



Report on the Community based Artist-in-Residence Project
at Neddy's Cottage, Dromineer, August-September 2011.

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1. Background

This Artist-in-residence project is a pilot project organised by North Tipperary County Council's Arts Office in partnership with The Arts Council and The Mid-West Regional Authority to test Neddy's Cottage as a potential workspace for artists. The project was funded by North Tipperary County Council, The Arts Council, The Mid-West Regional Authority, (European Regional Development Fund, Innovate and Atlantic Area).

The aim of this pilot residency project is to allow an artist to develop their artistic practice without a predetermined outcome in order to learn how an artist might use the space and how this could aid the development of new work. There is further a wish for the residency to function as a platform for community engagement in some form as the site of the residency, Neddy's Cottage, is a local attraction that the community is strongly attached to.

2. Methodology

This report has been created mainly through discussions with Artist in Residence Sharon Lynch and The Arts Officer Melanie Scott. Feedback was collected over time through the interactions Sharon had with people on the 6 Sundays visitors were invited into the cottage. Further feedback was sought from three local stakeholders from Dromineer: Declan Collinson the manager and owner of Lough Derg House (accommodation provider), Rita Ryan proprietor of the Whiskey Still (restaurant & bar) and Eleanor Hooker a committee member of the Dromineer Literary Festival and Lough Derg Lifeboat crew member.

The approach is reflective of the artist's practice in that it has been allowed to evolve organically over time. A big part of Lynch's practice is to observe and record events over time. My role has been to support her throughout this process and I have similarly been observing the interactions taking place on the open days. The report reflects this. My own background as an artist and curator interested in community involvement has coloured and shaped this report.

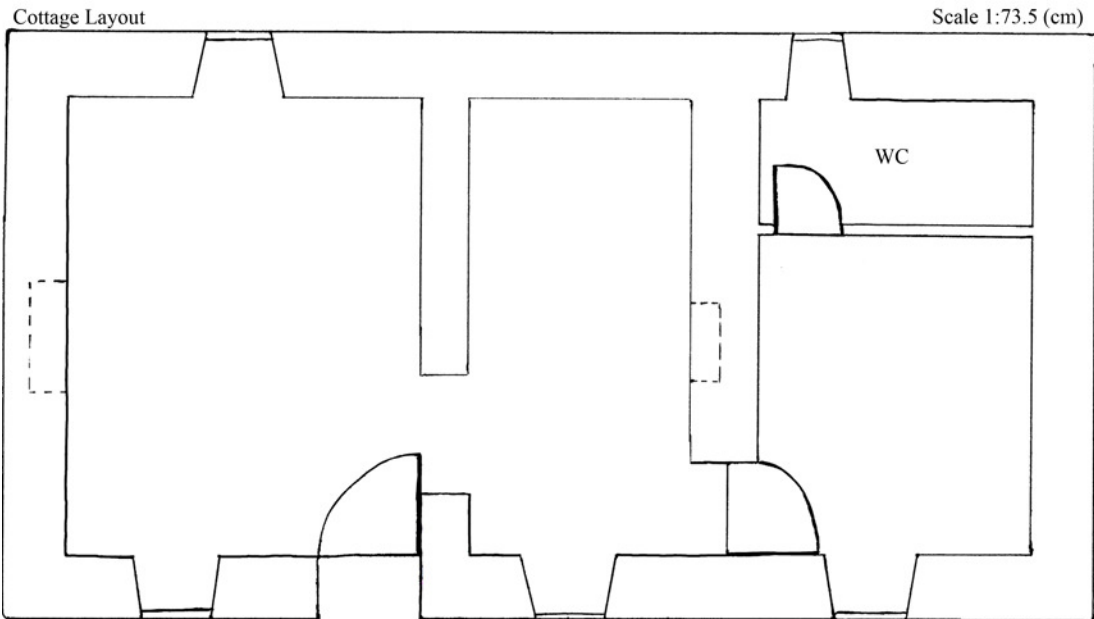
The findings are largely based on the experience of the artist, added to this are interviews with local stakeholders and comparisons with other rural artists residencies.

3. The Site



Neddy's Cottage named after the last inhabitant, Ned Hogan, in Dromineer is a traditional thatched cottage owned by North Tipperary County Council, which was renovated in 2009 at which time water and sanitary facilities were installed. It is situated on an area of grass close to Lough Derg in Dromineer Village, and is a well known local landmark. Local traditions claim that it was built in a day in order to obtain squatter's rights over the ground on which it was built. In the past the cottage has been regarded as one of Dromineers attractions.

