

## Press release: Carlow's Cultural Programme for Ireland's EU Presidency announced

Carlow County Council is pleased to announce its Cultural Programme for Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, taking place from October to December as part of *Cultúr 2026: Sharing Ireland's Culture*. The programme features four flagship events across Heritage, Literature, Visual Art and Music, celebrating Carlow's rich cultural identity and its enduring connections with Europe.

Developed in collaboration with artists, communities, organisers and cultural partners across the county, the programme showcases both Carlow's distinct cultural character and our shared European heritage. Through language, landscape, music, stories, traditions and community life, it highlights the many ways that culture can shape identity and connection while reflecting Carlow's place within a wider European cultural landscape.

Carlow's programme begins on **2 October 2026** with **European Horizons: Visual Arts on the European Stage**, a visual artist exchange programme developed with partners in María de Huerva, Spain. The initiative culminates in a specially curated event at VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art and St Patrick's College, Carlow, featuring workshops, a panel discussion and a showcase of work by participating artists. A particular highlight will be an evening artists' panel discussion led by Nora Hickey M'Sichili, Director of the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris.

The next event, **Harmonious Carlow**, takes place on **Friday, 9 October**, coinciding with European Day of Rock Art. Organised by Carlow Heritage Office and Carlow County Council Library Service, the event celebrates the prehistoric rock art of the Blackstairs Mountains. The programme includes children's workshops with local artist Jules Michael, adult workshops with local artist Máiréad Holohan, and a lecture by Prof. Muiris Ó Súilleabháin at the Step House Hotel, Borris.

The final two events continue the programme's strong European and artistic focus. **Storylands Exchange: Writer in Residence Cultural Exchange Programme**, facilitated by Carlow County Council's Writer in Residence, Caroline Busher, will see young writers from Carlow participate in a virtual exchange with the city library in Luxembourg, Carlow's EU Presidency partner country. The project will conclude on **5 November 2026** as part of Civic Reception.

**Bridge of Sound: Youth Music Exchange** will bring together Music Generation's senior youth traditional ensembles and Project SMOK, one of Scotland's most exciting indie-trad trios, for a unique collaboration celebrating cultural connection, creativity and youth participation through traditional music. The project culminates in a final performance on **6 December 2026**.

This programme is supported by the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport through Culture Ireland and forms part of *Cultúr 2026: Sharing Ireland's Culture*, the national cultural programme for Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Additional support has been provided by Creative Ireland Carlow. The programme has been coordinated locally by Carlow County Council through the Heritage Office, Library Services and Arts Office. Members of the public are invited to experience and enjoy this celebration of culture, creativity and connection across the county during the Presidency period. For the full national *Cultúr 2026* programme, visit [irelandculture2026.eu](https://irelandculture2026.eu). For more information on the Carlow programme, visit [Carlow.ie](https://carlow.ie) or contact the Carlow Arts Office at [artsservice@carlowcoco.ie](mailto:artsservice@carlowcoco.ie).