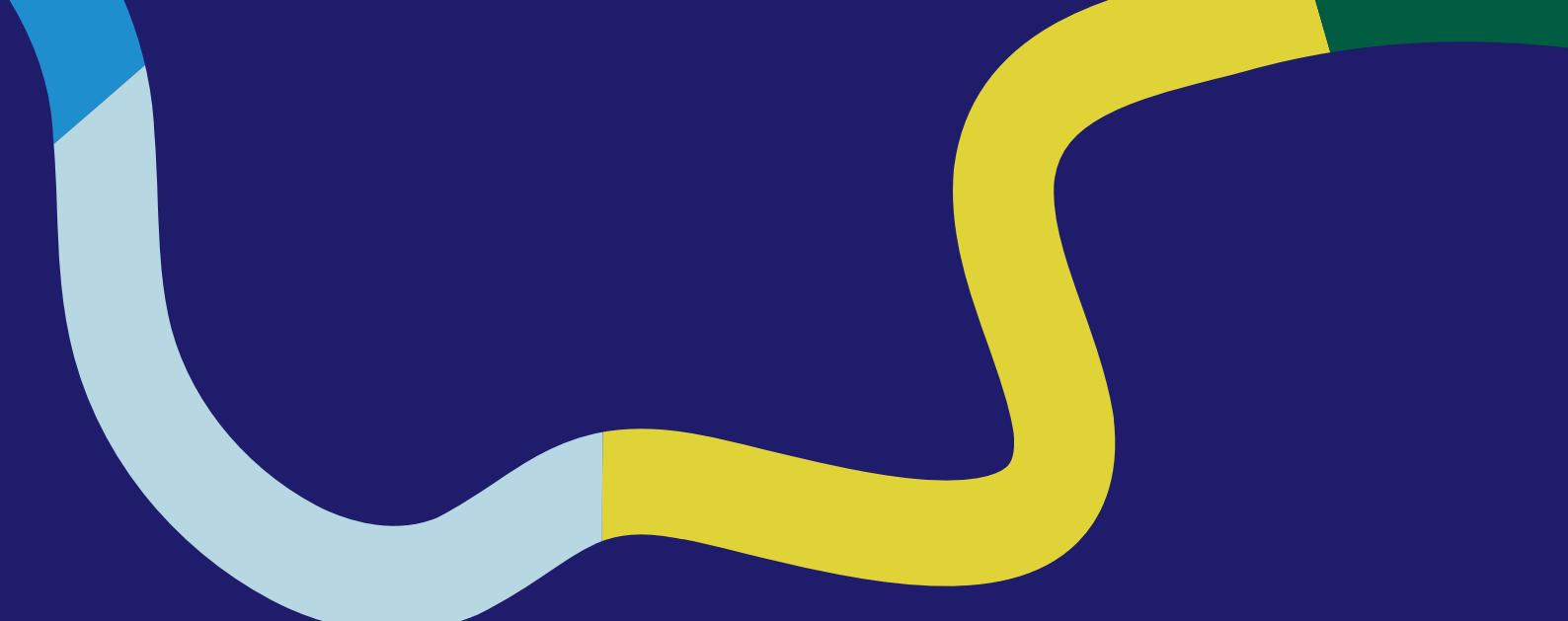




Bringing the County Alive

Tipperary Festival Strategy
2025-2030



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council





CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
TIPPERARY FESTIVALS STRATEGY: PURPOSE	4
METHODOLOGY	7
BRINGING THE COUNTY ALIVE – A NEW STRATEGY FOR TIPPERARY FESTIVALS 2025-2030	13
ACTIONS	15



INTRODUCTION

Festivals and festive events are central to the fabric of life in County Tipperary. They entertain, celebrate our communities, enhance our villages and towns, and stimulate local economic activity while serving as an expression of identity and place. They provide cultural, recreation and leisure opportunities for citizens, help build strong and resilient communities, deliver economic and social benefits, and provide employment opportunities. They foster creativity and innovation, encourage social wellbeing and connectedness, facilitate community participation and celebrate cultural identity.

Tipperary's festivals represent arts, culture, heritage and sport, showcasing the county, its people and its attractions. The large number and wide variety of festivals and festive events taking place across the county and throughout the year has cemented Tipperary's place on the map as a dynamic and vibrant visitor destination.