The cottage consists of 3 small rooms including a bathroom with a WC and small wash basin. Storage heaters have been installed to heat the space as well as several electrical sockets. As it is a traditional cottage there is limited natural light available inside. Although an old traditional cottage it is not a protected building, allowing for works to be carried out if deemed necessary. There is no Wi-Fi connection in the cottage, however Lynch was able to use a mobile internet connection which she provided herself. The reception area was decorated with furniture kindly lent by McCarney's & Son, Nenagh. Added to this desks and shelves were borrowed from North Tipperary County Council to set up the artist work area.



4. Report

For 6 weeks in August-September 2011 artist Sharon Lynch spent in total 22 days working in the cottage and living in the local hostel. An artist fee of €200/day was paid by North Tipperary County Council to allow the artist to focus solely on her practice. The cottage doors were open to the public each Sunday between 12-6pm and on these occasions visitors were invited to share stories, have a look around the cottage, see examples of Sharon's work in progress and ask questions. The work and the interaction with the community on Sundays evolved and developed throughout this time. From the outset all parties involved agreed that it was important to allow room for work and interactions to evolve organically in order to learn what might take place. At the last open Sunday 11th September people were invited to come and take part in art making workshops. It is estimated that 50 people visited the cottage during the residency. Some visitors showed a keen interest in taking part and exploring the art making process and an extra event is being considered for them to come together and create work.

Before the start of the residency Sharon Lynch had envisaged working with the lake as a starting point, as water had in the past proved to be a rich subject matter for her. However once in Dromineer she struggled with this plan and so changed the focus and used it as an opportunity to start from scratch. Having to start anew she had to re-establish what she knew and so started with the feet, literally finding her feet drawing them and focusing on being in a certain place in time. Looking out in order to explore the inside. By setting up mirror balls on the lawn that reflected the outside space in, in the form of tiny circles of passing cloud or passing people she followed the movement of light. This evolved into making balls of plaster. This kind of repetitive and meditative work re-occurs in Lynch's practice in which a seemingly irrelevant and purposeless task with some order and some outcome such as; trying in vain to create a perfectly formed sphere by hand with the fast drying materials, develops into something larger. While the work stays modest it presents itself as an honest, transient and considered exploration of material and the maker.



Having decidedly moved away from the water Lynch turned her attention to the cottage itself, possibly seeing a link from working with the plaster and the contrast with the imperfection of the cottages' plaster walls. During walks around the area she began to gather local natural materials, again making a connection to the cottage. One material, thistle heads, became important. Their behaviour, and the fact that their nature is to slowly and gently explode to then be carried by the uncertain wind resonated with her. It reflected her experience on the open Sundays when she had to describe what her work is about and what she was doing. As there was no finished work on show, this act of sharing, of admitting and presenting the uncertainty inherent in the artistic practice and to discuss this process became the real strength of the residency for Lynch. At the end of the residency Lynch felt that she needed to spend more time in the cottage to develop work that had only just started to take form, to continue to work from a place of uncertainty and trust. An agreement was reached with Melanie Scott that she could use the cottage until the end of October. Since the end of the official residency there have been talks regarding creating an exhibition in spring 2012 to showcase the work developed through and inspired by the residency.



5. Evaluation

The Experience

From discussions with all parties involved the pilot residency was deemed a successful project, a positive step in the right direction. The general agreement from local people who visited the cottage was that they were happy that the cottage was being used and that they could visit it.

*'The feedback I have heard is that people really enjoyed the interaction. That time and attention had been given to anyone visiting the cottage. It was appreciated that they had been listened to.'*¹

-Local stakeholder, Eleanor Hooker

For the artist it was valuable to have been given space and freedom to make new work in response to a new environment, as well as to share the experience of showing art in progress.

*'It was great to get the opportunity to focus on making my own work, rather than facilitating others, but having an interaction with people, and a real variety of people, I felt like I was finding my voice in the work, it helped to focus and questions that had been at the back of my mind for a long time, questions about the how's and why's of the work that I do. It was fantastic to be given the space, freedom and support to do this.'*²

-Artist, Sharon Lynch.

For North Tipperary County Council Arts Office it was valuable to support an artist's practice, create community interaction and to make use of the building they have in their care. Primarily it was an interesting opportunity to learn how the cottage could be used in the future.

The Site

The cottage lent itself well to work in. Lynch divided the space up into a desk/ office area, display/ experimentation area and reception area. The limitation of reliable Internet connection and natural light may deter some artists, however it might be seen as a bonus to others. Structurally Lynch suggests that a larger sink for washing art materials and dishes would be of great benefit as well as investing in a hot plate and small fridge to allow for storing and cooking of food. The purchasing of permanent furniture sympathetic to the cottage and its uses has been further suggested. At times the cottage can be quite cold which suggested that it is better to hold residencies during late spring-early autumn months when the weather is naturally warmer. Due to the seasonal climate of the region the ideal time for the residency would be June-August. The two busiest weekends in Dromineer are the first week in August and during the Dromineer Literary Festival at the end of September.

