

Waterford Cultural Quarter

Expression of interest: Utility box painting scheme Q4 2026

Waterford Cultural Quarter is an urban regeneration project with culture at its heart. Our vision is “to deliver inclusive and sustainable innovation and growth for the cultural and creative sectors of southeast Ireland; to become a distinctive, welcoming and engaging place to the heart of Waterford which is open, inspiring and a vital addition to the city’s creative, knowledge and visitor economy while supporting a climate resilient future.” WCQ is based in the O’Connell Street area of Waterford city and spans O’Connell Street and its tributary streets.

In 2021 several utility boxes in the Quarter were painted, and five years later, with a new [WCQ Strategy](#), it’s time to revisit the artwork. We are seeking the skills of creatives: artists, designers, historians and others to support our vision to make WCQ a distinctive, welcoming and engaging place.

The project ask:

- ✓ Map all utility boxes in WCQ – Great Georges St (GGS) from the Presbytery (3 & 4 GGS), Gladstone Street to Mary Street inclusive and each street to the right and left of O’Connell Street (tributary streets). Each utility box should be described by location, dimensions and if possible, purpose, and have a photograph attached using excel or similar software.
- ✓ Carry out research on utility box artworks nationally and internationally, providing a short document with examples of sustainable projects; Examples of different types of projects should be included, with consideration for gamification, community and stakeholder involvement, alternatives to visual art, ties to cultural heritage, local messaging etc. The research phase should also include engagement with local stakeholders.
- ✓ Paint several utility boxes (minimum 15, maximum 30) along WCQ to create a trail of public art works (final number to be agreed with WCQ team).
- ✓ The available funding is **€5,000** to include all costs (time, materials, insurances and all other expenses)
- ✓ The project must be completed by December 2026.

The applicant and application

- ✓ EOI applicants should provide up to four examples of artworks, ideally showing evidence of community engagement and / or socially engaged practice.
(25%) Expertise and experience
- ✓ Artworks should have strong artistic merit, be visually striking and interesting. Adjudicators will look at submissions of previous work carried out.
(25%) Artistic merit
- ✓ EOI applicants should provide three design concepts, themes or uses (e.g. city games, orienteering, QR codes for local cultural offering, destination signposting, nod

to cultural heritage of WCQ) to the adjudication panel to consider. It is not expected that applications develop this visually at this stage of the process – this is optional.

(25%) Project vision

Applicants should prepare an outline timeline for each element and a proposed budget breakdown including costs for time spent on each element (mapping, research and painting – numbers of hours and hourly rate in €'s) and budget for materials requirement (paint, cleaning materials, PPE etc).

(15%) Project Plan

- ✓ The materials for the project must come from the project budget. Use of non-toxic, sustainable and hard-wearing materials must be considered and described.

(10%) Sustainability approach

- ✓ The Arts Council "Paying the Artist" policy and Waterford City and County Council are committed to ensuring that equitable remuneration reflects the artist's time, expertise, and the value of their contribution. Applicant should ensure that their fee structure is clearly outlined in their application.
- ✓ A single applicant, group or organisation may make the application; while not essential we encourage a collaborative approach to the project.

The process

Applications can be made **here**. If for any reason text-based applications cause difficulty, applicants are welcome to make a video application of less than 5 minutes addressing the questions in the text application. Applicants are encouraged to upload a maximum of 6 images / short video (2 minutes max) to showcase their visual work or show images as part of their application.

- ✓ **Closing date for applications:** Monday October 19th at 15:00. Applications will only be accepted on the official application form.
- ✓ **Queries** should be directed to Katherine Collins, WCQ Project Manager culturalquarter@waterfordcouncil.ie by Wednesday October 14th at 15:00 – no responses will be issued after that date and time.
- ✓ The available funding is €5,000 to include all costs (time, materials, insurances and all other expenses)
- ✓ The project payment will be on a phased basis, anticipated to be 30% at project start, 30% after mapping and research are completed and 40% on project completion. Invoices will be requested from the successful applicant at each phase.
- ✓ The lead applicant must provide details of tax clearance and public liability insurance if appointed.
- ✓ A risk assessment will have to be undertaken prior to any work beginning to ensure safe working conditions, accessible footpaths etc. PPE
- ✓ Please be aware that not all utility boxes will necessarily be painted as part of this project; a selection will be decided on with the successful applicant.

- ✓ Local stakeholders including businesses, agencies and communities should be included in the research phase to garner opinions and involve local residents who will be most impacted by new art in their daily surroundings. WCQ Communications can support this work to get the message out.
- ✓ The artist/s must be willing to be profiled as part of WCQ and WCCC Communications, during and after the process, on websites, social media platforms, press releases etc and should expect to be photographed during the project. Artists can add their signature to each artwork.
- ✓ Social and cultural history resources can be found at www.waterfordculturalquarter.ie including social history videos (WCQ videos) and the Quaker Trail. Applicants can use these resources to inform their responses, however it's not expected that applicants do a deep historical project, more that they may be inspired by the local heritage of proximity to the historic port, trading, Quaker industrial history, Georgian architecture and so on.
- ✓ As with all public art, consideration to the longevity of the art should be given. For example, can artworks be touched up at a half-life of two/three years?
- ✓ In certain instances, electrical symbols are an important aspect of providing for safety for electrical workers and contractors. These symbols should be incorporated into art works and not painted over. Front, sides and top of boxes should be painted where feasible.
- ✓ Selected artwork imagery will still be owned by the participants. However, you must agree to let WCQ / Waterford City and County Council (WCCC) use artwork imagery including use on websites, social media, and all related publications. All artworks are intended to remain in place for a minimum of but likely to be up to 5 years. WCCC reserves the right to remove any artwork at any time without prior notice.
- ✓ Designs would be ineligible if they contain the following:
 - Breach of intellectual property rights (stealing someone else's idea)
 - Trademarks, advertisements, brand or business names, logos, or copyrighted images
 - Images relating to drugs/alcohol and/or offensive/contentious images
 - Artwork dominated by text, unless relevant to the design
- ✓ The successful applicant must prepare the surface of each utility box to make it suitable for the final design.
- ✓ Entrants must be 18 years of age or over. Each box will be awarded based on the quality and creativity of the design. The judging panel will consist of local authority representatives. We will not be able to provide feedback on individual applications.
- ✓ Waterford City and County Council reserves the right to carry this project out at a later date or to cancel the project prior to work beginning.

Examples of Irish Utility box projects:

[Dublin Canvas](#)

[Kevin O'Brien Art | Electrical box street art](#)

A how-to-guide by an artist:



[Painted Utility Box Public Art/Mural : 28 Steps \(with Pictures\) - Instructables](#)

For all queries, please contact Katherine culturalquarter@waterfordcouncil.ie

Socials: [Facebook](#), [Linkedin](#) and [Instagram](#)

Website: www.waterfordculturalquarter.ie