



**Sherkin Island Development Society Ltd**

*Sherkin Island, Skibbereen, Co Cork. Tel: 028 20802  
Email: [sidssecretary@gmail.com](mailto:sidssecretary@gmail.com) All mail: c/o SIDS Secretary*

**Third Level Education on Sherkin Island Joint Committee on Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht**

**13<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

Sherkin Island is known as the “The Island of the Arts”. The BAVA programme is a Community based Bachelor in Arts in Visual Arts. It is a key driver in this economy that the Island has created. This community has taken some of their main issues with regard to population decline and created a programme that brings people on to the island. There are currently 5 people living permanently on the island as a result of the programme

In a time when traditional island incomes such as farming and fishing are under threat. It has also created skilled jobs for the community 3 roles divided between four people.

This programme needs an annual input of €60,000 each year to deliver this BA. For €60,000 worth of investment, funders receive a programme valued at approximately €415,000. It is estimated that the Island of the Arts generates economic spin off to the value €150,000.

**A sustainable long-term funding solution.**

The Bachelor of Arts in Visual Arts is a full time four-year degree programme accredited by Dublin Institute of Technology. It is run in partnership between Sherkin Island Development Society, the West Cork Arts Centre and Dublin Institute of Technology. Students attend classes on site for four years every alternative weekend. It provides third level education to rural Ireland and non-traditional students. The programme relies on local supports and remote learning to deliver the course. The BAVA was established by SIDS, DIT and WCAC in 2007, following a very successful pilot programme from 2000 – 2006. As the community partner SIDS are responsible for the accommodation and facility and the direct employment of an Arts facilitator, IT Facilitator and Administrator.

From 2012 – 2016 the Programme has been co funded by the Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Cork County Council. In May 2016 the co funded agreement was altered so the Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht would contribute 60% and Cork County Council would contribute 40%. This was with a view to three year multi-annually funding.

The programme costs are broken down as follows approximately €45,000 for wages and employers prsi; €15,000 for administration, utilities, maintenance, insurance, professional fees (audit), rent and materials. It is evident that this programme provides value for money.



## Sherkin Island Development Society Ltd

Across the country, government departments and local authorities are seeking measures to tackle depopulation of island communities and to put in place initiatives for development and sustainability.

Sherkin Island already has an existing programme that:

- is an innovative, tried and tested, solution to island needs
- provides employment - 1 fulltime and 3 part-time jobs for islanders
- retains population - allows 4 families to remain on the island
- expands population - 5% of the full-time residents are living on Sherkin directly because of the BAVA
- brings inward investment to the island - €311,000 from DIT, €40,000 from DCHG and €20,000 from CCC - total €371,000 per year
- contributes to social and cultural life of the island
- contributes to the economy of the island - transport, accommodation, catering - BAVA as part of the Island of the Arts generates c. €150,000 for Sherkin per annum
- contributes to a sustainable tourism product
- drives the reputation of the island as a centre of culture and the arts
- provides a service that is needed and for which there is demand into the future

Sherkin Island are seeking a long term sustainable plan for this programme.

### Students

As of the last graduation in 2017 there are 68 graduates of the programme with another cohort due to graduate in 2018. Graduates have continued on to further education receiving PHD, MSC, MA and H.Dip qualifications.

Other graduates have gone on to a variety of employment Island Cottage Gallery, Arts Facilitator WCAC, Youth and School Co-coordinator WCAC, IT Lecturer, HSE Arts for Health Programme Facilitator, ETB Tutors, Self-employed Artists, and Art Gallery Management.

### The Benefits of running the BA in Visual Art on Sherkin Island

To Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht  
*Ensuring sustainable vibrant communities continue to settle on the islands.*

- Supporting employment in rural communities
- Aids in retaining a strong population level
- Instil pride of place on the islands
- Development of island technological infrastructure
- Increase demand for ferry service
- Creating an island as a centre of excellence



**Sherkin Island Development Society Ltd**

To Cork County Council

*Driving Development on the West Cork Islands through the Integrated Development Strategy*

- Further develop the arts as an economy on the islands
- Support diversification and innovative measures to add value to island life
- Encourage co-operation between relevant agencies
- Promotes the development of community organisations
- Provide islanders with access to third level education
- Engage with the arts community to develop a vibrant agenda for the art, creativity and culture on the West Cork Islands.

To the Participants on the Course

*Making education possibilities real: Living, working, and accessing higher education qualifications locally*

- Acquisition of validated higher education qualifications
- Development of independent learning skills
- Increased involvement in communities
- Diversification of means of livelihood
- Development of technological expertise in the locality

To the Locality and the Community in Sherkin Island:

*Learning that is connected to community sustainability and identified local skills: Working towards building sustainable and live communities*

- As a source of income, concentrated in the winter off-season months
- Supporting year-round residency and sustainable communities
- Contributing to the developing and maintaining of communications technology in the locality
- Contribution to social bonding and community building
- Raising community self esteem

To DIT

*Leading the way in education: innovation in access, pedagogy and teaching technology*

- Development of relationships and partnership in education
- Re-defining the Student for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Contribution to quality and sustainable life-long learning
- Development and reflection on innovative learning methodologies
- Enriched professional competencies
- Grounded and innovative use of communications technologies
- Pioneers in distance learning methods



**Sherkin Island Development Society Ltd**

To the Higher Education Sector:

*Irish Higher Education as a leader in innovation and practice*

- Development of lifelong learning policy and practice
- Development and practice-based innovation in learning methodologies
- Development and practice-based innovations in assessment methods
- Development of independent learning policy and practice
- As a Model for community partnership
- Contribution to Lifelong Learning in practice

To the West Cork Arts Centre

*Creating opportunities for the people of West Cork to have access to, and engage with, local and global arts practice of excellence.*

- Provide a continuous flow of highly skilled artists in the locality
- Create a network for accessing artist based in rural areas
- Cultivate artist learning opportunities
- Development of successful partnerships with agencies
- Foster community links

This programme has brought many notable events to the Island and raised Sherkin Islands profile on a local, national and international Scale. In 2010 President Mary MacAlesse was guest of honour at the graduation. This year we have Dr. Mike Birchall, Director of Public Programmes at Tate Liverpool visited on 9<sup>th</sup> March and Ireland's representative at the Venice Biennial, artist Jesse Jones visiting on 23rd March.

SIDS would like to sincerely thank all our partners for their support to date. SIDS have outlined the huge benefits of this programme to the partners, students and islanders and are looking for a sustainable long-term plan to secure it for the foreseeable future