¹ Eleanor Hooker, Personal interview, 25 Oct. 2011.

² Sharon Lynch, Personal interview, 13 Oct. 2011.

As a site it is uniquely Irish, conjuring up notions of nostalgia and history, which would have an appeal to creative practitioners nationally and internationally. For Lynch there was a continuous awareness and tension not to get stuck into these notions connected with the cottage but rather focus on her own interest in the area. In the end she found working with the structural elements such as the stonewalls most rewarding. The site further opens up the possibility of working with the boating and fishing communities in and around the lake. Part of Lynch's original idea for exploration was to focus on Lough Derg. An interesting factor that might have contributed to her not engaging with the water as much as first envisaged was how inaccessible the water is to anyone without access to a boat.

Benefit and Support to the artist

The creative freedom of Lynch's project was most beneficial to the artist although at times she was unsure of what the expectations were of her working in the cottage. Going forward it is advisable to create a clear brief regarding what is expected in terms of artist outcome and community interaction, whilst still allowing room for ideas to evolve and change.

The support that was provided in terms of: artist fee, provision of accommodation, free use of the cottage, independent artistic/curatorial feedback and support as well as ample support from North Tipperary County Council was deemed highly beneficial and reassuring by the artist. Having had the opportunity to spend longer time in the cottage Lynch suggests that suitable duration would be between 6 – 8 weeks, with a maximum of 12 weeks.

The added outside support by an independent person with an understanding for contemporary art was something that Lynch found most beneficial.

*'Another positive was in having support and interaction with Veronica throughout, having someone to converse with, almost have critical engagements with. This was very useful.'*³

-Artist, Sharon Lynch

Lynch has suggested that this type of support could be replicated in a formal or informal manner by an artist, curator or anyone with a good understanding of artistic practices. In order to attract strong artists and proposals it is important to create a model that appeals to and benefits their practice. Key benefits are: Financial support, freedom to create, free studio space, an interesting site, time, access to a local community, critical support and an opportunity to showcase work so that it can be disseminated to the larger art community.

Examples of other residency structures

Four regional and rural residencies were studied for this report. They were selected on the basis of location, community involvement and reputation. By listing this basic data I wish to highlight the various ways in which valuable support can be provided

³ Sharon Lynch, Personal interview, 13 Oct. 2011.

and what kind of work or community involvement has been expected in return for the artist fee. While Leitrim Sculpture Centre comes across as most ambitious and well paid it is interesting to note that the higher level of artistic freedom combined with curatorial guidance and feedback provided by The Good Hatchery provides for a different highly valued support. The WHAT residency looks for much community engagement in exchange for the artist fee, however in return they provide access to a community an artist might not otherwise have access to as well as curatorial support.

Leitrim Sculpture Centre offers 6 artists a year (2 from Leitrim, 3 from Ireland and 1 international) a 4-6 week residency. The artists are paid €3,600 which is to cover travel, material, living and accommodation expenses. Added to the financial support they are offered a studio, curatorial and technical support, access to the workshop and specialist equipment such as kilns. There are two types of residencies: One that supports artists in helping to develop their technical skills or practice and the second supports artists in helping to engage with places, people, industry, groups, communities or landscapes in Leitrim. The artists exhibit work at the Centre following the residency. Information and images of the artists work is displayed on their website in a professional manner.

The Art@Work residency, which is organised by Roscommon County Council Arts Office invites a group of artists, numbers vary from year to year, to work for 3 weeks in a workplace. The 15 days can be spread out over a longer period of time based on agreement with the artist and the company. The fee is €2,000 plus a possible extra €500 to cover accommodation costs. The artist is provided with a workspace, some free raw materials and access to a community to work with. A clear curatorial brief sets the tone of the residency however the artist works mostly independently on site. Following the residency a catalogue and an exhibition is created documenting what took place. The catalogues are available free to download online.

Waterford Healing Art Trust (WHAT) is a 6 months artist residency linked with Waterford Regional Hospital. The artist is paid €3,500 which is to cover material and accommodation costs. The artist is provided with a studio, access to a digital dark room as well as curatorial support. The artist in return assist in weekly art workshops and engages part of the patient population of the hospital in a collaborative arts project. An exhibition is held in the hospital at the end. The work is documented in a catalogue and work is presented on their website.

An alternative example is The Good Hatchery set up by artists Carl Giffney & Ruth E. Lyons. The residency is run as a curatorial program of residencies with a particular interest in unusual and experimental projects as well as in collaborative group proposals. Providing artists with residential studios and workshop spaces free of charge. The residencies are ongoing throughout the year. The duration varies depending on project and artists proposals. They fund some curated projects in which artist are paid to create or display work. Exhibitions and catalogues are produced to highlight certain projects. Based in rural Offaly they focus on engaging with the Irish art community through taking part in seminars, by creating and taking part in exhibitions around Ireland and by creating catalogues.