The Tipperary festivals offering is varied in scale, location, type and objectives. It encompasses a broad range from small, locally-based community events to large-scale festivals with professional programmes, garnering wide press attention and attracting significant audience numbers. Most festivals are planned and delivered by local committees, volunteers and advocates, punctuating each year with celebration and colour.

A small number have professional management structures. Common to all the Festivals and Festive Events, however, is a high level of goodwill, investment, community engagement and local value and pride.

Tipperary County Council recognises the value of festivals, each of which has its own distinctive qualities and appeal. We aim to ensure that our support and investment in festivals has maximum impact and benefit, with our goal being to enable communities and event organisers to develop and sustain events and build capacity in the sector locally. This enhances Tipperary's reputation for hosting festivals and festive events that contribute to healthy and thriving communities and stronger local economies.

As we look to the future, we can see clearly how festivals will continue to have a significant role in meeting the needs of our communities throughout the county and how they will contribute significantly to a range of policy objectives. Through this strategy, Tipperary County Council will continue to work to ensure the ongoing support of the county's rich and varied festival activity.

TIPPERARY FESTIVALS STRATEGY: PURPOSE

Tipperary County Council has developed a strong vision for festivals in Tipperary through its desire to ensure that everyone who lives in, works in or visits the county has the opportunity to engage with and participate in quality festivals, and to enjoy a vibrant cultural life.

Working through the Arts Office and the Municipal Districts, Tipperary County Council's vision for festivals is multi-faceted and comprises a wide range of services, actions, and activities. This includes provision of information and advice, advocating for festivals at a local and national level, brokering partnerships and collaborations, undertaking research and planning, seeking investment, and supporting the festivals infrastructure through the management of a range of schemes, initiatives and training programmes.

This new Festivals Strategy defines Tipperary County Council's role and the ways in which it will support the development of festivals and festive events over the coming five years.

Policy Alignment and Development

Festivals have a unique and important role to play across a range of local authority and national policy objectives. The aim is for this Festivals Strategy to complement and integrate effectively with the key existing strategies across Tipperary County Council and with national strategies. The new Tipperary Festivals Strategy will align closely with:

Tipperary County Council Corporate Plan – 2024 - 2029

Tipperary County Council's Corporate Plan 2024 – 2029, *Reshaping Tipperary's Future Together*, sets out five strategic themes for which strategic objectives have been developed that will deliver on the Council's vision and will ensure the improvement of Council services and infrastructure over the period of the plan. The Communities and Culture strategic objective is particularly relevant to this strategy in its ambition to "...continue to develop Tipperary as an attractive place to live" and to "promote confident communities who celebrate and enjoy our rich and diverse culture, heritage, sport, and creativity" and "to continue to develop a sense of place, identity, and well-being by fostering ... increased local participation which will promote inclusive and connected communities".

The Tipperary County

Development Plan 2022 – 2028

This plan recognises the unique character and strengths of county Tipperary and will help support quality of life for the people of Tipperary by setting out a framework for affordable housing, job creation and the provision of amenities, services and infrastructure. The plan recognises the challenges for current and future generations, in mitigating and adapting to a changing climate and economy, and in protecting the environment. The plan also recognises the key role arts, heritage, sports, culture and community festivals play in enriching people's lives and the importance of the preservation and evolution of local cultural identity and distinctiveness.

Tipperary Arts Strategy: Tipperary – A Place for the Arts 2023 - 2027

Imagining, supporting, and championing a central place for the arts in Tipperary. Tipperary County Council's second all-county Arts Strategy (2023 – 2027) builds on a strong legacy of over two decades of arts provision in the county and aims to maximise opportunities for arts development in the years ahead. *Tipperary – A Place for the Arts* provides a roadmap for Tipperary County Council to continue its work to support an environment where the arts can flourish to the benefit of artists, cultural producers, local communities and visitors to the county.

Creative Ireland Culture and

Creativity Strategy 2023 – 2027

This strategy allows Tipperary County Council to look broadly at creative endeavour and community, and identifies strategic priorities for the coming years. The priority for this strategy is to build on the strong partnerships and relationships that were developed over the first five years of the Creative Ireland programme and to champion the cultural development of Tipperary and to enable creativity across all communities in the county.

Tipperary Transforming: Tourism

Product Development Plan 2020 – 2030

This plan showcases the vast abundance of excellent visitor experiences that the County has to offer and outlines a plan of action to guide and assist the Council and Tipperary Tourism in delivering its plan to significantly improve the visitor experience in the county, increase capacity, dwell time, bed nights and the overall county tourism economy.

