ambition is to include other art disciplines. The programme will be curated and documented and critiqued through website and publications.

ARTS ACT GRANTS

The granting of an Arts Act grant is a reserved function of the elected members of the County Council. We will increase individual grants available here and categorise to include support to artists and art groups (including professional and amateur arts sectors) with:

- purchasing of equipment, instruments and material: production costs relating to new work;
- documentation material such as CD, video and catalogue;
- production/exhibition or research;
- arts training and arts practice development.

ARTS & CULTURAL FESTIVAL

We aim to explore the feasibility of introducing a county Arts and Cultural festival.

Implementation

- ▶ To explore with our neighbouring counties the establishment of a Midland Network. This will involve commissioning a piece of research, which will explore both the scope for the Network and consider its operational structure. The review will be commissioned in 2006 with a view to establishing the Network in 2007.
- ▶ To revise the current residency programme and support an artist in any discipline making new work.
- ▶ To start a dialogue with Planning and Development Departments to consider in creative ways the possibilities of devising a programme that might be attractive to artists who may consider relocating to live in Laois. We will consider best ways to approach this programme looking at examples from elsewhere in Ireland and abroad, particularly where there has been emphasis on the importance of the arts and artists and the role they play within rural economies.
- ▶ To provide funding assistance to individual artists and art groups, both professional and amateur under the Arts Act grant.
- ▶ To establish a Patronage Award for Laois artists, taking into account the Arts Council's *The Artist and the Local Authority Document*.
- ▶ To establish "the Laois Mini Biennial" as a platform for making of new work in situ and taking into account the curatorial issues emerging out of the Laois Sculpture Symposium 2005.
- ▶ To investigate with local arts organisations, artists and cultural organisations, local authority departments, the possibility of establishing a county arts and cultural festival.

3. Public Art and the Per Cent for Art Scheme

Policy

To develop a strategy for implementation of *Per Cent for Art Scheme*, based on best practice and on the Department of Arts, Sports, Tourism General National Guidelines.

The *Per Cent for Art Scheme* is a Government initiative first introduced by the Department of Environment in 1986. It allows for 1% (up to a ceiling of Euro 65,000) from public construction budgets to be spent on commissioning or purchasing works of art. Over the years the scheme has come under review and in 2004 the Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism published guidelines to provide a common national approach to implementation of the *Per Cent for Art Scheme*. The guidelines emphasise that *Per Cent for Art* can ‘*be in any form and can work within or across many art forms such as visual arts, dance, film, literature, music, opera, theatre, architecture, performance, life art, multi-media, sound, and video. Works under this scheme can be of any duration, temporary or permanent and can be centred in an urban or rural context*’² (reference www.publicart.ie). Public art is not a static field and is constantly evolving and open to new forms of expression. As such, time for research and development is a critical part of public art commissioning.

Implementation

▶ To establish a Public Art Working Group. This will comprise of representatives from various departments of the Council which have construction budgets including Environment, Housing, Transport, Planning as well as other departments / individuals who have a role in shaping our physical and social environment. It will also include two external artistic experts.

- ▶ To agree a mechanism with the Public Art Working Group to ensure maximum use of *Per Cent for Art Schemes* by Laois County Council.
- ▶ To commence on-going educational and research programmes for our Public Art Working Group. This will involve a set number of lectures, presentations and field trips each year and will focus on the potential and scope within the public art field, best practice and procurement methodologies.
- ▶ For the Public Art Working Group to make a recommendation to Strategic Policy Committee of the Council on the preparation of a public art policy for commissioning artwork under the *Per Cent for Art Scheme*.
- ▶ To include artistic and curatorial advice at Brief stages and in the procurement of *Per Cent for Art* commissions.
- ▶ To commission a Conservation Study advising on repairs and maintenance to existing public sculptures.
- ▶ To document all commissions.





4. Education: Young People and Children

Policy

Laois County Council is committed to sustainable educational programmes in the arts that support opportunities for learning as well as developing skills and experience in a range of art forms both within and outside of the formal educational sector.

Arts-in-Education has been one of our main areas of focus. We acknowledge the role that such educational programmes have played, particularly as the arts are not considered a core area within the school curriculum. A critical part of developing arts in education programmes has been the commitment by partners and we hope during the course of this plan to consolidate such partnerships, enabling such projects as Laois School of Music to realise its full potential.

