

NORTH CLARE CHORAL AND CULTURAL FEST 2008

MEDIA RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL CHORAL AND CULTURAL FESTIVAL ANNOUNCED FOR NORTH CLARE

- Members of the local community urged to get involved in inaugural Fest

County Clare, IRELAND, Tuesday 12th February 2007 – Details of an international choral and cultural festival for County Clare have been announced. The organisers of the inaugural **North Clare Choral and Cultural Fest** are planning to hold a wide-ranging programme events in various locations around the region on June 19th-22nd 2008.

The Festival will represent a celebration of culture encompassing music, sport, dance, food, crafts and literature, with a specific emphasis on choral music. Meanwhile, members of the local community have been invited to attend an open meeting on the proposed Fest at the Falls Hotel and Spa Resort in Ennistymon at 6.30pm on Tuesday 27th February 2007.

Mayor of Clare, Cllr. Flan Garvey said, *“I am confident that the Fest will be a success due to the diversity of the Programme content. It will offer the visitor a real insight into Irish culture while offering a strong choral component with a ‘something for everyone’ ethos. The Fest will also provide members of the local community and business sector with the opportunity to showcase the North Clare Region and what it has to offer the overseas visitor. It is anticipated that the event will become a leading event on the Irish festival calendar”*

It has been proposed that the four-day Festival, which is being backed by incoming tour operator Custom Ireland, will feature a comprehensive programme of events including choral performances, music workshops and sessions, poetry readings, literary sessions as well as cookery, craft and arts workshops. There will also be a strong emphasis on community participation in such events as a market fair day, guided Burren walks, sporting exhibitions and family treasure hunts.

“The Fest is not just an event for north Clare – it is a festival for the entire county and mid-west region. Through discussion with Custom Ireland and other interested parties, I believe that this high quality event has the potential to draw high numbers of visitors to County Clare”, Mayor Garvey added.

Commenting on the participation of choirs in the Festival, Fiona O'Sullivan of Custom Ireland said, *"The festival will strive to ensure that choral music, representative of many historical and cultural traditions, is brought to the people of north Clare and the many visitors who will travel to the region for the event. Participating choirs will have an opportunity to perform non-competitively in a range of Festival activities presented over the weekend including concerts, church and informal performances."*

Festival organisers say they are hopeful of building on existing links between the county and international choirs. In addition, Custom Ireland will undertake an intensive sales and marketing drive ensuring that the required numbers of choral singers attend the Fest.

"Clare has, in recent years, hosted a number of high profile international choirs. The Bel Canto Chorus of Milwaukee - a community-based choral arts organisation from the State of Wisconsin - played a series of successful concerts in County Clare in 2006. It's expected that the participation of similar internationally acclaimed choirs will be confirmed over the coming months", Ms. O'Sullivan added.

Ms. O'Sullivan indicated that the overall success of the Fest would be largely dependent on the participation of members of local community and other interested parties. She continued, *"The people of Clare, known for their warm welcome and strong community spirit, will play an integral part in the Fest from volunteering to Programme content contribution and audience attendance at choral performances. A committee will shortly be established at a local level to take responsibility for the organisation and execution of the Fest."*

Anyone interested in finding out more about or participating in the **North Clare Choral and Cultural Fest 08** is invited to attend an open meeting at the Falls Hotel and Spa Resort in Ennistymon at 6.30pm on Tuesday 27th February 2007.