

18th May 2026

To: The Príomh Chomhairleoir and Each Elected Member of Limerick City and County Council

Re: Panel Recommendations: Halloween in Limerick 2026 Funding Open Call

A Chomhairleoir, a chara,

Enclosed is a report and recommendations for investment in Limerick festivals and events under the Halloween in Limerick Festival 2026.

Total funding allocated for the Halloween in Limerick Funding Open Call is €130,000.00.

22 applications were received with a total ask of €386,168.21.

The expert independent assessment panel met on Wednesday 13th May 2026 and considered all applications based on the guidelines and criteria for the Open Call.

Assessment Panel

An Open Call for applications for funding for the Halloween in Limerick Festival 2026 was opened on Monday 20th April 2026 at 09:00am with a closing date of Friday 8th May 2026 at 17:00pm, for festivals and/or events taking place in Limerick as part of Halloween in Limerick 2026 between the 11th October and 1st November 2026 inclusive.

The panel, which carried out the assessments, was composed of three Independent Experts with significant track records in the sector. The panel was chaired by an independent chairperson, with relevant experience of grant scheme evaluations and working with festivals.

The Panel Members were:

- Chairperson Kath Gorman is a creative producer, curator and arts management consultant. She has senior arts management experience in the area of festivals, venue management and resource organisations in Ireland and the UK. She set up Promenade in early 2021, providing producing and strategic supports to artists and organisations in the fields of circus arts, multi-disciplinary arts, participatory arts, street arts and spectacle. Recent roles include: Adviser, Arts Participation for The Arts Council of Ireland, Head of Participation and Engagement and Artistic Curator for Cork Midsummer Festival, one of Ireland's leading multi-disciplinary arts festivals and well-known as leaders in developing ambitious and high-quality international arts projects involving multi-stakeholder partnerships. She has particular expertise in producing site-specific arts commissions with international and Irish artists in specific places or with communities of interest. She is also an experienced fundraiser using a partnership multi-sectoral based approach to raise substantial funding.

Kath was also the Project Manager for large-scale outdoors arts commission Cork Ignite (Led by National Sculpture Factory and Create during 2014/15) resulting in an ambitious projection mapped artwork for over 8,000 people during Cork City's Culture Night 2015. Past consultancies include Development plan for ISACS FRESH STREET#3/ Galway2020, International Scoping Study for Creative Places (The Arts Council, Ireland) and INTERREG Ireland Wales Coracle Culture Programme. Other previous roles include Director of Kinsale Arts Week; Festival Producer for multi-partnership outdoors creative learning festivals on behalf of BBC Blast at the National Theatre (Watch This Space), Serpentine Gallery/Kensington Gardens and Trafalgar Square and Director of London arts centre Jacksons Lane. She has been a peer review panel member for the Arts Council and local authorities and has regularly been asked to speak on Creative Europe funding.

- Siobhán Mulcahy has over 30 years' experience of working in the arts. She was the Artistic Director of South Tipperary Arts Centre before her appointment as Arts Officer of Clare County Council in 1999. She served as Chairperson of the Association of Local Authority Arts Officers from 2013 – 2015 and has sat on numerous national panels, working groups and advisory groups. She has extensive experience of programming and supporting festivals, including developing capacity building measures for festival makers.
- Helen Ryan is a Senior Enterprise Development Officer with Limerick City and County Council, supporting business growth through the Local Enterprise Office. With over a decade of local government experience, she previously worked as an Economic Development Officer with Carlow County Council, where she supported SMEs and delivered festival and event funding schemes, along with the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. She brings a strong track record in enterprise support, programme delivery, and regional economic development.

Recommendations

Recommendations: Strand 1: Fund Available: €60,000.00 (Adjusted by the Assessment Panel to €70,000.00)

9 applications were considered under this strand with a total ask of €282,850.00.

The assessment panel has recommended the allocation of funding to 4 successful applicants totalling €70,000.00.

Recommendations: Strand 2: Fund available: €50,000.00 (Adjusted by the Assessment Panel to €40,000.00)

1 application was considered under this strand with a total ask of €50,000.00.

The assessment panel has recommended the allocation of funding to 1 successful applicant totalling €40,000.00.

Recommendations: Strand 3: Fund Available: €20,000.00

12 applications were considered under this strand with a total ask of €53,318.21.

The assessment panel has recommended the allocation of funding to 6 successful applicants totalling €20,000.00.