Tipperary Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

The LECP sets out the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic and community development of the county. The high-level goals that form part of the Tipperary LECP 2024-2029 build on the foundation of the first LECP and include new elements that will support the vision set out in the County Development Plan 2022-2028.

Tipperary County Council Climate

Action Plan 2024 – 2029

Tipperary County Council's Climate Action Plan has identified its scope and role in reducing its energy consumption to slow climate change caused by greenhouse gas emissions. The plan outlines a number of actions under the headings of Full Accountability, Influence, Co-ordination and Facilitation, and Advocacy.

Town Centre First Policy

The Irish Government's Town Centre First Policy, launched in February 2022, aims to revitalise town centres by addressing dereliction, vacancy, and promoting sustainable, vibrant, and attractive spaces for living, working, and visiting. It focuses on creating a more holistic, place-based approach to rural development. Festivals help deliver on many of the key aspects of this policy.

METHODOLOGY

This Strategy has built on the work of Tipperary County Council's previous two Festivals Strategies (Festival Strategy 2018 – 2020 [extended to 2022 as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic] and *The Way Ahead*, 2022 – 2024). These earlier strategies identified a number of strategic goals and priorities, and associated actions, to steer the Council in achieving its ambition for the support and development of festivals and festive events throughout the county. They articulated how Tipperary County Council would work with local communities and organisations to ensure festivals and festive events were inclusive, demonstrated best practice, and could flourish.

Over the course of its previous strategies, the Council has demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing the festivals and events sector through a collaborative, strategic, and sustainability-focused approach. By working in close partnership with internal directorates, municipal districts, and external agencies, the Council has worked to foster a supportive environment for festivals and festive events.

A review of the actions outlined in the second strategy, and of Tipperary County Council's supports to festivals was undertaken during 2023 and 2024. This process of review has informed the ongoing delivery of the Council's development supports for festivals and festive events throughout the county, and the management of the Festivals and Events scheme for the provision of funding supports to not-for-profit festivals and festive events.

Festivals: Definitions

Tipperary County Council defines Festivals and Festive Events as follows:

FESTIVAL

A festival is a collection of events occurring within a defined timeframe that celebrate a single or general theme, are promoted as one within this theme and which animate our towns and villages.

FESTIVE EVENT

A community, celebratory, or commemorative event (or curated series of events) that animates our towns and villages and is open to the general public. An example of a festive event is a St Patrick's Day Parade, a cultural celebration, a community day or community sports festival.



Image:
John D Kelly

Funding supports to festivals

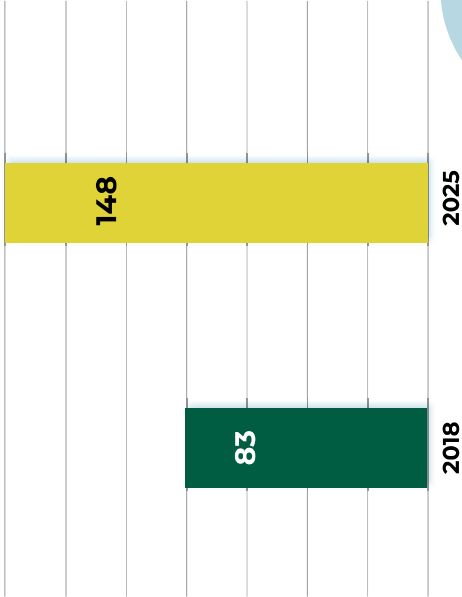
Since 2018, Tipperary County Council has supported local festivals and events through the Tipperary Festivals and Events Scheme. This arose from the identified need by the Council to have a standardisation of supports offered to festivals and events, a coordinated approach to funding and a central, homogenous application and assessment process.

Since the inception of the Festivals and Events Scheme in 2018, the number of festivals and events supported under the scheme has increased by 75 per cent, from 83 in 2018 to 148 in 2025. The funding support disbursed by Tipperary County Council in 2025 is €337,940.