The LAOIS SCHOOL OF MUSIC

The Laois School of Music was established in 2001 as an initiative between the Laois Arts Office, the Arts Council and Laois VEC. The School was born out of a need to respond to the wider community needs in relation to the development of music within the region. A body of work was carried out in advance of the School becoming operational to identify the deficit in the provision of musical education in the Midlands region. From its inception the school has had capacity figures and a waiting list, which continues to grow year on year. Currently the school has an attendance of 330 pupils with 340 persons on the waiting list.

The main objectives of the Laois School of Music are:

- To develop music programmes which foster musical development.

- To nurture the love and appreciation of music.
- To promote access to and participation in music for all ages within the community.
- To identify and target specific measures aimed at groups who are particularly disadvantaged.
- To align the support for music in the Midlands with the local and national development plans and initiatives.
- To preserve and enhance existing musical heritage in the county.

The Laois School of Music is an initiative which services a real need in the provision of music education in the Midlands region. This initiative has the potential to be developed further over the coming years to provide a range of services that are equitable with other music schools throughout the country. The continued success of the Laois School of Music lies in the role played by the key partners who remain committed to the enterprise. The Laois School of Music recently carried out an evaluation of its structure and services with a view to developing its strategy for the future.

The evaluation recommends that Laois School of Music be developed on a more formal basis. The Steering Committee of the Laois School of Music is considering the implementation of recommendations.

ARTISTS IN SCHOOLS

Laois County Council successfully supports artists-in-schools schemes allowing for artistic collaboration between artists in any art forms and pupils from our primary schools.

To date projects have been short-term (4 months). We will increase the duration of these programmes giving the artist more time to develop projects with pupils.

ARCHITECTS IN SCHOOLS

Laois County Council successfully supports an architect to work with schools in the county. To date projects have been short-term (4 months). We will increase the duration of these programmes giving more time to the architect to develop projects with pupils.

COMMUNITY SUMMER ART WORKSHOPS

The Community Summer Art Workshops are an annual programme of workshops given by local artists in a range of arts areas, which take place in different venues throughout County Laois. The workshops to date have included, Art, Dance, Drama, Creative Writing, Music, Sculpture, Pottery and Creative Environmental. While Community Summer Arts Workshops have tended to focus on children and young people, we have also extended this programme to include opportunities for the wider community.

Implementation

- ▶ To strengthen Laois School of Music and to work closely with it in implementing the recommendations from the evaluation study.
- ▶ To continue to support artists-in-schools schemes.
- ▶ To continue to support architect-in-schools scheme.
- ▶ To continue to support the annual Summer Arts Programme throughout the county.



5. Active Participation: Community and Amateur Arts

Policy

To provide opportunities that extend and enhance the experience of the arts, that support active participation and increases wider participation, particularly in marginalised areas and areas of inequality. Aligned to this programme is our long-term commitment to building audiences for the arts.

YOUTH THEATRE

Laois County Council has established four Youth Theatre groups between 1993–1995 in Portlaoise, Mountmellick, Rathdowney and Stradbally. Currently facilitating 80 pupils, the youth theatres provide weekly workshops in a range of theatrical mediums including mime, dance, games and improvisation. They have also supported members meeting with other youth theatre groups countrywide, through exchanges and festivals. While the emphasis is as much on process and participation as it is on a final outcome of new productions and plays, the Laois Youth Theatres have an impressive curriculum vitae which has included the commissioning of new plays by Irish writers such as Pat Boran, Michael Harding and John Dunne.

At this point in their development we consider it important to give time to explore how best Laois Youth Theatres might develop. We wish to consider issues around expansion and consolidation, along with mentoring of tutors/directors and the possibility of commissioning artists to work with youth theatres e.g. writers, visual artists, choreographers, musicians, composers etc. We will commission a review of the county's four youth theatres, which will give consideration to how best to strengthen and sustain active youth theatre in the county.

SOCIALLY ENGAGED ARTS PROJECTS

Laois County Council will initiate a new scheme for artists who are interested in working in areas of physical and social disadvantage. Here we are interested in supporting progressive and artistically ambitious projects in any medium and discipline that allows for a genuine creative interaction between artists and participants. We will encourage groups and others to work with artists in developing proposals in a creative way. We will be open to new ways of expression and knowledge that can result from such collaborations, and that resist using the arts as a blanket tool for social cohesion. In order to advance such projects we will consider a pilot programme, which supports select groups in working with artists on an initial research phase, with a view to remaining committed to the development and realisation of projects.

