

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL

Commission for GEASHILL, COUNTY OFFALY



CPV 92312230-2 92312200-3

Introduction

Offaly County Council is seeking to stimulate artistic excellence and innovation through the creation of a unique site-specific piece of outdoor sculpture¹. A specific site at Geashill has been chosen for this commission, which is outlined on the maps enclosed. The budget available for this commission is in the range of €35-€40,000.

Funding

This Public Art Commission is part funded from the Town and Village Renewal Scheme (€25,000) with the balance of funding from Offaly County Council.

Stage 1 - an open call from which artists will be short-listed and invited to make a more detailed proposal

Stage 2 - comprising of a limited competition with artists directly invited to make submissions. Artists invited to stage 2 of the process will be paid a fee of 600 euro to develop the proposal.

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1. Policy

Offaly County Arts Plan 2018-2022 *"The arts are embedded and integrated into the way of life of the people of County Offaly; accessible to and experienced by all citizens, as well as attracting visitors to the county"*.

2. Location and the Site

The site chosen is the park on the Portarlington Road out of Geashill on the R420. This area has been carefully chosen as the location as it is a spacious open area with parking. The backdrop is the esker ridge, which is an integral part of the Battle of Geashill. The site provides a view into Geashill and a pause point before entering the village.

¹ The completed commission will be permanent outdoor sculpture and should be made of durable material not bronze.



The **identified site** for the sculpture is the Portarlinton Road Park out of Geashill.

3. Context In Brief

The Council wish to commission a site-specific permanent sculptural work that will both relate directly to the strategic location selected and **respond innovatively to the Battle of Geashill.**

'In the dim and distant past of Irish antiquities, there is an extraordinary story of an epic battle between two brothers. The year is reputed to be 1699BC in the early pre-history of the land of Éireann. The battle between the brothers is over the ownership of land the oldest source of conflict between men. Fuelled by male pride, it ends in a vicious family feud. Youthful tempers flare and the only resolution is the death ..., of one brother at the hands of the other, in a terrible slaughter. Nearly all the historical documents name this slaughter as the Battle of Geashill in the lands of Uí Failge.'

From the introduction of 'Heremon and Heber and the Battle of Geashill' by Clemens Von Ow 2017

For a full description of Battle of Geashill see Appendix 1

4. Budget

The value of the commission is between €35,000 and €40,000 including VAT and all expenses.

The budget should include all costs such as; artist fees, design development, materials, fabrication, supply and installation, foundation preparation, engineering costs, health and safety report, labour, transport, VAT, insurance, any other charges and any contingency.

5. Commissioning Procedure

The commissioning procedure will involve a 2-stage National Open Competition process:

Stage 1 – an open call from which artists will be short-listed and invited to make a more detailed proposal

Stage 2 - comprising of a limited number of artists directly invited to make submissions. Artists invited to stage 2 of the process will be paid a fee of 600 euro to develop the proposal

Stage 1

Applicants are invited to submit:

- A current **CV**
- **Examples of relevant projects.** documentation in the form of: a maximum of 12 good quality images of work. Full details for each image are required, i.e. title, medium, measurements and date of work
- **Statement of Interest** to be attached (800 Words)
- Summary concept and approach to commission.

Short listed applicants from Stage 1 will be invited to submit a more detailed proposal².

Site Visits

The site is publically available and can be viewed at any time.

Stage 2

Stage 2 of the process will comprise of a limited competition with a number of artists directly invited to make submissions. Shortlisted applicants will be required to provide a more detailed proposal, (including the supply of a maquette/model to aid visualization), in terms of concept, approach and finances at this stage. A fee of 600 euro (inclusive of VAT) will be paid to all short-listed artists upon receipt of a bona-fide stage 2 proposal.

5. Criteria for Artist Selection (1000 Marks)

- **Quality and Originality** of idea - Artistic excellence, innovativeness and uniqueness of proposal presented both on a stand alone basis and with reference to other competing applicants and in relation to the brief. (250 marks)
- **Concept and relevance** to the commissioning context - Appropriateness to cultural, geographic, historical and environmental character of the county and to the specific site chosen for this commission. (250 marks)
- **Impact** - Assessment that the commission will have a lasting meaningful impact on those who reside in Offaly, its visitors and for generations to come. (250 marks)
- **Feasibility** - Process and feasibility of the proposal, track record of the artist, and capacity to develop, manage and deliver the project within budget. (250 marks)

Where the Selection Panel considers that no submission has met with the criteria set out in the briefing document they may decide to consider other commissioning options.

² As applications will be short listed on the basis of information supplied, applicants should ensure that information given is sufficiently comprehensive. Details of all relevant information relating to experience, qualifications, response to the brief etc. must be supplied. Failure to include this information may result in applications not being shortlisted. Applicants may be invited to attend for interview at Stage 2. Offaly County Council is not responsible for travel costs incurred in attending for interview

Selection Panel

Proposals will be assessed by a Selection Panel appointed by Offaly County Council, the members of which will have appropriate expertise in Public Art Commissioning. The selection panel will be appointed by, and include representation from, Offaly County Council, and will include expertise from external artist/curators with public art commissioning experience.