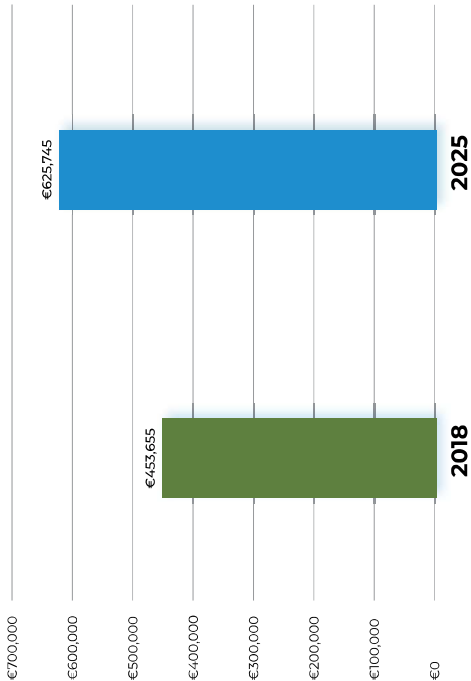
Demand for funding support through the scheme has increased since the inception of the scheme, increasing by 38 per cent from €453,655 in 2018 to €625,745 in 2025.

The level of funding support allocated over this time has also increased by just over 50 per cent.

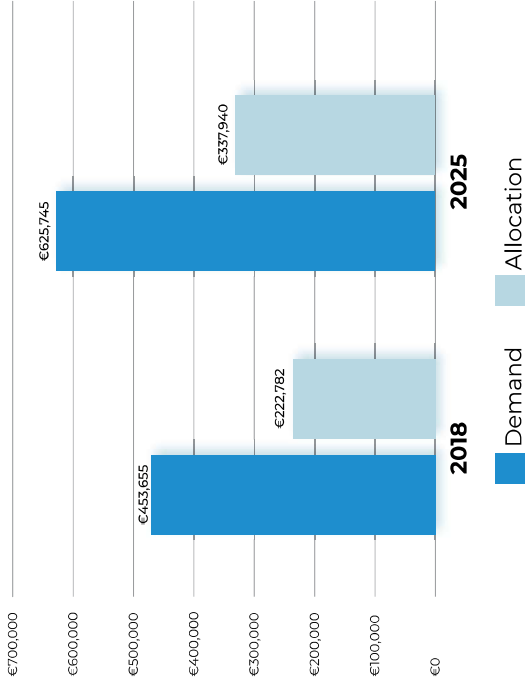
A. Tipperary County Council support to festivals 2018 – 2025



B. Demand Comparison 2018 - 2025



C. Funding demand vs allocation 2018 - 2025



This demand is an indication of the high, and growing, level of activity and local interest in festivals throughout the county. Demand for funding support through the scheme each year is, generally, more than double the budget available.

Development supports to festivals

A key priority of the previous two strategies has been in building the capacity of festival and event organisers. This has been undertaken in response to their stated developmental needs and following an identification by the Council of areas of work and initiatives that align with strategic objectives and offer strong growth potential. This has involved delivering tailored and targeted group and one-to-one training programmes to suit varying levels of scale and experience, supporting marketing and PR, audience development, governance and policy development. Given the size and spread of the county, initiatives and training programmes have been delivered to groups and festival and events organisers both online and in person.

The Council has worked in partnership with other Local Authorities and expert agencies to develop and promote toolkits, guidelines, and templates – from health and safety procedures and event risk assessments to logistics and evaluation – making vital resources easily accessible to organisers. The introduction of the Council's online festivals and events portal will further assist festivals through the provision of resources around event delivery. To ensure a consistency of approach, the Council has retained a dedicated festivals advisory team to provide expert guidance and to assess funding applications.

Marketing and promotion of festivals and events by the Council itself have been strengthened over the course of the strategy. Working with other Council departments, the Arts Office has created the Tipperary Festivals brand - *Tipperary Festivals, bringing the county alive* - and developed a dedicated communication programme for Tipperary festivals and festive events. This campaign has become an effective and welcome vehicle for promoting the county's festivals and events, showcasing the county as an attractive place to live, work, and visit and highlighting the county's strengths to local, national and international audiences.

Ongoing review of the festivals and events activity in the county, in tandem with analysis of applications submitted to the Festivals and Events Scheme has shown that Tipperary has a vibrant festival and events landscape. This strategy provides Tipperary County Council with a roadmap to continue its work in bringing the county alive through its support of the wide, dynamic festival offering.

Tipperary County Council identifies three different categories of festival and festive event through its Festivals and Events Scheme.