Community engagement

The location of Neddy's Cottage is perfectly situated to facilitate social interaction, as it is a well-known landmark that people are curious to visit. There appears to be a strong feeling among local people who are very attached to the cottage that it should be used more often in some form. When interviewed the three stakeholders were happy to have been asked and delighted to give feedback and suggestions as to how the cottage could be used in the future.

*'It would be great to see the cottage being used more. For example children's art workshops during the summer, say 3 Saturdays in a row for 1 hour. It is a lovely building with a real local history.'*⁴

-Local stakeholder, Rita Ryan

*'For the future it would be great to see more art. As there is a strong local connection to the water, a focus on sailing or boating might create more interest. I would be happy to put up art in the café in conjunction with the residency.'*⁵

-Local stakeholder, Declan Collins

*'This year was the first time the Literary Festival had a poetry event in the Pub, moving it away from the Yacht club. First people were hesitant about it but it turned into a great success. I am sure that village people would be interested to get involved and take ownership of events taking place in the cottage.'*⁶

-Local stakeholder, Eleanor Hooker

The difficulty is how the cottage might be best used to serve the visiting artist, North Tipperary County Council Arts Office and the local community. A way to address this is to schedule various events throughout the year to accommodate differing views and tastes. The more varied, unusual, engaging, and entertaining activities the better. Thus removing the pressure of the artist residency to unite the various parties.

There was an expectation from people visiting the cottage to see an art exhibition and few people felt comfortable enough to take part in art workshops on a drop-in basis. Going forward it is worth considering how to give visitors a way in to the work. Should it be advertised differently? Should there be more examples of work in the space? Should the open days take place at the end of the residency allowing more work to have been created? Should people be especially invited to events or workshops rather than having an open door? As this was the first event of this kind in the cottage it is reasonable to assume that should this continue visitor's presumptions would change in time.

A grey area for this initial project was exactly what was expected of the artist. Is the artist there to engage with and add something to the community or is she or he there to develop their own work? One of the reasons Lynch was invited to take part in the project was her background in working with people and communities. As many artistic practices engage with community there would be artists who's practice

⁴ Rita Ryan, Personal interview, 24 Oct. 2011.

⁵ Declan Collins, Personal interview, 17 Oct. 2011.

⁶ Eleanor Hooker, Personal interview, 25 Oct. 2011.

naturally combines the two.

The Future

Going forward both Lynch and Scott are in agreement that the residency needs to connect with other cultural events locally and nationally in order to create awareness, to add cultural value and open up critical dialogue. For example by linking the residency with events such as the Dromineer Literary Festival or Culture Night. Another possibility is to link the residency with local businesses as has been done through the Art@Work residency program organised by Roscommon County Council. The creation of an exhibition following the residency or the publication of a catalogue at the end of the residency allows the work to be disseminated and creates a clear outcome for the residency.

*'Key is how to make the residency benefit the artistic practice. We need to look at how the work created during the residency can be disseminated. From a longer residency there needs to be an outcome: a beginning, middle and end. For example an exhibition or publication could be created at the end.'*⁷

-Arts Officer, Melanie Scott

When asked how the structure could be improved to support the artist and facilitate community involvement Lynch replied:

*'I really feel that the answer to this question will be in looking at individual artists practices, each artist will design and adapt a model and way of working and interacting that is specific and appropriate to their practice and that is the beauty of giving artists the freedom that a residency like this affords.'*⁸

-Artist, Sharon Lynch

In time, by learning from numerous artists working in this setting in various fields and with different approaches to community engagement, a clearer picture of how the cottage can be best used will emerge. As this pilot project was created for a visual artist and as my background is in this area the report is mainly focused on this area. However with the Dromineer Literary Festival taking place at the end of September-early October every year it would be pertinent to arrange a writer's, illustrator's or storyteller's residency or workshops leading up to or in conjunction with this event.

6. Recommendations

From the outset this pilot project was devised to learn how the cottage could best be used in the future, to learn how an artist might use the space, how the residency could benefit an artist's practice as well as learn more how the project can function as a platform for community engagement. From this experience we have learnt that the cottage is suitable for hosting artist residencies and that it appears to be an appropriate site for community engagement. Further, that the site and the support structures have

⁷ Melanie Scott, Personal interview, 11 Oct. 2011.

⁸ Sharon Lynch, Personal interview, 13 Oct. 2011.

benefitted Lynch's practice and that the local community is positive to events taking place in the cottage. This process of collecting feedback and observing the project unfolding has highlighted strengths and areas that can be developed to improve the project.

