

# Join us in following the Citizens' Jury on the Future of Carlingford Lough

We are excited to invite you to engage with the Citizens' Jury that is about to take place on the future of Carlingford Lough.

This Saturday 7th February, the Citizens' Jury will bring together a representative group of people from communities on both sides of the Lough, selected through a democratic lottery. Over the course of February, this group of 14 jurors will explore the long-term environmental, social, and economic future of the Lough. They will hear from a range of expert witnesses, including scientists, advocates, and local voices, and will work together to produce a set of carefully considered recommendations.

The aim of the Jury is to create a space where citizens can thoughtfully consider complex, shared challenges and express what they believe should matter in decisions affecting Carlingford Lough.

There are a two main ways you can engage with the process:

1. **Observe the proceedings:** You are welcome to watch part of the Jury in action. Please fill out this [form](#) to let us know when you would like to attend.
2. **Send a message to the Jury:** You can share a note of encouragement or reflection for the jurors' consideration using this [link](#), or email us directly if you prefer.

Our goal is to make the Jury's work visible and accessible, and to show the community that citizens' voices are being taken seriously. We hope you will take the opportunity to engage with this unique process and see how ordinary people come together to address issues that affect us all.

Further details about the project, including FAQs, dates, locations, and guidance on observing proceedings, are provided below.

Thank you for your interest and support.

## FAQ

### **What is a Citizens' Jury?**

A citizens' jury is an established democratic process used all over the world. It is a group of people selected by civic lottery, who broadly represent the make-up of the lough shorecommunities. The people who take part will learn about the issues and discuss them with one another. They will then make recommendations about what should happen and how things should change.

### **Why Carlingford Lough?**

The Citizens' Jury has emerged from the Shifting Tides project, which brought together cross-border coastal communities around Carlingford Lough through ecology, culture and community participation and the Jury is being funded as an extension to the Shifting Tides project.

Shifting Tides is a recipient of the Creative Climate Action fund, an initiative from the Creative Ireland Programme. It is funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in collaboration with the Department of the Taoiseach. The fund supports creative, cultural and artistic projects that build awareness around climate change and empower citizens to make meaningful behavioural transformations.

### **Who is organising the Jury?**

The Jury is convened by The Wheel and NICVA as part of their Shifting Tides programme (see above). It is organised and facilitated by Involve, a leading public participation specialist. It is funded by Creative Ireland.

Funders and organisers do not direct the Jury's conclusions.

### **Is this connected to any political party or campaign?**

No. The Jury is completely independent of any political party, campaign group, or special interest. It is non-partisan and impartial, designed solely to hear from ordinary citizens and produce recommendations based on informed discussion. It does not advocate for, or promote, any predetermined outcome.

### **What does it mean to observe the Jury?**

The Citizens' Jury will be open to observers during the second and third sessions.

An observer at a Citizens' Jury is someone who attends the process to watch and learn, without taking part in the deliberations or influencing the jury's discussions.

Observers may include public officials, elected representatives, community organisations, funders, or others with an interest in the issue or in deliberative democracy more broadly.

We offer observer places for two main reasons: learning and transparency.

- Observation allows others to see first-hand how a Citizens' Jury works in practice, including how evidence is presented, how facilitation supports fair and inclusive discussion, and how jurors work towards considered recommendations.
- At the same time, opening the process to observers helps build trust and legitimacy by making the jury's design and conduct visible, demonstrating that the process is independent, robust, and genuinely citizen-led.

People interested in observing will be able to register in advance.

### **What time commitment is expected of jurors and observers?**

Jurors are committing three days to taking part in the process, as well as a little time to prepare for the meetings.

Observers can decide how much time to spend observing sessions, from an hour to a full day.

### **How can I find out the conclusions of the jury?**

We will publish a detailed report on or before April 2026. This will be made available on our website - [involve.org.uk](https://involve.org.uk) - and the websites of our partners. To receive an email directly with the report, please add your details to [this form](#).

### **Where and when does it take place?**

The jury will meet on three Saturdays in February - the 7th, 21st, and 28th. Meetings take place in Rostrevor and Carlingford (exact venue details can be found in the [observer form](#)).