Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Luimnigh
Limerick City & County Council

3rd November 2026

To: The Cathaoirleach and Each Elected Member of The Metropolitan District of Limerick City and County Council

Re: Panel Recommendations: Night Time Economy Christmas Funding Open Call

A Chomhairleoir, a Chara,

Enclosed for consideration is the Assessment Panel Report and funding recommendations in respect of the Night Time Economy Christmas Funding Open Call.

- An Open Call for funding applications under the Christmas in Limerick 2026 Festival was launched on 23rd October 2026, with a closing date of 12:00 noon on 30th October 2026.
- The Open Call sought proposals for events and creative initiatives taking place after 6pm within Limerick City that would enhance and complement the Christmas in Limerick 2026 programme.
- A total funding allocation of €10,000 was made available under the Open Call.
- 7 eligible applications were received, seeking a combined funding amount of €15,394.71.

The Assessment Panel convened on 3rd of November 2026 in person and evaluated all eligible applications in accordance with the published Open Call guidelines, eligibility requirements, assessment methodology, and scoring criteria. The enclosed report outlines the assessment process undertaken and sets out the panel's recommendations for the allocation of funding under the Christmas in Limerick 2026 programme.

Background – Night Time Economy Christmas Funding Open Call

As part of the Christmas in Limerick 2026 programme, Limerick City and County Council launched a competitive Open Call for Businesses, Artists and Community Groups to seek funding for events after 6pm in the city centre that would compliment the 2026 Christmas in Limerick programme. The initiative was designed to complement and enhance the core Christmas in Limerick programme while providing opportunities for artists, community groups, cultural organisations and businesses.

The Open Call provided a total funding allocation of €10,000, with individual awards ranging from €500 to €3,000. Funding was available for proposals that demonstrated unique ideas that would help drive foot fall in the city after 6pm in December and align with the overall vision and objectives of Christmas in Limerick 2026. Applicants could seek either full or partial funding, with the Council retaining discretion to award a lesser amount than requested or to make no award where proposals did not meet the required standard.

The Open Call formed part of the implementation of the *Christmas in Limerick 2026-2028 Strategy*, which seeks to develop Christmas in Limerick into a nationally recognised signature winter festival and establish Limerick as a premier seasonal destination.

Applications were assessed by an independent evaluation panel against a published scoring framework comprising:

- Quality of Proposal (60%)
- Value for Money (20%)
- Applicant Experience (20%)

Applicants were required to achieve a minimum score of 500 marks (50%) in order to be considered for funding.

Name of Applicant	Funding Sought	Funding Granted	Quality of Proposal - 60% - 600 Marks	Value for Money - 20% - 200 Marks	Applicant Experience - 20% - 200 Marks	Total Score	Comments
Afro Pop City Christmas Party	€2900	€1,000	500	75	200	775	Admin costs very high and could be more Christmas Themed
Treaty Christmas Fair	€3000	€3,000	550	200	200	950	Excellent
Lumen Street Theatre Scrooge Night	€3000	€1,000	450	150	200	800	Not expected to drive as much foot fall as other applications seeking max funding. Limited budgets for grant call so only suitable for part funding
Glenduff Creative	€1178.71	€1,100	500	200	175	875	Excellent
Mother Macs	€1516	€500	500	75	200	775	Can contribute to peer/ink and design but suggested that Mother Mac's patrons could pay for the postage themselves
Daithi Collopy	€800	€400	450	200	200	850	Funding awarded to deliver one performance not two
The Milk Market	€3000	€3,000	500	200	200	900	Excellent

Recommendations

Having considered all eligible applications received under the Night Time Economy Christmas Funding Open Call, the Assessment Panel is satisfied that the evaluation process was conducted in accordance with the published guidelines, eligibility requirements and assessment criteria. The panel carefully assessed each application against the three specified criteria: Quality of application, value for money and applicant experience

The panel noted the strong level of interest in the Open Call and the overall quality of submissions received.

Following detailed assessment and scoring, the panel recommends that funding be awarded to all 7 of the applications, all of which achieved scores in excess of 775 marks and demonstrated a strong alignment with the objectives of Christmas in Limerick 2026, together with clear evidence of creativity, public engagement, deliverability and value for money. These projects will enhance the overall festival programme and contribute positively to the visitor experience, community participation and city centre animation objectives of Christmas in Limerick.

The Assessment Panel therefore recommends the following allocations:=

- Afropop Christmas Party - €1,000 (Score 775/1000)
- Treaty City Christmas Fair - €3,000 (Score 950/1000)
- Lumen Street Theatre Scrooge Night - €1,000 (Score 800/1000)
- Glenduff Creative Christmas Workshops - €1,100 (Score 875/1000)
- Mother Mac's Christmas Postcards - €500 (Score 775/1000)
- Daithi Collopy Storytelling - €400 (Score 850/1000)
- The Milk Market Christmas with Boherbouy Band - €3,000 (Score 900/1000)

The recommended allocations total €10,000, fully utilising the budget available under the Open Call. Please see the attached signed marking sheet, for reference.

