

# Online Events Guide

The **Bealtaine Festival** is a hybrid festival that accepts both online and in-person events. We would love for you to join us by delivering your own event as part of the programme, and hope that this guide to planning online events helps if you're interested in enjoying Bealtaine remotely.

There have been many successful online projects and events since the beginning of the pandemic, from online choirs to dance classes and visual art workshops. All of this relies on the participants having access to a reliable internet connection and the skills to engage through the chosen platform. We advise building in time and support with this for any online project.

Age & Opportunity is always committed to providing an enjoyable and safe Bealtaine experience for everyone who attends our events. This is also true in relation to our national festival partners. This year, we encourage everyone attending Bealtaine festival events to liaise with event organisers in relation to their safety and security in light of government guidelines and restrictions around Covid -19.

## Planning the event

1. Don't just transfer your event directly online if it was planned to happen in person – adapt and change to suit a digital presentation. This may involve cutting down on activities, changing the amount of people involved, or simplifying the delivery.
2. Be clear on what you are trying to achieve with this event and what platform would be best suited to deliver it: Zoom, pre-recorded video, YouTube livestream, crowdcast.io, Facebook live, Instagram live, Twitch. Do some research and try things out!

3. Take into consideration the amount of people who could attend and still get the most of it – is it a participatory event like a workshop, or are people free to sit back and enjoy the show? Have capacity restrictions in place if you need to keep the attendee list small.
4. When you have decided on your platform, make sure everyone involved knows how to use it and prepare for any troubleshooting you may need to do on the day. It often works best if the facilitator/presenter and technical support roles are separated.

### Technical issues

1. How will everyone involved contact each other if things go wrong? It can help to have a WhatsApp group or easily accessible email chain to contact everyone quickly if something goes wrong.
2. How will you distribute the link? A public event can be shared on your social media platforms for anyone to click and enter, but consider platforms like Eventbrite to sell tickets if you need to control numbers.
3. If you're using a platform like Zoom or Google Meet it might be safer to set a password for your meeting room that is only distributed to people who book through a system such as Eventbrite to avoid anyone disrupting the event.
4. Consider accessibility and ways to make your event accessible such as live captioning, subtitles, and ISL interpreting. Check out [Arts & Disability Ireland](#) for more information and support on this. If this presents a budget issue, consider surveying people where they buy tickets to see if these resources will be needed.
5. Make sure that the audio and visual is high quality and that everyone sharing audio or visual as part of the event has a good internet connection.

## Before the event

1. Make sure to rehearse the event beforehand if it's due to happen live. Go through the running order, any screen sharing or presentations due to happen, and give everyone a chance to practice if needed.
2. Make sure to do some housekeeping at the start of the event to clarify how it's going to work, including any tech issues that may arrive, making sure attendees keep video/audio off (this can also be controlled by the 'host' on most platforms), how to use chat or Q&A functions, how to access tech support during the event.
3. If things go wrong, have a back-up plan in place – if a presenter suddenly gets cut off maybe take a quick break and encourage everyone to stretch their legs while you figure it out or move onto the next speaker, giving time to come back at the end of the session.
4. Allow people to enter the event space (or equivalent of a waiting room if it's available) to ensure that the event can start on time without waiting for people to arrive – just like an in person event!

## During the event

1. If the event is due to go on for longer than an hour make sure to schedule a 10/15 minute screen break. This can be useful before a Q&A session is due to happen or in between speakers so people can get up, stretch, relax their eyes, and grab a snack or something to drink.
2. A great way to break the ice is to have people share their name and where they're tuning in from via a chat function. If your event requires questions for a Q&A session, send a few reminders through chat or mention it when you can.
3. You can encourage people to share their thoughts on Twitter using a dedicated hashtag for the event (and #Bealtaine)! Take some

screenshots during the event to share afterwards on your own social media.

## Dawn Chorus

Record a virtual Dawn Chorus with your choir! Resources such as the LDC in your locality may be able to assist with upskilling in technology. [Sing Ireland](#) also have helpful guides and resources for rehearsing and recording online.

Check out the Bealtaine at Home 2020 [Dusk Chorus](#)

## Event Ideas

For more inspiration, check out some of the events that ran as part of Bealtaine At Home in May and October 2020:

[CoisCéim Broadreach Love Letters dance project](#)

[Virtual Portrait Project with artist Andy Parsons](#)

Other types of events you could consider:

- Interview with an author
- Workshop with an artist
- Panel discussion

## Community Supports

It can be useful to check in with your local Arts Officer, local Age Friendly Programme Manager, Local Development Company (which may be a member of your Age Friendly Alliance), and your local library to find support locally both in terms of moral and in-kind support. They may also be able to help find available hands on technical support.

Age & Opportunity's Arts Programme team is pleased to answer any queries you might have so feel free to contact our Arts Programme Administrator, Eva Griffin, on email: [arts@ageandopportunity.ie](mailto:arts@ageandopportunity.ie)