Use of Neddy's Cottage

For all parties involved it was a largely positive experience to have an artist residency taking place in the cottage. Among the local people there is a strong wish for more activities to take place. A solution to this is to schedule other varied events throughout the year such as storytelling, children's art workshops or traditional music sessions as suggested by the local stakeholders interviewed as part of this report.

What is unique with this residency is the opportunity to work in a traditional thatched cottage that has a historical importance to the local community located in the centre of a rural boating village. Going forward creating and developing an identity for the residency I recommend working with and enhancing these strengths. By asking creative practitioners to make proposals that are in some way connected to one of these aspects an identity will develop over time. This combined with strong artistic support in terms of critical support and funding will set this residency apart.

A small investment in the cottage would benefit artists at work. For the next year the most urgent need is for a kitchen area including a small fridge, a hot plate and a kettle. Further Lynch's suggestion to install a larger sink is recommended, however this is not a priority. To make the cottage more welcoming, warmer and in keeping with the traditional structure of the cottage I recommend the fireplace be reinstated in the main room. The purchasing of comfortable and suitable furniture such as chairs and tables would add to this. This could be done slowly over time as the needs become clearer and funds are made available.

Aiding the development of an artist's practice

The opportunity to focus on her own art practice and to be supported throughout this time was highly prized by Lynch. The interaction with people who visited the cottage further added to the development of her work. This project focused on a visual artist, however various creative practices would benefit from using the space to develop work. Further experimentation will lead to better knowledge into what kind of a practice is best suited, which is why I recommend to continue to invite artists for the next 1-2 years. Curatorial or critical support at points throughout the residency would aid the artist in the process as well as aid the creation of high quality work. I recommend that a curator be involved in the project, meeting up with the artist before and during the residency as well as leading up to the exhibition. A set amount of hours or a fee could be agreed in advance. Roughly 15-20 hours of interaction would be sufficient.

The Structure

The brief for this pilot residency needed to be open to learn what would take place.

Going forward I recommend that the brief needs to be made clearer prior to the commencement of the residency. This would aid the artist carrying out the project, help modify local expectations and make it clearer for the Council how to support and evaluate the project. A set outcome such as an exhibition following the residency would benefit the artist and as the work gets viewed, it will allow the local community to get a better understanding of contemporary arts practices as well as provide the Council with a product at the end to show for their investment.

There seems to be three clear directions in which the residency could evolve:

1. Artist is to create work without a set outcome but has to propose some scheduled community involvement. Work to be developed later into an exhibition.
2. Artist is to create work connected to or inspired by the history of the cottage or the area but has to propose some scheduled community involvement. Work to be developed later into an exhibition.
3. Artist is to create work through community involvement. Work to be developed later into an exhibition.

As artists work in a multitude of ways it is appropriate that each artist should prior to the residency propose what kind of community involvement or interaction they wish to pursue. Through discussions with the artist, arts officer and the curator a clear brief will then be developed prior to the commencement of the residency. The brief will further include a set outcome. The outcome will outline how the work carried out through the residency can be disseminated for example through the creation of an exhibition, a catalogue or a publicised event. Exhibitions could take place in the cottage, in a venue or business in Neenagh or further a field depending on what would best suit the work. Allowing for flexibility in this area would benefit the development of the residency as feedback and knowledge is accumulated through experimentation. It would further make it artistically and critically more interesting.

As there is a strong wish by the local community to have something in the cottage they can connect with I recommend to initially invite a creative practitioner that has an interest in working with the history of the area and its people. Although the local community already is positive to something taking place it would help to build local interest and support. Having already engaged a visual artist it is recommended to invite a writer, musician, filmmaker or another alternative practitioner for the 2012 residency.

For the next 1-2 years I recommend emerging or established practitioners from various backgrounds are invited such as writers, musicians, craft makers and visual artists in order to create a better understanding of how the space can be used as well as create a profile for the project. Experience in community engagement need not be a prerequisite, however it appears pertinent to invite practitioners that are open to or have an interest in some form of community interaction. An open call process could be pursued following this period.

A big part in developing the residency is to create a reputation for the residency so that artists know of it and wish to become part of the “Dromineer Alumni”. The creation of a website that promotes the residency and work that has been carried out would be helpful in this regard. The Leitrim Sculpture Centre⁹ and Fire Station¹⁰ both have good examples on how this can be done.

Based in a rural area it is vital to consider how to publicise and communicate the work created for a larger audience. For example by linking it with other national cultural events such as National Drawing Day, Bealtaine Festival or Culture Night. Locally the residency could be connected with festivals such as Dromineer Literary Festival and Terryglass Arts Festival.

A way of tying the work with contemporary arts practices could be to nurture relationships with other institutions or agencies such as Limerick City Gallery of Art or Create, the national development agency for collaborative arts in social and community contexts. This could subtly be done by inviting curators that are linked with progressive contemporary art galleries or organisations. Taking part in symposiums, creating well publicised public events, exhibitions or catalogues are various ways in which the work could be further disseminated.

