Biosphere Artist in Residence 2026/2027

Call for Proposals

1. Overview

Manx Wildlife Trust is delighted to be hosting our fifth Biosphere Artist in Residence.

Together with UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man, funded by Isle of Man Arts Council MWT invites proposals for a year-long funded artist residency. The residency will connect new audiences with Manx nature, through the medium of Art. The aim being to enable more people of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy our culture and the arts, as well as inspiring them to act for Manx nature. The funding will support one artist or art collective to develop their community-focussed and socially- engaged practice in the Island over the course of a year, with opportunities to deliver physical and/or digital interventions across the Island.

2. Background

Biospheres connect people to the world around them, prompting awareness, care, and action. This has never been more important. As the world's first whole-nation Biosphere, we recognise that the Three Legs of Biosphere – Community, Environment, and Economy – are interconnected and interdependent. We strive to help people connect more deeply with, care for, and appreciate the value of our nature, culture, heritage, and community life. Our membership of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme affords us the chance to collaborate with, and learn from, other Biospheres worldwide, and they to learn from us, as we all seek sustainable solutions.

The Isle of Man Arts Council works to deliver its vision of arts, culture, and creativity for everyone in the Island. This residency invests in the creative community, develops the knowledge, skills, and creative practice of the Manx artists, and champions the arts as fundamental to our wellbeing and sense of place.

Manx Wildlife Trust supports these ambitions and knows that a society where nature matters is key to our wellbeing. We believe in developing creative partnerships to get people outdoors experiencing and enjoying Manx landscapes and seascapes. This residency brings people closer to nature at our sites, reaches local communities including those who don't normally engage with MWT, and offers opportunities across the Island to take part in creative and cultural activities that improve our Island understanding of nature, our Biosphere, wellbeing, and quality of life.

3. Brief

The Isle of Man enjoys a reputation as an Island that cares and has a conscience for the unique culture, heritage, and community of its past and present. Few other places can identify such a clear and intimate connection between its society, environment, and economy. The landscape and seascape of the Island is an inspiration to its creative communities and treasured by residents and visitors alike.

The *Biosphere Artist in Residence* programme brings together the vision of a sustainable future for Ellan Vannin by bringing people closer to nature and promoting our unique Manx culture and distinctiveness as central to the Island's image nationally and internationally.

We welcome proposals from artists and creatives working in any discipline who can demonstrate innovative, adventurous, and creative ways to connect people with both our living landscapes and our living language. Projects should be rooted in community engagement and inspire pride, understanding, and action for our Island's natural world

4. Deliverables

Artistic and creative outputs may take a range of formats, media, and themes. This brief does not intend to exclude any approach. However, the Residency should:

- Develop understanding and build relationships with Manx Wildlife Trust, Biosphere Isle of Man and Isle of Man Arts council, their aims, visions and objectives. This process has often been one of the more significant parts of the residency and reaching its goals.

- Develop innovative and accessible ways to connect people with Manx nature and the Isle of Man as a UNESCO Biosphere, reaching new audiences, particularly those who do not usually engage with the natural world. Use creative experiences to deepen understanding, foster care

  Minimum expected outputs:

- Five public events, education opportunities, activities, or live/digital artistic interventions across the Island, with varied audiences, including:
  - At least one at an MWT site.
  - At least two **not** at MWT sites (including possible Douglas-based events), aimed at reaching those who do not usually engage with MWT.
  - One flagship artistic intervention that becomes a focal point around which public interest and media coverage can be generated.

- Exploration and development of creative practice to expand knowledge and skills, and/or explore new horizons through innovation, media, and technology.

- A reflection by the artist or art collective towards the end as part of the legacy of the residency. The format of this is not fixed and should be outlined in the proposal.

- Digital engagement including a dedicated webpage, social media presence, and regular blog posts. Writing press releases and doing press interviews. The successful applicant will be supported in this, and these processes can be constructive and productive in an artist's career.