COMMUNITY

A Community festival or festive event is centred around a local community. It may be an annual or once-off event. It is generally short in duration, a one- or two-day local event and is most likely to be organised by volunteers. These events are important to the social fabric of the locality and county, animate our towns and villages and generate civic and community pride.

MUNICIPAL

A Municipal festival or festive event is staged for local people but is also significant and attractive to the wider community near to the event location. Municipal events generate civic pride and add to the vibrancy of an area, as well as contributing to the social fabric of the county. While these events may often be aimed at local residents, they encourage visitors to an area to stay longer, add to a culturally rich location and are often specialised in their programming. A Municipal festival or event is generally held over two or more days. However, large-scale events held over one or more days and attracting audiences of over 1,000 people are also considered to be Municipal level events.

PREMIER FESTIVALS

A Premier festival is usually held over at least three days and attracts a large local, regional and national audience and participation. Often specialised events with high elements of originality, Premier festivals are of a significant scale and ambition, delivering a large number of high-quality events, adding colour and vibrancy to the locale and surrounding areas and contributing strongly to the local economy. They are usually professionally or semi-professionally run and have a positive regional and, sometimes, national profile, regularly achieving widespread media coverage.



Image:
Odhran Ducie

BRINGING THE COUNTY ALIVE – A NEW STRATEGY FOR TIPPERARY FESTIVALS 2025-2030

Tipperary's third Festivals Strategy, *Bringing the County Alive*, guides Tipperary County Council in its aim to support and sustain festivals and festive events that celebrate our rich and diverse culture, heritage, sport, and creativity, add vibrancy to County Tipperary, animate our towns and villages, and deliver community and economic cohesion throughout the year. The strategy will provide the Council and its executive teams with a clear direction to continue to achieve greater cultural, community, social, economic and tourism benefit for the county, its citizens and visitors.

Vision

Tipperary's citizens and visitors enjoy a vibrant cultural life through engagement with and participation in a diverse range of quality festivals and festive events.

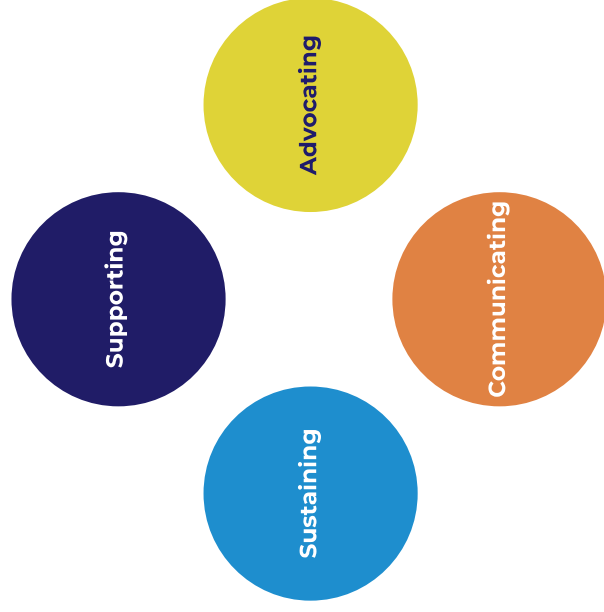
Ambition

Through this strategy and our support of festivals and festive events, we aim to increase community engagement, local pride and economic benefit, showcasing Tipperary's culture, heritage and unique natural environment and highlighting the county as a vibrant festival destination.

Strategic Priorities

The Council has identified four strategic priorities under which it will work to encourage, support and sustain festivals that are created in Tipperary to develop and grow in quality and delivery.

Twenty-nine actions are outlined under the Strategic Priorities which will guide the Council in its work for the coming five years.



Implementation

This strategy will be implemented over the coming five years through the twenty-nine actions outlined below. An operational plan will be developed by the Arts Office in Tipperary County Council to shape the delivery of the strategy. The progress of the strategy and operational plans will be reviewed regularly by the Arts Office team and a mid-term review of the strategy will be undertaken. The Council will, of course, remain flexible and open to changes and opportunities in the local and national landscape and within the festival environment and will adapt to new opportunities and circumstances as required.

Supporting

Tipperary County Council will continue to build capacity in the sector to assist festivals in effective event management, policies, governance and standards and will support the delivery of a wide offering of events across the county for audiences of all ages and demographics.