Duration & Fee

June until end of August is the busiest time in the area and it would seem natural to hold the residency during this time. The ideal duration will depend on each artist and the degree of community involvement desired. Sharon used the cottage for 22 days, which is roughly 4 weeks spread over the time of 6 weeks. In terms of funding I propose 4 weeks of paid residency, which equals 20 days that could be stretched out for 6-8 weeks depending on the artist’s schedule. Allowing for flexibility to reflect the artist’s proposals. A fee of €180/ day which is to include material costs, artist fee, transportation and accommodation is in line with Leitrim Sculpture Centre and Art@Work residency fees. This totals to €3,600. Providing a good fee will help attract interest in the project and bring onboard interesting practitioners nationally and internationally. The fee reflects what is expected of the artist in terms of the level of community engagement as well as the ambitiousness of the proposed project or artistic exploration.

Added to the residency cost would be the curator’s fee. Depending on experience and reputation the hourly fee could range from €30-€50. Based on 20 hours the fee would range between €600-€1000.

⁹ http://www.leitrimsculpturecentre.ie/programme/residencies/2010/residencies_2010.html

¹⁰ <http://www.firestation.ie/artists/>

7. Appendix: Feedback

7.1 Sharon Lynch, Artist-in-Residence, Feedback

1. *How did you find the experience working in the cottage?*

It was great to get the opportunity to focus on making my own work, rather than facilitating others, but having an interaction with people, and a real variety of people, I felt like I was finding my voice in the work, it helped to focus and questions that had been at the back of my mind for a long time, questions about the how's and why's of the work that I do. It was fantastic to be given the space, freedom and support to do this.

2. *Did it benefit your practice?*

Yes, most definitely. For the first time in a long time I feel like there is something new going on, some sort of shift, I don't know yet what that is but something has changed.

3. *How did you find the community interaction?*

Strange, neither good nor bad, positive nor negative, but unusual, I wasn't quite sure how to interact, there wasn't a clearly defined group that I was focused on. Those whom I interacted with were a mixture of locals, passers by, visitors and those with a particular interest in the arts. But as time went on I began to identify particular individuals that I wanted to spend more time with and invited them back. Before the project began I had been interested in working with a focus on the lake, but once I got there the focus changed, I began to be interested in broader questions about the nature of creativity and so those individuals who responded to that theme began to be a group, or at least I saw them as the community group that I wanted to work with.

4. *How did the open house Sunday work for you?*

Again, unusual, and for many of the reasons above. I felt pressure to have an exhibition on show, there seemed to be an expectation that I would be there selling my wares, and I fought against this expectation, by going very much in the opposite direction, I wanted to show people that I was in the process of making work, or gathering information, I wanted to show that I was starting from zero and trusting in the artistic process to get me to some sort of answer/conclusion/product. At times during the Sundays I would be able to have conversations with people and explain in depth this process, and there were some times when these people really connected personally with this process (not always necessarily, the artistic process, but the notion of trusting your 'gut' process) so these exchanges were really gorgeous and genuine and for me refreshing and so useful.

5. *Did you feel you became a part of the local community?*

No, I didn't become part of the local community, but that was never my intention, I was always going to be a visitor, an observer. That's not to say that people weren't friendly and warm and open, which many were but I wasn't to be accepted as one of them, as a new member of the community.

6. *Could you mention something that stood out for you as positive?*

The conversations that I mentioned above in Question 4, because they came out of me fighting the fear of expectation, of being honest and they were intangible but very real. Another positive was in having support and interaction with Veronica throughout, having someone to converse with, almost have critical engagements with. This was very useful.

7. *Could you mention something that stood out for you as negative?*

I'm finding it hard to come up with a negative...

8. *Do you have any suggestions how the cottage could be improved to support artist residencies?*

Practically a larger sink, some basic cooking facilities (because eating out becomes expensive).

9. *Did it work well for you to live in the Hostel during the residency?*

Yes.

10. *Do you have any suggestions how the residency structure could be improved to support the artist and facilitate community involvement?*

I really feel that the answer to this question will be in looking at individual artists practices, each artist will design and adapt a model and way of working and interacting that is specific and appropriate to their practice and that is the beauty of giving artists the freedom that a residency like this affords.

11. *How long do you think the residency should be?*

The 6 weeks seemed to fly by so a minimum of 6 to 8 weeks would be good.

12. *What time of the year do you think is best suited for the residency?*

Spring summer months would be best because it can be cold and damp in the cottage so, I would avoid the colder wetter times of the year.

13. *Where you happy with the support you were given throughout the residency?*

Yes, I didn't always need it but I always felt and knew that I had Veronica, Melanie or Rosemary at hand for help.