6. Timeline

Schedules may change due to unforeseen circumstances

Monday 22 Oct 2018 – Friday 30 Nov 2018	Advertisement of Commission
3 p.m., Friday 30 Nov 2018	Deadline for receipt of Stage 1 submission
Friday 14 Dec 2018	Notification of Shortlisting Decisions
Monday 28 January 2019	Deadline for receipt of Stage 2 submissions
Mid February	Announcement of Stage 2 decisions
July	Commission Completed /installed

Offaly County Council's short listing and commissioning decisions at Stages 1 & 2 will be final. Canvassing will disqualify an applicant. The deadline for receipt of submissions is

3p.m. Friday 30 Nov 2018

All submissions will be through the E-tenders website

All Clarifications and further information will be through the E-tenders messaging facility

Appendix 1

Context for the brief

'In the dim and distant past of Irish antiquities, there is an extraordinary story of an epic battle between two brothers. The year is reputed to be 1699BC in the early pre-history of the land of Éireann. The battle between the brothers is over the ownership of land the oldest source of conflict between men. Fuelled by male pride, it ends in a vicious family feud. Youthful tempers flare and the only resolution is the death ..., of one brother at the hands of the other, in a terrible slaughter. Nearly all the historical documents name this slaughter as the Battle of Geashill in the lands of Uí Failge.'

From the introduction of *'Heremon and Heber and the Battle of Geashill'* by Clemens Von Ow 2017

It is not often that an event, which occurred over 3700 years ago can be said to have shaped the future of a country, but this is one such little known, but very significant happening in the history of Geashill, and also in the history of Ireland.

Our story begins, not in the midlands of Ireland, but across the sea in Gaul, or present day Spain. Nor is it some fanciful take, but an account which was passed down in the oral tradition by a select group or 'filads' or poets, who were trained and tasked with memorising the hereditary history of their clan and all their descendants... It is also recorded in the Annals of the Four masters written in the 17th century AD.

The land that we now call Spain was at this time undergoing a 26-year famine, and King Milesius sent his uncle Ithe to seek out a new and fertile homeland, which it was reported lay to the north. Ithe landed in Ireland but his forces were defeated by the Tuatha de Danann and he was killed. His son Lughaidhe brought his body back to Spain.

An angry Milesius sent his 8 sons with a great fleet to avenge the death of his uncle and to conquer Ireland. A storm blew up however which claimed the lives of 5 of his sons, leaving just 3, the eldest surviving Heber, Amergin, a druid and the younger Heremon.

They went on to easily defeat the de Danann, and then set about dividing Ireland between them. It was agreed that Heber and Heremon would rule as joint kings of Ireland, with Heber as eldest son getting the better lands in the southern half or Munster, Heremon ruling the northern half, and smaller tracts set aside for Amergin and their sons and friends.

So began the joint reign of Heber and Heremon in 1699BC, the first of 183 kings or sole monarchs of the Gaelic Milesian or Scottish race to govern Ireland for 2885 years until their final submission to Henry 11 in the 12th century AD. The agreement to rule jointly only lasted for one year however. It is said that the wives of Heber and Heremon complained that the other had secured better lands from the division. The political and military advisors on both sides did what advisors often do when dealing with strong, powerful, aggressive leaders, they told them what they felt they wanted to hear and encouraged war.

The state was set and the armies came together in the year of 16998 BC on the edge of Bri Damh, (The Hill of Oxen) at Togher-idir-da-mhaidh, (The causeway between the two plains) in what would be known as The Battle of Geashill, which would decide the fate of the Kingship of Ireland. In the course of the battle, Heber killed one of Heremon's sons, but the outcome was eventually decided when he in turn was slain by Heremon. Heremon and his army had won the day and the undisputed kingship of all of Ireland. He placated Heber's sons by giving them lands in Munster, but in a later dispute over land with his remaining brother Amergin, he showed his ruthlessness again by killing him.

He would go on to rule for 14 years until his death at his royal home in the Nore Valley in 1683BC. He was buried as was custom in a large mound... All subsequent Irish Kings would be descended from these two branches of the Milesian dynasty, the brothers Heremon and Heber whose fates were decided at the Battle of Geashill.

Perhaps because these great events took place so long ago, deep into Ireland's past, and also because Geashill since Christian times has such a rich history, the epic Battle of Geashill has remained not so much a secret which was deliberately kept from us as something which was simply forgotten. It is surely now time, after 3712 years to tell this story, to bring the epic events of the Battle of Geashill which defined the history of Geashill and all of Ireland back into the broader public domain.

Submission to Secrets of Offaly project by Geashill Tidy Towns (2014)

'The encounter came off in the barony and parish known to this day by the name Geashill, as it were the land of mighty deeds (for *Geasa* means feats imposed and *Aill* wonderfull) situate in the eastern portion of the King's County.'

From Canon U.J. Bourke 'A Region of Irish History Pre-Christian Ireland'

Appendix 2

Further Information - Freedom of Information

Offaly County Council is a Freedom of Information (FOI) body. When submitting information, Artists should indicate what parts of their submission are commercially sensitive and what parts they consider should be kept confidential should the Council receive an FOI request relating to the submission.

Offaly County Council undertakes to use its best endeavours to hold confidential any information provided by you in this submission subject to the Council's obligations under law including the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003. Should you wish that any of the information supplied by you in this submission should not be disclosed because of its sensitivity, you should, when providing the information, identify same and specify reasons for its sensitivity. Offaly County Council will consult with you about this sensitive information before making any decision on any Freedom of Information request received. In the event that Offaly County Council decided to release particular information provided by you, you will have the option of appealing the Council's decision to the Information Commissioner. Please note that in the event that no information is identified by you as sensitive, with supporting reasons, then it is likely to be released in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Acts.

Notes on submission to Stage 2

Details of the requirements at stage 2 will be made available to shortlisted artists, it should also be noted:

Maquettes/models of the shortlist submission may be put on public display

Prior to the signing of the Contract for Services, the Artist will be required to furnish Offaly County Council with a:

- Tax Clearance Certificate
- Public Liability Insurance Certificate
- A Health and Safety Statement

The successful submission will be subject to Health & Safety checks, which will be carried out by specialised staff of Offaly County Council prior to contracts being signed.