Strand 1 – Limerick’s Ireland, Home of Halloween 2026 Festival

Festival/Event	District	Award
Halloween Hauntings @ King John’s Castle	Metro	€40,000.00
Rathkeale Halloween Festival 2026 “Dullahan to Darkness”	Adare-Rathkeale	€12,500.00
Limerick Harvest Festival	Metro	€12,500.00
Morbid & Sons – Pop-up Funeral Shop	Metro	€5,000.00
Total		€70,000.00

Strand 2 - Halloween Parade / Procession

Festival/Event	District	Award
Mischief Night Parade	Metro	€40,000.00
Total		€40,000.00

Strand 3 – Community Group Halloween Events

Festival/Event	District	Award
Samhain at the Crossroads - Creative Places Kilfinane	Cappamore-Kilmallock	€5,000.00
Northside FRC HallowNight Festival	Metro	€4,000.00
The Factory ScareFest	Metro	€4,000.00
Limerick Civic Trust Halloween Experiences	Metro	€3,550.00
Samhain Tales by the Limerick Fireside	Metro, Newcastle West, Cappamore-Kilmallock	€1,950.00
Glow & Ghouls	Metro	€1,500.00
Total		€20,000.00

Following the Panel Assessment meeting held on Wednesday 13th May 2026 with Chairperson Kath Gorman, Siobhán Mulcahy and Helen Ryan, I recommend the granting of the above recommended funding amounts under the three identified strands for Halloween in Limerick 2026 Festival, through this competitive grant scheme.

The Council is requested to approve the allocations outlined.

Is mise le meas,



John Moran

Mayor of Limerick

Report on Panel Recommendations for Halloween in Limerick 2026 Funding Open Call

Strand 1: Limerick’s Ireland, Home of Halloween 2026 Festival

- 9 applications were considered under this strand with a total ask of €282,850.00.
- The assessment panel has recommended the allocation of funding to 4 successful applicants totalling €70,000.00.

Strand 1 Requirements:

- Events/Festivals should be tourism-driven and include saleable experiences and events.
- Must demonstrate the ability to attract national and international visitors.
- Think about: Samhain seasonal change; Feast and food; Fire and light; Specific local folklore and places; Mischief and Trickery; Otherworld and ancestors; Ancient Celtic heritage; Storytelling: Transformation; Community celebration: immersive experiences.

Strand 1 – Limerick’s Ireland, Home of Halloween 2026 Festival

Festival/Event	District	Award
Halloween Hauntings @ King John’s Castle	Metro	€40,000.00
Rathkeale Halloween Festival 2026 “Dullahan to Darkness”	Adare-Rathkeale	€12,500.00
Limerick Harvest Festival	Metro	€12,500.00
Morbid & Sons – Pop-up Funeral Shop	Metro	€5,000.00
Total		€70,000.00

Halloween Hauntings @ King John’s Castle €40,000.00

A Limerick castle on Ireland’s Wild Atlantic Way is home to a female vampire from Irish folklore this Halloween. An otherworldly and menacing Celtic character, Dearg Due, with her accompanying cast of exotic gothic performers will appear at King John’s Castle for the opening weekend of Limerick City’s 2026 Halloween (Samhain) festivities. This spectacular attraction incorporates aerial performances, live music, dance, contemporary circus, light, sound, and special effects. The historic King John’s Castle is dramatically located on the banks of Ireland’s River Shannon. It will be transformed for this unique Halloween event and offers audiences an immersive experience of ancient Celtic heritage combined with contemporary technological storytelling. This unique Halloween attraction is being created by award winning street spectacle specialists Waterford Spraoi in partnership with Limerick City and County Council and Fáilte Ireland.

Rathkeale Halloween Festival 2026 “Dullahan to Darkness” – the story continues but something has changed!!!! €12,500.00

Experience Halloween at its roots in Rathkeale, where ancient Samhain traditions meet immersive community celebration. The Rathkeale Halloween Festival invites visitors to step into a town transformed by lantern light, folklore, and playful mischief, offering an authentic Irish Halloween experience beyond the commercial and the ordinary. Explore lantern-lit streets glowing with hollowed-out turnips and pumpkins, enjoy seasonal traditional foods, and encounter costumed performers inspired by local mythology and the age-old custom of community disguise. Family-friendly daytime experiences lead into dramatic evening spectacle, creating a complete visitor journey filled with storytelling, atmosphere, and warmth. Set in the heart of West Limerick, the

Rathkeale Halloween Festival offers culture-led tourism, heritage, and hospitality—an unforgettable Halloween destination rooted in tradition, creativity, and community.

Limerick Harvest Festival **€12,500.00**

Celebrate the season at the Limerick Harvest Festival, where ancient harvest traditions meet the spirit of modern-day Halloween! Fire Shows & Circus, Traditional German lantern making, Fermenting/Sauerkraut demonstration, Woodcraft games, food, craft & garden fair, puppeteer and festival stage featuring well-known names like Eddie Lenihan and Tom Flavin. Set in the iconic Milk Market, this vibrant, cultural and family-friendly festival on Sunday, 25th October offers something for everyone—whether you're here for the spectacle, the food, or the folklore.

