

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020

### **Heritage Council welcomes increased budget allocation**

*Community Grants Scheme will be reinstated as a result of the additional funding*

The Heritage Council has welcomed its significantly increased budget allocation, confirmed today (14.10.20) by the Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan TD.

Under its budget vote, the Heritage Council will now be in a position to reinstate its community grants scheme. In 2021, the Heritage Council will launch 'Heritage at the Heart: Community Grants Scheme' aimed at supporting heritage projects at a community level. The total fund available will be €1million.

In addition, the Heritage Council is being supported to develop a new initiative, an 'inclusive heritage' programme, which set out to encourage diversity and inclusivity in heritage practice. The first phase of the programme will work specifically with the Traveller Community to record and promote their heritage.

With the support and engagement of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Heritage Council is also identifying additional budgets that can be frontloaded into supports for heritage NGOs who have sustained significant losses due to COVID-19.

Speaking following confirmation of the budgetary allocation to the Heritage Council, CEO Virginia Teehan said: "The case for supporting heritage is multifaceted. During the pandemic, the significance of our local heritage and people's sense of place has become more relevant to citizens and society. As we rebuild our tourism economy, the role that heritage plays in encouraging local economies and sustainable tourism is recognised.

"But for heritage to deliver for us, we must invest in our heritage and in the heritage sector. The communities who preserve, record, and promote heritage have lost whatever small income sources that keep doors open and infrastructures maintained. Today's budget allocation is a strong statement from Government that heritage matters and is an important economic driver in our recovery.

"The Heritage Council is committed to working with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, as well as partners across the heritage sector, to use our resources wisely, and in a way in which both communities and the economy can be supported. We will bring added value to our allocation by helping to support the heritage sector, increasing capacity, and promoting best practice at community level."

The Chairman of the Heritage Council, Michael Parsons added: "The allocation to the Heritage Council is a strong endorsement of the work that we do, especially at community level. We look forward to working with Minister of State Noonan, and Minister Darragh O'Brien, in enabling heritage to play its role in recovery and sustainability."

## **ENDS**

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### **Notes to Editors:**

- Heritage Council chief executive, Virginia Teehan is available for interview, on request.

**About the Heritage Council:** The Heritage Council was established under the Heritage Act 1995 with responsibility to propose policies and priorities for the national heritage. It works in co-operation with a range of agencies, communities, and individuals to promote education, enjoyment and understanding of our national heritage. For further information, visit: [www.heritagecouncil.ie](http://www.heritagecouncil.ie).