AMATEUR ARTS

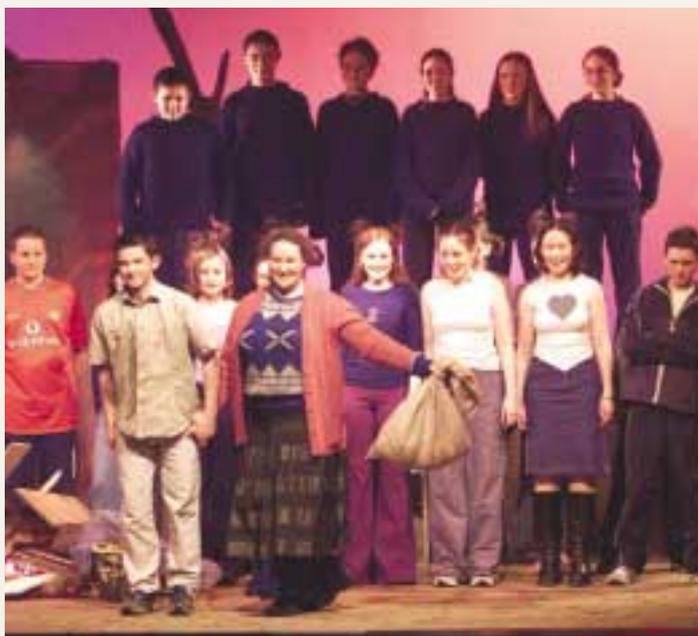
To continue to support and value the amateur arts sector and the contribution it makes to creating a vibrant arts environment in the county. We will continue to support this sector through Arts Act grants (see under programme 3), advice and through training schemes.

TRAINING IN ART FORM AREAS

Laois County Council has invested in training schemes in specific art forms such as Storytelling and Creative Writing. We will continue to work with the VEC to formalise the development of such training programmes, targeting specific art form areas.

Implementation

- ▶ To commission a review of youth theatres in the county.
- ▶ To introduce a pilot scheme supporting socially engaged arts practice, targeting marginalised areas and areas of inequality. We will build in time at the start allowing for artists and groups to develop proposals in a creative way.
- ▶ To continue to support training in art form areas and formalise this scheme with the VEC.
- ▶ To work with local health organisations on arts-in-health programmes.



6. Venues and Other Spaces

Policy

To continue to support Dunamaise Arts Centre as a primary performance and exhibition space in the county and to explore the possibility of developing other spaces for the arts throughout the county, particularly studio and workspaces for artists.

DUNAMAISE ARTS CENTRE

Dunamaise Arts Centre is the primary performance and exhibition centre in the county. It has been in operation for six years, having opened in May 1999. It has successfully delivered a varied artistic programme of a high calibre and has played an important role in building audiences for the arts locally.

The challenges now facing the Centre are different from those of a start up organisation and Dunamaise Arts Centre has identified the following as its main priorities over the forthcoming years:

- consolidation of its reputation as a centre for excellence in the performing and visual arts
- audience development
- universal access

It receives annual revenue and programming budget from the County Council and the Arts Council, which combine to make up 42% of its overall income. It has recently published its first Arts Strategy, which identifies the role it plays in the building of a local professional artistic community and as a resource for the development of local arts organisations and events. It is envisaged that the Dunamaise Arts Centre over the period of the plan will require an income of Euro 3.9million.

OTHER SPACES

The potential to create or develop spaces which can be utilised by artists as both work and studio spaces and for showing/performing work will be considered by working interdepartmentally and in particular with Planning and Development Departments. We are interested in imaginative solutions to encourage artists to live in Laois, particularly in the south and centre of the county. (see also programme 3).

Implementation

- ▶ Laois County Council to review Dunamaise Arts Centre's Strategy.
- ▶ To incrementally increase financial support to Dunamaise Arts Centre.
- ▶ To identify with Dunamaise Arts Centre, potential for shared outreach initiatives that focus on building audiences and increase participation.
- ▶ To consider the inclusion of studio and workspaces and other spaces for showing/performing work as part of *Living in Laois* (see Programme 3).





7. Plan Free Zone



Policy

To Plan for the Unplanned.

During the course of this plan we will allocate a budget for unanticipated artistic projects/ programmes that ‘come out of the blue’ and/or to allow for further investment in existing schemes and projects that are developing in a particularly interesting way and can benefit from additional resources. The budget here can be spent on a number of smaller programmes/projects or on one significant project. It aims to support flexibility and provide an open door policy through which artists, partners, communities, arts groups, individuals, festivals and events may enter to present ideas to the Arts Office.

Implementation

- ▶ To instigate a Plan Free Zone – to support the unforeseen.



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LAOISE

LAOIS ARTS PLAN 2006–2011

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The Arts Council Staff

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COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LAOISE

PLEAN EALAÍON CHONTAE LAOISE 2006–2011

