

BIRR WRITERS' RESIDENCY

OPEN CALL



Applications are now being sought for the 2025 Birr Writers' Residency.

This residency offers professional writers' accommodation and workspaces for five nights, at Brendan House in the centre of Birr, County Offaly. This Georgian Heritage Town in the midlands of Ireland has a remarkable history and is embedded in a community with a thriving arts culture.

The purpose of the residency is to provide an opportunity for artists to focus on a writing project (current or new) in a tranquil environment which supports and values high professional artistic development. It is open to professional writers of any genre, e.g. literary fiction, poetry, playwrights, journalism or travel writing.

Deadline: Monday 19th May, 5pm

THE LOCATION: BRENDAN HOUSE, BIRR



Brendan House is a period home and occasional guest house, located in the heart of the heritage town of Birr.

Offaly Arts Office have funded this residency award since 2014. In 2025 the Arts Office in collaboration with Brendan House, offers up to two writers, bed and breakfast accommodation for 6 days and 5 nights in one of the period rooms of the guest area. This also includes two evening suppers, at the beginning and finish of the residencies. WiFi internet connection is available throughout the house. Writers can work in their rooms (a small writing desk is available) or may prefer to work in the drawing room, or the adjoining artist studio, (when free). The local library is also a very short walk away.

Writers should be aware that being a period residence, accommodation, facilities and decor are in keeping with the historic nature of the building.

To ensure that the nature of this exquisite but old-world experience is fitting your access needs, please read about the accommodation here:

[BRENDAN HOUSE](#)

(Also see additional images below)

THE FACILITIES

- A single or a double bedroom with a small writing desk/table.
- Access to the drawing room with armchairs, fireplace and a selection of books, art and antiques.
- Bathroom (not en-suite; for the sole use of the resident writers).
- Access to the Tin Jug artists' studio (when available), if additional work/writing space is needed.
- Fresh breakfast every morning.
- Two evening suppers at the beginning and at the end of the residency.
- Wi-Fi.
- Central location close to Birr town cafés and restaurants, arts amenities, the library and shops, and Birr Castle Demesne

AVAILABLE DATES

Selected Writers can avail of one of the following options, subject to availability.

JULY
12/13 - 17/18

OR

JULY
20/21 - 25/26

OR

OCTOBER
12 - 17

OR

OCTOBER
19 - 24

TO APPLY

Closing Date: Monday 19th May, 5pm

Please complete the online application form together with:

- A copy of your full CV
- A maximum of 3 examples of published works

Link to the online application: <https://submit.link/3sH>

This may require establishing an account. Please allow ample time to upload application.

For further information or support please contact Offaly Arts Office at arts@offalycoco.ie or 05793 57400.

Deadline: Monday 19th May, 5pm

SELECTION PROCESS & CRITERIA

An independent selection panel will meet to assess the applications and make recommendations for the award.

Selection Criteria

The selection process will be made based upon the following criteria:

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| • Impact / benefit of the residency
(i.e. professional development for the applicant) | 40% |
| • Quality of the proposal/ ambition and innovation | 25% |
| • Experience / track record of the applicant
(i.e. professional development for the applicant) | 20% |
| • Impact of the award to County Offaly (demonstrate any benefits
your time spent on the residency will have for Offaly) | 15% |

Birr Writers Residency is supported by Offaly County Council Arts Office

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND IMAGES

BIRR



The picturesque heritage town of Birr, developed around the Birr Monastery, founded by Saint Brendan, The Elder who was one of the Twelve Apostles of Ireland, and later spread around Birr Castle estate of the Parsons family, the Earls of Rosse. With its handsome ensemble of Georgian architecture, there's a lot to like about Birr. The tree-lined malls and avenues of elegant houses dating from the 1800s tell a fascinating story. Heaving with

history, Birr is one of Ireland's premier heritage towns and proud of its unique character spanning many centuries.

Its most famous landmark, Birr Castle Demense, has been the seat of the Parsons family - the Earls of Rosse - for fourteen generations. Today the Castle Gardens & Science Centre attracts tourists throughout the year, captivated by the stunning formal gardens, the Great Telescope and the grandeur of the castle itself. The town is also home to the renowned Birr Theatre - an essential regional stop-off for all major drama, dance, opera and comedy performances doing the national circuit. A

great way to explore the town is to take either the Birr Fan Trail or Riverbank Walk, with both routes starting from Emmet Square and covering a distance of just over 1km each. Another option to explore the town is ['A Town Reads Mitchell' trail](#) (poems from The Living Chalice). This is a Creative Ireland and Anam Beo Community Arts Project, a celebratory



experience derived from the Famous and Notables of Birr Trail created previously by local artists Jackie Lynch and Rosalind Fanning as a tourism initiative for the town.

RESIDENCY ACCOMMODATION: BRENDAN HOUSE

A place of joy for creative spirits and full of unexpected marvels, Brendan House is a listed building that spans history and culture in one generous human brushstroke - poets, artists, musicians flock."



Drawing Room



Four-Poster Bedroom (double bed)



Red Room (single bed)



Grey Room (single bed)



Guest Bathroom



Brendan House (front door)