14. *Did the artist fee cover your expenses?*

Well, the overall fee allowed for travel and materials cost so yes it did.

15. *Do you think it would be of benefit to have two artists working at the same time in the cottage for support?*

The space might be too small for two artists to work in but if two artists proposed to work together then of course this could work.

16. *What kind of artistic practices do you think would suit this residency?*

The space does present certain limitations, for sure, but a wide range of artistic practices could happen in and from the space. In fact I can't really think of a practice that couldn't adapt or at least benefit from spending time in the space.

17. *Do you see a future for artist residencies in the cottage?*

Absolutely.

7.2 Melanie Scott, Arts Officer, Feedback

1. *What were your expectations of the residency?*

To test an idea/concept while being open about the result. It was important to allow the residency to develop organically. Sharon and her approach to art making was key as her approach to the residency mirrors this. What I expect is to learn how the cottage could best be used in the future. Is an artist residency a good way to use this resource? How does it benefit an artist's practice? Finally it would be a bonus if this could also add community & cultural value to the area.

2. *Do you think the residency achieved what you had wished for it to do?*

It was successful. People engaged with it. I didn't expect 100's to engage. Locally people did and this happened in an organic matter. Local people who were curious and visitors who passed by came in to the cottage. It created a cultural dialogue.

3. *How did you find the community interaction? In retrospect how did the open house Sunday work from the council's perspective?*

It was a short period and it takes a while to build awareness. There could have been more people to visit, but it was ok. Sharon's use of the space got better with time. At the beginning it was hard for visitors to connect with the practice, as there was not much work on display to help them to engage and to open up conversations. This resulted in more abstract conversations. In hindsight there could have been previous work projected or presented in the space from the start to aid this.

The general call out in the local paper to take part in workshops didn't work, however the open door allowed for interaction and connections to be made. To invite people to special events would work better.

4. *Was there something that stood out for you or something that occurred that you had not expected?*

Sharon not working with the lake or water to the extent that she originally had proposed. It was an interesting turn.

5. *What kind of artistic practices would you like to support in the future? Is there a special emphasis on emerging or local artists? What kind of artistic practice do you think would suit this residency?*

I am interested in using the space to promote a variety of creative practises from writers to visual artists. Our experience is that there doesn't seem to be a need for local artists to get access to a studio as most have set up their own studio in the home, however I am open to engaging local and national artists.

6. *Would you be open to making some changes to the cottage to support artists in residence?*

Yes, budgets allowing.

7. *Do you have any suggestions how the residency structure could be improved to support the artist and facilitate community involvment? Do you have any long term goals or ambitions for the artists residency?*

It would be important to link the residency with other initiatives going forward, for example the Dromineer Literary Festival. Ways to create local connections. For example there could be a way to link the residency with local businesses such as the Woollen Mills, boat building companies or local crafts. Possibly an interaction based on the art@work residency in Roscommon. Key is how to make the residency benefit the artistic practice. We need to look at how the work created during the residency can be disseminated. From a longer residency there needs to be an outcome: a beginning, middle and end. For example an exhibition or publication could be created at the end.

8. *How long do you think the residency should be? What time of the year do you think is best suited for the residency?*

The residency could be up to 3 months, bearing in mind the natural rhythm of Dromineer. Best time to hold residencies would be spring-summer. Based on climate and on when people are active on the lake.

9. *Would you be open to have local people involved in the selection panel of artists?*

Yes. The local community is quite disperse so you would need to consider how this could best be done.

7.3 Local Stakeholders Feedback

Declan Collinson, Lough Derg House, Dromineer.

1. *What are your thoughts on using the cottage for artist residencies?*

From talking to Sharon there was a lot of interest. The residency was a positive move in the right direction. It is great to see the cottage being used. There was a perception from people visiting the cottage that there would be an art exhibition or some art on display, which was not fulfilled. Would be great to have more art to look at.

2. *What time of the year do you think it would be best to have something taking place in the cottage?*

March-October is the full season, however July-August is the peak with early August and the Literary Festival (end of September early October) being the busiest time. It would make sense to link the residency with this time in some way.

3. *Do you think the residency added anything to the community or your business?*

For our business there was no direct impact, except for maybe some more coffees sold. More an added benefit to the area, it is hard to measure the impact.

4. *Do you have any suggestions or thoughts going forward?*

For the future it would be great to see more art. As there is a strong local connection to the water, a focus on sailing or boating might create more interest. I would be happy to put up art in the café in conjunction with the residency. There is a strong creative community that would be interested in various art forms, for example once a year a group of writer stay in the hostel for brainstorming sessions. Local artist that display work in Neengh would probably like the opportunity to show work in the cottage.

Rita Ryan, Whiskey Still, Dromineer.

1. *What are your thoughts on using the cottage for artist residencies?*

Lovely idea. It was a pity there were not more posters and leaflets around before the residency happened. It was very quiet. We told people about the event but it is hard to know how many went down to take part.