Actions

1.1 Investing

Over the course of the strategy, the Council will:

1. Continue to offer the Tipperary Festivals and Events Scheme as an investment programme to support high quality festival development and delivery in the county
2. Continue to monitor and review the Festivals and Events Scheme to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness
3. Over time, develop online applications for the Festivals and Events Scheme to streamline the application process for the Council and applicants
4. Explore alternative funding sources and provide timely information to festivals to enable them to apply to or avail of these opportunities
5. Over the course of the strategy, work with each Municipal District to direct financial support to at least one strategically important festival to assist them to build their capacity, and support them in addressing their developmental needs (this might include programming review, audience review and development, strategic planning, etc.)

1.2 Training & Resources

Over the course of the strategy, the Council will:

6. Continue to engage with Tipperary festival organisers by delivering a suite of targeted training opportunities, tailored to suit different levels of need, scale and experience in response to stated requirements (e.g., marketing, volunteer recruitment, health and safety training, etc.)
7. Support festivals through training to ensure governance, policies and procedures are in place to support quality, development, inclusion and sustainability into the future
8. Run funding clinics in advance of the Festivals and Events Scheme application deadline to familiarise applicants with the new online application process when in place
9. Maintain and continually update the Festivals resources page on the Tipperary County Council website to include a range of information sheets, guidelines and checklists (e.g., health and safety information, risk assessment tools; social and environmental impact assessment checklists, etc.) to signpost organisers to supports available

Advocating

The Arts Office will continue to act as a central festivals co-ordination point in Tipperary County Council and will continue to play a leading role in championing continued support for festivals and festive events across Tipperary.

Actions

Over the course of the strategy, the Council will:

10. Continue to work in partnership across directorates (Culture & Libraries, Tourism, Economic, Community & Rural Development, Sports, Heritage, Town Centre First teams) and with the Municipal Districts to ensure an integrated approach to supporting and developing Tipperary festivals
11. Retain the expert advisory Festivals team within Tipperary County Council which assesses funding applications and monitors and reviews the Council's support of festivals and festive events in the county

12. Seek to improve data collection from festival and festive event organisers to understand more fully the value, economic and social impact of Tipperary's festivals and festive events
13. Continue to partner and work with external agencies locally and nationally (e.g., the Arts Council, Fáilte Ireland, Creative Ireland, OPW etc.) in support of festival development in the county

Communicating

The Council and Arts Office will work to amplify the communication and marketing efforts of Tipperary festivals and festive events

Actions

Over the course of the strategy, the Council will:

14. Highlight the Council's support of festivals and communicate the wide ranging benefits to our communities
15. Proactively support the marketing efforts of funded festivals through Tipperary County Council communication and media channels
16. Further develop the Tipperary Festivals promotional initiative to highlight the vibrant cultural landscape and to attract wider audiences to visit the county and experience Tipperary festivals and festive events
17. Encourage festival and festive event organisers to provide timely, accurate information for inclusion in relevant websites and social media campaigns as part of funding agreements
18. Encourage cross promotion of festivals activity with our wide range of partners across the county, and nationally (e.g. Tourism, Arts, Heritage, Sporting, Community and Enterprise sectors).
19. Maintain the role of the Arts Office as an information point in Tipperary County Council for festival-related enquiries and supports
20. Work with local and national tourism and development agencies to promote Tipperary festivals to a wider audience base

Sustaining

Tipperary County Council will support Tipperary festivals to become more sustainable

Actions

4.1 Financial sustainability measures

Over the course of the strategy, the Council will:

21. Encourage and support festivals to increase their income from a variety of sources, including, e.g., earned income, sponsorship, grant funding and fundraising
22. Harness Local Authority financial and other supports to assist festivals in leveraging funding from other sources

23. Encourage festival and event organisers to engage and support local artists, makers, specialists and providers for programming and presentation

24. Encourage festivals to support and promote local producers and providers

4.2 Environmental impact measures:
The Council will implement a range of initiatives in support of the Council's Climate Action Plan and will advocate for climate conscious programming and event management

Over the course of the strategy, the Council will

25. Facilitate training on actions to enable festivals to identify and reduce the environmental impact of their festivals and festive events
26. Work with festivals to set and meet achievable targets for environmentally friendly and biodiversity friendly practices
27. Provide environmentally friendly resources and links on the Festivals Resources web page
28. Work with colleagues across the Council and with other national and international partners and experts to investigate and promote other actions that event organisers can implement at their events to ensure sustainability
29. Reduce the environmental impact of the Festivals and Events Scheme through the development of an online application process

