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PRESS RELEASE

Share in the joy of heritage – Heritage Council launches National Heritage Week

EMBARGOED: 11:00, Wednesday, 16th June 2021

Open the door to heritage is the message from the Heritage Council as it - today (16.06.21) - launched National Heritage Week 2021 in the meadow at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin.

Organised by the Heritage Council, National Heritage Week will run from Saturday, 14th – Sunday, 22nd August, and has become one of Ireland's largest cultural events.

Michael Collins, Men's Health Worker, Pavee Point Traveller & Roma Centre along with his grand-aunt Biddy Collins and son Davy Collins joined the Heritage Council at the launch, to showcase their Pavee Roads Home project, a series of family trees and story maps borne from researching and documenting important memories from older Travellers. Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan, also attended today's launch.

Speaking about the Pavee Roads Home project, Biddy Collins, who was raised in a tent and camped mostly in the midlands said: "Many Travellers nowadays don't know what life on the road was like. They can't get a chance to experience it – so it's very important the information is kept. For me it was lovely to visit the old camps, to talk to the young ones and to fill in the missing information on families. Us Travellers have our own history and story and it's great to tell people about it."

The launch was attended by Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, **Malcolm Noonan, TD**. He said: "My department and I are pleased to support this year's National Heritage Week, which focuses on encouraging the inclusion of as many people as possible in exploring, sharing and enjoying Ireland's diverse heritage.

"I especially welcome the heritage newcomers approach taken this year, which is an invitation to those who are new to heritage to get involved. During lockdowns many of us have had more time to explore our local or personal heritage. National Heritage Week may be the perfect opportunity to showcase what you have discovered, or to dig deeper and find out more. Whatever aspect of heritage is chosen, I wish the very best to all those taking part and look forward to seeing the end results in August."

The Chairman of the Heritage Council, Michael Parsons, said: "A success of last year's online approach saw the hundreds of heritage activities organised as part of National Heritage Week made more accessible to a wide audience. This year, building on that positive impact, I strongly encourage all project organisers to think meaningfully on how they might include new

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members of their communities in their projects, and explore aspects of heritage that may have been overlooked in the past.”

Chief Executive of the Heritage Council, Virginia Teehan added: “National Heritage Week continues to be an important moment for community engagement, wellbeing and social cohesion.

“This year’s focus on getting as many people as possible to enjoy heritage encourages us to cast the net wide and consider reaching out to groups in the community that may not traditionally feel included in heritage. We’re particularly interested in seeing projects that include young people and provide accessibility, encouraging active engagement with our heritage across all age groups. Projects such as the ‘Pavee Roads Home’ demonstrate the deep value of intergenerational heritage projects. National Heritage Week also offers the perfect opportunity to showcase a personal heritage project that can be part of the bigger heritage landscape and shared with the wider national community.”

Minister of State with responsibility for Office of Public Works, **Patrick O'Donovan, TD**, also attended today’s launch. The Office of Public Works (OPW) joins Fáilte Ireland, the Irish Landmark Trust, and the Local Authority Water Programme as partners of National Heritage Week 2021. The venue for the launch, the Irish Museum of Modern Art at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, is a flagship OPW property.

Marking its support for Heritage Week, Orla Carroll, Director of Product Development, Fáilte Ireland said: Ireland’s heritage has always been a big draw for tourists. As businesses reopen safely this summer Fáilte Ireland is pleased to once again be supporting Heritage Week. We encourage domestic tourists and locals to open the door to heritage this summer and explore the many unique heritage sites around Ireland that are perfect for visitors of all ages.”

National Heritage Week 2021 will follow the same format as last year, where local heritage groups and organisers, families and communities are invited to develop projects which can be showcased on line. In-person events will be limited and will be required to adhere to public health advice. There is no subject-specific theme for National Heritage Week 2021; instead, the focus is on getting as many people to enjoy heritage as possible.

Project organisers are being asked to consider the following:

- **Heritage newcomers:** A general invitation to individuals, families and communities who have never engaged in National Heritage Week to work on a heritage project.
- **Heritage sharing:** An invitation to existing National Heritage Week organisers to connect with a group / individuals in the community who may not feel included in local heritage; or an opportunity to explore an aspect of local heritage that is seldom considered / celebrated.
- **Heritage for all ages:** This is an invitation to National Heritage Week organisers to include different age groups in heritage projects.

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Projects should be completed in time for National Heritage Week (14th-22nd August 2021) when they will be showcased on www.heritageweek.ie. Accepted formats for showcasing vary from online talks or exhibitions, to a video, podcast, slideshow presentation or blog, to media coverage, a dedicated website or moderated social media account, or by means of small, in-person events, which comply with official public health advice. A suite of resources to support project development will be available on HeritageWeek.ie as well as a series of webinars which will run in June, presented by the Heritage Council. For more information, visit www.heritageweek.ie.

At the county level, National Heritage Week is co-ordinated and supported by local authority heritage officers, their colleagues and with numerous local heritage groups and organisations.

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Note to Editors

- CEO of the Heritage Council, Virginia Teehan is available for interview on request.
- 'Pavee Roads Home' is an exploration of Traveller culture and heritage told through the lens of history and geography which was developed by Pavee Point's Men's Health team, as a way of promoting a positive sense of identity and culture. It charts the family trees of three Traveller men and their families' journey from Galway to Dublin over generations. The project is supported by the Eastern Region Traveller Health Unit and developed with Dublin City Council Culture Company, the National Library and Maynooth University Geography Department.
- Mark Stedman has been commissioned to cover the photocall and will issue images to photodesks to this afternoon.

About National Heritage Week: National Heritage Week is co-ordinated by the Heritage Council as part of European Heritage Days – a joint initiative of the Council of Europe and the European Union in which more than 40 countries participate each year. The main aim of European Heritage Days is to promote awareness of our built, natural and cultural heritage and to promote Europe's common cultural heritage.

National Heritage Week is supported by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and is generously supported by Fáilte Ireland, the Irish Landmark Trust, the Local Authority Water Programme and the Office of Public Works. At the county level, National Heritage Week is co-ordinated and supported by local authority heritage officers, their colleagues and with numerous local heritage groups and organisations. Supporting partners include RTÉ Supporting the Arts and The Irish Times. For more information, visit heritageweek.ie.

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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 cooperation 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.