Morbid & Sons – Pop-up Funeral Shop **€5,000.00**

Business is dead! No one is dying anymore; the obituaries in the newspapers have been blank for weeks. The Morbid family is struggling to make ends meet and poverty has forced them to take to the streets to sell death to the living. They hope to drum up some much-needed funeral trade by travelling from town to town with their Victorian “pop-up funeral shop”. Drop in and try on a coffin: the offer is buy one get one free! Take the hearse out for a little road test: this is a one-stop shop for your final rest!

Listen while the Morbid family sing humorous songs about hideous deaths and watch as they display their expertise by way of a demonstration funeral. Be careful they might “kill you with kindness”, or “embalm you while you wait”! Remember, death comes to us all in the end. Join the Morbid family as they attempt to put the “fun” back into funerals!

Morbid & Sons is an interactive, macabre experience about death and the afterlife, a musical treat for all the family.

Strand 2 - Halloween Parade / Procession

- 1 application was received with a total ask of **€50,000.00**.
- The assessment panel has recommended the allocation of funding to 1 successful applicant totalling €40,000.00.

Strand 2 Requirements:

- This strand supports the delivery of a high-quality, large-scale Halloween parade or procession with broad public appeal. The successful applicant will be responsible for full event delivery in partnership with a professional Event Management Company.
- The procession will take place on Saturday 31st October 2026.
- Pre and post-parade street entertainment is **mandatory**.

Strand 2 - Halloween Parade / Procession

Festival/Event	District	Award
Mischief Night Parade	Metro	€40,000.00
Total		€40,000.00

Mischief Night Parade **€40,000**

The Limerick Halloween Procession conjures a thrilling night that celebrates ancient Gaelic traditions, spine-chilling diversity, and the symbolic return of the dead. Inspired by the shadowy festival of Samhain/ancient Halloween, the event will intertwine Limerick’s Celtic roots, eerie Viking founders, haunted river heritage, and vibrant modern culture. Ghostly participants—dressed as sailors, Vikings, Celtic fairies, and mysterious representatives of contemporary communities—will parade through moonlit streets, engaging in rituals evoking flickering sacred fires and leaving macabre offerings for departed souls. Local schools, organisations, and businesses are invited to add their own sinister flair, fostering inclusion and mutual respect within the community. The procession will revive supernatural customs, blending mythological tales and urban legends into a harmonious entity, and promoting unity and remembrance in a delightfully creepy atmosphere. The Parade will celebrate traditional storytelling and chilling symbolic acts will evoke spirits past, ensuring the night is both festive and reverent. Ultimately, this eerie event aims to deepen connections across generations, enrich Limerick’s cultural tapestry, and establish a wickedly joyful tradition that honours heritage and welcomes renewal. It promises a night where the living and the spectral come together, embracing Limerick’s unique spirit and forging unforgettable memories for all.

Strand 3 – Community Group Halloween Events

- 12 applications were considered under this strand with a total ask of **€53,318.21**.
- The assessment panel has recommended the allocation of funding to 6 successful applicants totalling **€20,000.00**.

Strand 3 Requirements:

- This strand supports locally driven Halloween initiatives that foster community participation, creativity, and neighbourhood engagement.

Strand 3 – Community Group Halloween Events

Festival/Event	District	Award
Samhain at the Crossroads - Creative Places Kilfinane	Cappamore-Kilmallock	€5,000.00
Northside FRC HallowNight Festival	Metro	€4,000.00
The Factory ScareFest	Metro	€4,000.00
Limerick Civic Trust Halloween Experiences	Metro	€3,550.00
Samhain Tales by the Limerick Fireside	Metro, Newcastle West, Cappamore-Kilmallock	€1,950.00
Glow & Ghouls	Metro	€1,500.00
Total		€20,000.00

Samhain at the Crossroads - Creative Places Kilfinane **€5,000**

Samhain at the Crossroads is a community-led Creative Places Kilfinane celebration forming part of Limerick’s Home of Halloween programme in early October 2026. Inspired by rural Samhain traditions, the project brings together local artists, families, young people, older residents and new community members to mark the changing season through creativity and shared experience.

In the weeks leading up to the event, participants take part in artist-led workshops exploring light, folklore, harvest and protection, creating lanterns, artworks and installations that will be displayed throughout Kilfinane village and along walking routes during the Ballyhoura Walking Festival. These

creative encounters invite residents and visitors to engage with place, landscape and tradition in a gentle, inclusive way.

The programme culminates in a lantern walk and community gathering featuring storytelling, sound and shared light. Free and accessible, Samhain at the Crossroads offers a meaningful rural expression of Home of Halloween—rooted in creativity, participation and community connection.

