

Eleven of Ireland's Museums recognised for high standards under Heritage Council's Museum Standards Programme for Ireland

Irish Museums among best in world

Wednesday 26th June 2013: Eleven of Ireland's museums were today recognised for high standards in the management of the museum, care of collections and visitor services by the Heritage Council under the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland.

The Lewis Glucksman Gallery, Cavan County Museum, Drogheda Museum Millmount, Kerry County Museum and South Tipperary County Museum were all awarded full accreditation; while Trinity College Zoological Museum, Allihies Copper Mine Museum in the Beara Peninsula, Athy Heritage Centre Museum, and Donaghmore Workhouse and Agricultural Museum were awarded interim accreditation; and Knock Museum and the National Print Museum were awarded maintenance of full accreditation.

These museums will now join 43 other museums nationwide that have been recognised for high standards under the Programme. The Museum Standards Programme, the first of its kind in Ireland is an important initiative which sets out to improve all aspects of Ireland's museum practice and in particular raise the standards of care for collections across Irish museums and galleries. A voluntary programme, it has attracted involvement from across the cultural spectrum from national institutions to small, volunteer led organisations. To date of the 54 participants in the programme, 20 museums have achieved full accreditation and 10 have been awarded interim accreditation.

The Heritage Council's continued commitment to care of collections is demonstrated through its support of the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland. Speaking about the Programme, **Michael Starrett, Heritage Council Chief Executive** said, *"With a renewed focus on tourism and the economic potential it offers, there is increased pressure to ensure the cultural experience we are offering visitors is of high quality. Ireland's museum sector has met this challenge to provide world class standards in the management of the museum, care of collections and visitor services, despite a continued cut in funding. Accreditation under this Programme offers quality assurance to visitors that the museums they are visiting are adhering to a high set of standards. It is fantastic to see eleven museums being recognised here today for the high standards they have achieved. It is now crucial that the museum sector, which has worked hard to ensure what they are offering is of high standard is promoted and supported as a key tourism attraction"*.

The Museum Standards Programme for Ireland (MSPI) aims to benchmark and raise professional minimum standards in the museum sector. Within the Programme, there are seven categories consisting of 34 standards, 25 of which are interim standards and nine are full. A voluntary programme, it has attracted involvement from across the cultural spectrum — from national institutions to small, volunteer-led organisations.

An application for interim accreditation takes three years to complete, while full accreditation takes five years. When first launched in 2006 the Programme had 12 participants, today there are 54 museums participating.

"The Council is delighted to award full, interim and maintenance accreditation to these museums today. Each of these museums has been working towards this award for a number of years. This achievement reflects their hard work and continued dedication to the Programme", commented Mr. Starrett.

Judges Comments**Full Accreditation 2013*****South Tipperary County Museum, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary***

South Tipperary County was recommended for Full Accreditation by assessors because it is an exceptionally

innovative, active and outgoing institution with excellent modern permanent display galleries and an ambitious

and high-achieving educational programme. The Museum also operates an excellent conservation programme. The

Museum is well regarded in its county and region and is noteworthy for its co-operative strategy with other arts

and heritage groups or local authority officers.