- Participate to some degree in the life of and engagement with the team and the work of Manx Wildlife Trust. Past artists in residence have found this access into the knowledge and culture of nature conservation and Biosphere Isle of Man one of the most rewarding aspects of the residency, but it also occupies time in the life of the Residency year.

5. Funding and Support

Funding is ring-fenced in this residency to support the artist or art collective to develop their practice during the year. This is a fixed amount to cover a minimum of 25 days to complete the outputs agreed in the proposal, and in-kind contributions from Manx Wildlife Trust to provide office space, support from MWT staff including past Biosphere Artist in Residence, and use of equipment at their Headquarters in Peel.

We invite proposals that respond creatively to these objectives and demonstrate an ambition to achieve these through the residency.

The aim is to invest in the Island's creative community for success and sustainability; help develop knowledge, skills and understanding within our creative and cultural industries; and inspire and enable people to explore new horizons through innovation, media, and technology.

Specialist support will be provided, and funds are ring-fenced to facilitate this. Part of this support will be in evaluating the impact of the residency, which will involve the awardee both delivering and participating in evaluation. The Artist in Residence may apply for further funding for specific projects from the Isle of Man Arts Council or other sources including corporate sponsorship. Support for this will be provided for this via the MWT Engagement Team.

The total budget for this residency is £12,000 and includes the following core components:

Budget Line	**No. of Items**	**Rate**	**Total**	**Notes**
Artist Stipend	25	£240	£6,000	This equates to five weeks of work across the year.
Materials Budget	1	£4,000	£4,000	For equipment, materials, training and event costs.
In-kind contributions from MWT	1	Value: £2,000	Value: £2,000	Hosting costs for the residency including office space, phone and computer equipment, email hosting, social media support, Biosphere expertise.
		TOTAL	£12,000	

This table is provided for the information of potential applicants to understand how they will be supported throughout the residency.

6. Time frame and Eligibility

Work cannot begin before **15 January 2027** and all work, outputs, and events must be completed by **15 January 2028**. Proposals including activity outside of this timeframe will not be eligible and no funds will be awarded retrospectively for work already completed. The panel will review the proposed timeframes for delivery in submissions to assess for feasibility.

You must be an Isle of Man resident, or your organisation must be registered in the Isle of Man (as a charity, limited company, or other relevant registration) to be eligible to apply for this funding. We will confirm this as part of our due diligence process before announcing the awarding of any funds.

7. Application Process

We welcome applications in written, sound, or moving-image format. For fairness, the following restrictions on length of applications apply:

- No more than 3 sides of A4 submitted electronically as one document (hard copy applications will not be accepted). Still-image submissions must conform to this limit.
- No more than 3 minutes of audio or audio-visual content submitted electronically as a single file in MP3 or MP4 format, accompanied by no more than 1 side of A4 which addresses the budget and time frame requirements.

Your application should include and demonstrate the following:

- Your artistic response to the brief, addressing the deliverables in section 4.
- Your understanding of the Manx Wildlife Trust, Biosphere and Isle of Man Arts Council objectives in relation to section 3 (Brief).
- Your outline plans for community engagement and/or participatory work as required in section 4 (Deliverables).
- Proposed time frame for delivery of activities and outputs.
- Evidence of your portfolio (this may include a URL link to further examples of your work).

Applications can be submitted to: **carmel@mwt.im**

The deadline for application is Wednesday 9th of December 2026. For those chosen to present, the interviews will take place at St Johns Mill on **Tuesday the 15th of December, 2026**. The assessing panel will consist of representatives from Manx Wildlife Trust, Biosphere Isle of Man, and Isle of Man Arts Council. The assessing panel may request reasonable amendments to the successful proposal prior to awarding funds and reserves the right not to make an award should no suitable proposals be forthcoming.

8. Key Contact

For an informal conversation or for queries about the brief, contact:

Dr Carmel Croukamp, Head of Engagement, Manx Wildlife Trust
carmel@mwt.im

9. Resources and links

UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man
https://www.biosphere.im/

Manx Wildlife Trust Biosphere Artist in Residence
https://www.mwt.im/biosphere-artist-residence

Isle of Man Arts Council
https://www.iomarts.com