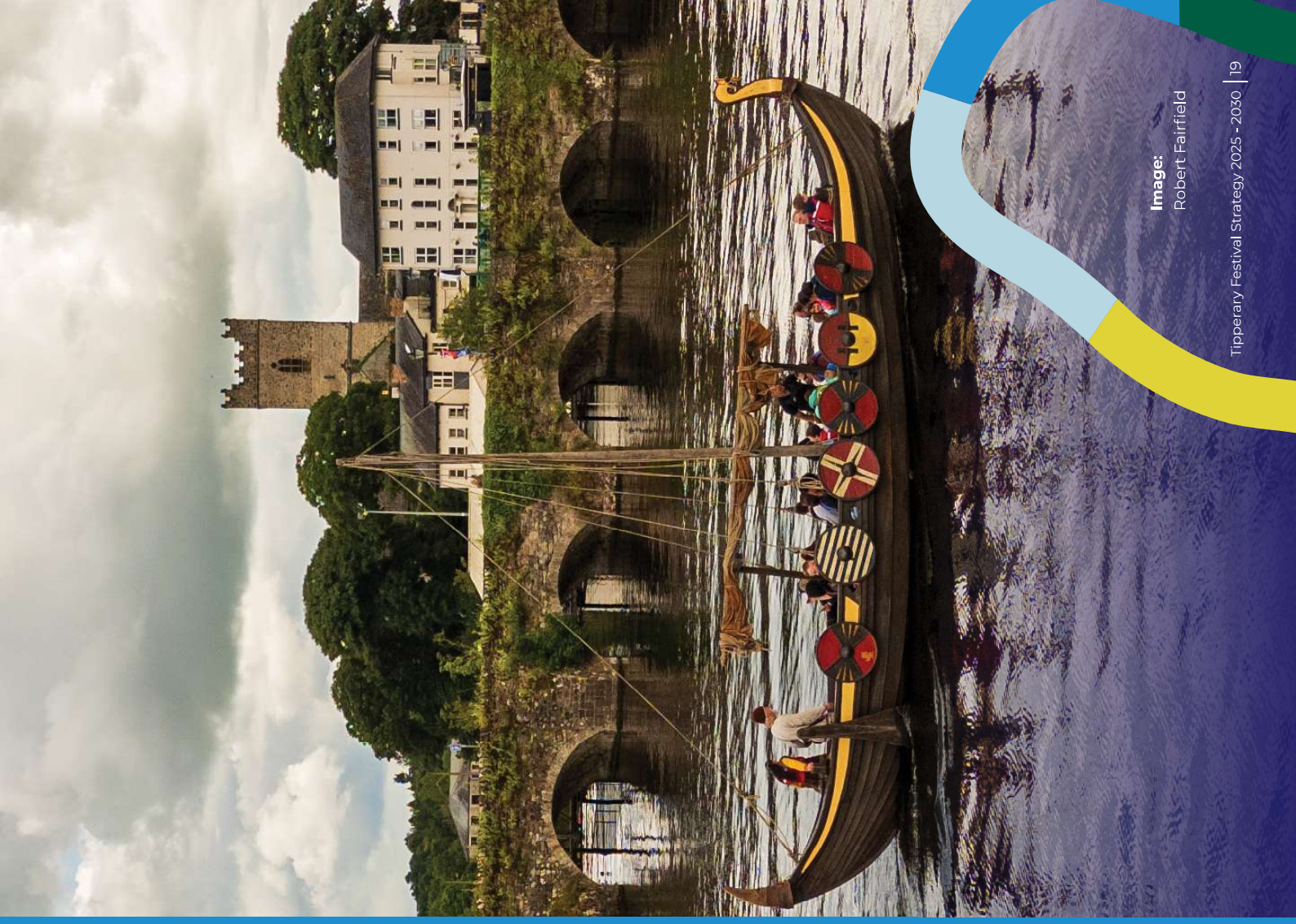


Image:
Robert Fairfield



Image:
Matthew Morrissey

Tipperary County Council

Civic Offices, Limerick Road,
Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, E45A099

Civic Offices, Emmet Street,
Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, E91N512

P: +353 (0)818 06 5000
E: artsoffice@tipperarycoco.ie



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council