Northside FRC HallowNight Festival

€4,000

Play All Day, Panic All Night at the Northside FRC HallowNight Festival will be a vibrant, community led celebration of Limerick’s folklore, history, and Halloween traditions. Taking place over four exciting days, the festival brings together families, children, young people, and older residents for a series of free, inclusive events inspired by ancient Samhain customs and the rich storytelling heritage of Limerick’s northside.

The programme features traditional turnip-lantern carving, a guided Haunted Heritage Walk through some of the area’s most atmospheric sites, and an intergenerational storytelling night where local legends and memories are shared across generations. The festival culminates in the return of the much-loved community Haunted House, created and performed by local young people for a playful, spooky, family-friendly finale.

With creative workshops, arts activities, and community involvement at its heart, the Northside FRC HallowNight Festival offers a welcoming, culturally rich Halloween experience for all ages. Join us as we celebrate identity, imagination, and the spirit of the northside.

The Factory ScareFest

€4,000

Join us at The Factory Halloween ScareFest, a community-led Halloween event taking place at The Factory Southside Youthspace in Limerick City. The event offers a fun, safe, and welcoming space for young people, families, and the local community to celebrate Halloween together.

The programme includes interactive scare rooms, themed activities, and a youth café space with music, games, and refreshments. Young people are actively involved in the design and delivery of the event, helping to create a unique and engaging experience.

The event is fully supervised and provides a strictly drug, alcohol, and vape-free environment, promoting positive choices and a safe space for young people. It is low-cost and accessible, ensuring that everyone in the community can take part.

Building on previous years, the 2026 event aims to reach a wider audience across Limerick City and County and continue to grow as a recognised community Halloween event.

Limerick Civic Trust Halloween Experiences

€3,550

Over the past ten years, Limerick Civic Trust has ran a number of events for Halloween at two of our properties, The People’s Museum and St. Munchin’s Church. For 2026, we would like to run all of those events at once, in both locations. We would also like to run a walking tour that takes in the historic city centre, and focuses on the supernatural stories of Limerick.

We would have four events in store for visitors, which would cater to a whole host of diverse communities and audiences.

1. Limerick Civic Trust haunted tours of King’s Island
2. People’s Museum Haunted House Tour
3. City Centre Spooktacular Walking Tour
4. St. Munchin’s Church Halloween Experience

All four of these events will cater to local audiences, national audiences in terms of either staycationers or bringing people from bordering counties to the city centre, and international audiences via tourists visiting the city during a festival that draws people to the historic home of Halloween- Samhain.

Samhain Tales by the Limerick Fireside

€1,950

Gather Round me now!

A captivating Halloween Traditional Irish Storytelling performance show by renowned storyteller and musician Daithi Collopy for all the family young and old to enjoy together by the Limerick Fireside. Hear the legends ,history, folklore and origins of Samhain in story song and verse. Experience the customs and rituals associated with Samhain in a uniquely Irish and Limerick cultural experience guaranteed to entertain and captivate all who experience it.

Featuring

The Irish Origins and Traditions of Samhain

Kids Trick or Treat Parade

The Legend of Seán na Gealaí

Traditional Irish Music and Song

The Haunting of Thomond Bridge

The Curse of St Munchin upon the people of Limerick

And many more.....

Glow & Ghouls: A Samhain Candle-Making Experience

€1,500

Glow & Ghouls: A Samhain Candle-Making Experience is a culturally rooted, participatory Halloween event that combines hands-on craft, storytelling, and community engagement. Delivered in collaboration with Gealach Candles and in support of GOSHH (Gender, Orientation, Sexual health and HIV), the event reinterprets the ancient festival of Samhain through a contemporary, accessible lens.

Samhain, originating in Ireland, marks the end of the agricultural year and the transition into winter. Traditionally, it was believed to be a liminal time when the boundary between the human world and the spirit world became permeable. Fire and light played a central role in protecting homes, guiding spirits, and bringing communities together. This event draws directly on those themes, positioning candle-making as both a creative activity and a symbolic act of light, protection, and remembrance.

The concept is built on three interconnected pillars:

- **Creative Participation:** Attendees actively engage in candle-making, learning a new skill while expressing personal creativity.
- **Cultural Heritage:** The event incorporates authentic Samhain traditions specific to Limerick and Ireland, ensuring a strong sense of place.
- **Social Impact:** Proceeds support GOSHH, reinforcing the idea of “bringing light” to others.

Additionally, the event aligns with Ireland's 2026 EU Presidency and Limerick's cultural pairing with Germany by highlighting shared European traditions of seasonal transition, harvest, and light-based rituals.