The Assessment Panel is therefore pleased to recommend approval of the above funding allocations under the Night Time Economy Christmas Funding Open Call. These projects represent a strong mix of cultural, community and visitor-focused initiatives that will complement the core Christmas in Limerick programme and support the Council's objective of further developing Christmas in Limerick as a premier festive destination

Conclusion

The Assessment Panel undertook a robust and transparent evaluation process in accordance with the published Open Call guidelines and assessment criteria. The applications recommended for funding achieved the highest scores and demonstrated a strong combination of creativity, public engagement, alignment with the Christmas in Limerick vision, organisational capacity and value for money. Collectively, these projects will strengthen the overall festival programme, increase opportunities for community participation, enhance the visitor experience, and contribute to the animation of Limerick City Centre during the festive period.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the funding allocations proposed by the Assessment Panel be approved, as set out in the accompanying Assessment Report, for a total investment of €10,000 under the Night Time Economy Christmas Funding Open Call

Approval of these recommendations will support the delivery of seven high-quality projects that complement the core Christmas in Limerick programme and advance the objectives of the Council's Christmas in Limerick Strategy, including increased cultural participation, enhanced visitor experiences, greater city-centre animation, and the continued development of Limerick as a nationally recognised Christmas destination.

Accordingly, it is recommended that the proposed funding allocations be approved and that Letters of Offer issue to the successful applicants, subject to the standard terms and conditions of funding.

John Moran

Mayor of Limerick

Report on Panel Recommendations for the Night Time Economy Christmas Funding Open Call

(i) Afro Pop City – Christmas Party

Funding Awarded – €1,000

- AfropopCity proposes an Afro-centric Christmas nightlife event at Angel Lane on 19 December 2026 from 9pm to 2am.
- The event celebrates African and diasporic culture through Afrobeats, Amapiano, Hip-Hop, R&B and Dancehall music.
- The proposed line-up features DJ WAX (2FM) and DJ Francis (SpinSouthWest), creating an inclusive late-night entertainment experience.
- The event aims to diversify Limerick's Christmas programme, attract audiences into the city after dark, and strengthen Limerick's reputation as a vibrant and inclusive cultural destination.

(ii) Treaty City Christmas Fair

Funding Awarded – €3,000

- Treaty City Brewery proposes a free Christmas Night Fair on Nicholas Street across two December weekends (12-13 and 19-20 December 2026), running from 3pm to 9pm with evening programming from 6pm.
- Around 20 local makers, artists and food producers will trade from a covered marquee, creating a festive retail and cultural destination in the Medieval Quarter.
- Evening entertainment includes a Christmas choir, local DJs, live music, festive lighting, and a family zone with seating and giant games, alongside a pop-up art fair.
- The event aims to increase city-centre footfall after dark during the Christmas period while showcasing local businesses, creatives and performers.

(iii) Lumen Street Theatre – Scrooge

Funding Awarded – €1,000

• Lumen Street Theatre proposes an outdoor theatrical production on 18 December 2026 in its courtyard ("the Boneyard"), beginning at 6:30pm.
• Inspired by Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, the immersive performance follows Scrooge's encounters with the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come.
• The courtyard will be transformed into a theatrical graveyard with bespoke scenery, lighting, sound effects and costumed actors to create a distinctive festive cultural experience.
• The production focuses on themes of hope, generosity and community while showcasing local creative talent and complementing the wider Christmas programme in Limerick.

(iv) A Very Creative Christmas: Stuff From Glenduff

Funding Awarded – €1,100

• A series of four festive candle-making and craft workshops will take place at Wickham Way, Limerick City Centre on 10, 13, 17 and 20 December.
• Participants will create personalised Christmas decorations including candle containers, Christmas parcel stacks, snowman candles and wax baubles, taking home handcrafted items valued at over €60.
• One workshop will focus on parent-and-child crafting, encouraging family participation and the creation of handmade Christmas gifts.
• The programme aims to draw people into the city centre after dark, offering an inclusive and creative alternative to traditional Christmas shopping while supporting a vibrant festive atmosphere

(v) From Our Local to Yours – Christmas Wishes from Mother Mac's Public House

Funding Awarded – €500

- A series of free Christmas postcard evenings will be held at Mother Macs on High Street, celebrating the Irish pub as a place of connection and conversation.
- Locals, visitors and returning emigrants will have their photograph taken, write a personal Christmas message and send one of 300 custom postcards anywhere in the world.
- Each postcard will carry the message: "Christmas wishes from Limerick. Until we meet again," promoting the city's sense of welcome and belonging.
- The initiative encourages people to gather in the city after dark, share stories and strengthen connections with friends and family at home and abroad.

(vi) Christmas in Limerick in Song & Story – Daithí Collopy

Funding Awarded – €400

- Two adult-focused performances will take place at Katy Daly's on Castle Street during December.
- The shows will combine traditional Irish storytelling with festive songs in a warm pub setting.
- Stories will focus on Limerick people and the wider Irish diaspora, celebrating local identity and shared Christmas traditions.
- Audience members will be encouraged to participate in a festive sing-along experience, creating a lively and interactive evening event.

(vii) Boherbuoy Christmas Concert at the Milk Market and Fire Show

Funding Awarded – €3,000

- Limerick Market Trustees / Milk Market proposes a free festive evening event featuring a live Christmas performance by the Boherbuoy Brass Band at the Milk Market.
- The event will include family-friendly entertainment from Little Legends, festive face painting, and Christmas characters from 5.30pm until 8pm.
- A Christmas canopy of lights and a spectacular fire show will create a unique festive atmosphere and enhance the city centre's evening offer.
- The event aims to provide a free, inclusive Christmas experience that attracts families and visitors into the city after dark while showcasing local musical talent.