2. *What time of the year do you think it would be best to have something happening in the cottage?*

June-August when children are off from school are our prime months with Saturday and Sunday being the busiest days in the Pub. The fishing and boating begins in May which brings people out onto the lake.

3. *Do you think the residency added anything to the community or your business?*

We didn't notice much being talked about the event but it was still something positive. Neddy's cottage hasn't been in use for a long time and people were happy something was taking place. The Dromineer Literary Festival has been running for many years now and this year there was a real difference. People got involved and talked about it, there was a buzz around the place. We also had an event in the pub by "The Divas" which was well received.

4. *Do you have any suggestions or thoughts going forward?*

It would be great to see the cottage being used more. For example children's art workshops during the summer, say 3 Saturdays in a row for 1 hour. It is a lovely building with a real local history. It is a pity it is not being used more. We were in discussion with Melanie Scott in the past of opening up a shop or a tearoom but Declan has that set up in Lough Derg House now. There is a real need for a shop but Neddy's Cottage is probably not the most appropriate location in terms of food safety. Being a tourist area there are many visitors curious to learn more about the region. The cottage could be well suited as an unmanned visitors centre where you could learn more about local wildlife and attractions. For example many are curious to learn more of what kind of fishing takes place on the lake.

Eleanor Hooker, Dromineer Litterary Festival & Lough Derg Lifeboat.

1. *What are your thoughts on using the cottage for artist residencies?*

The feedback I have heard is that people really enjoyed the interaction. That time and attention had been given to anyone visiting the cottage. It was appreciated that they had been listened to.

2. *What time of the year do you think it would be best to have something happening in the cottage?*

The best time for an artist residency would be during the summer time. I am not sure if the artist residency would link in with the Dromineer Litterary Festival, I would need to discuss that with the board. It would be wonderful to use the space in various ways reflecting the seasons. In wintertime the cottage could be made cosy and heated up with a fire to facilitate story telling events

and in the summertime open up the doors and make use of the outdoor space for art or other interactions. Making it a seasonal indoor/outdoor space.

3. *Do you have any suggestions or thoughts going forward?*

There are many older people in the area with great stories that will get lost unless someone records them. For example Mrs McGrath who worked in the kitchens of all the big houses in the area. She is an astute observer and is wonderful in expressing this in a nuanced way. Everyone has stories to tell but they are not recorded. Local people wouldn't consider themselves storytellers but they know stories. I am sure they could be convinced to take part and share. Maybe the local radio station or RTE would be interested to take part? Someone who is used to documenting will be able to learn more from this gathering as mannerisms of the story comes through unwittingly. This could take place in the winter for a limited time to keep the momentum. There would need to be more coverage in wintertime to draw people in. There is the historical society in Neenagh who have popular meetings, maybe they could be involved? There is a great intellectual hub in the area, which could be tapped into for example specialist in Malaria research etc.

Another idea is to have traditional music jamming sessions in the cottage. A local woman recently had one organised in her home, as it was her dying wish. People naturally sang songs and played music. This was a magical experience. This year was the first time the Literary Festival had a poetry event in the Pub, moving it away from the Yacht club. First people were hesitant about it but it turned into a great success. I am sure that village people would be interested to get involved and take ownership of events taking place in the cottage.

We had workshops in Neddy's Cottage linked with the Dromineer Literary Festival once. The space was very cold and the plastic chairs were uninviting and uncomfortable. A fire in the main room and more suitable furniture would make a big difference.

7.4 Sharon Lynch Biography

Lynch is a Galway based Professional Artist working in both studio and community based contexts. She completed a B.A. in Fine Art Sculpture at the Limerick School of Art and subsequently went on to complete a H. Dip. in Community Arts Education at The National College of Art & Design, Dublin. Sharon has worked extensively on arts and educational projects with Macnas, Galway Arts Centre, Baboro and V.A.I, as well as exhibiting in Tulca Arts Festival, Galway Arts Festival, Claremorris Open Exhibition and Temple Bar Galleries, Dublin.

7.5 Veronica Forsgren Biography

Forsgren is a Swedish born artist and curator based in Dublin. She has a joint

B.A. in Fine Art Sculpture & Art History from the National College of Art & Design, Dublin and recently completed a M.A. in Visual Arts Practices (MAVIS) from the Institute of Art, Design & Technology, Dun Laoghaire. Veronica is currently working as a freelance curator for both the Children's Gallery and the McKenna Gallery at the Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbridge Co. Kildare. She has exhibited nationally and internationally, notably taking part in the Art@Work (residency organised by Roscommon County Council Arts Office), Preponderance of The Small (The Douglas Hyde Gallery) and Apocalypse When? (Dublin Fringe Festival).