

# **Minutes of Meeting of Community, Culture and Library Services Strategic Policy Committee held on 17th September, 2021 at 10:00am via Zoom**

## **Present:**

**Councillors:** Cllr Andy Moloney (Deputising Chairman), Cllr Niall Dennehy, Cllr Anne Marie Ryan, Cllr Fiona Bonfield, Cllr Ger Darcy

## **Sectoral Interests:**

**In Attendance:** Damien Dullaghan, County Librarian  
Marie McMahon, Museum Service  
Melanie Scott, Arts Officer  
Eddie Meegan, AO, Community and Economic Development  
Margo Hayes, AO, Community and Economic Development  
Roisin O'Grady, Heritage Officer

**Apologies:** Cllr Micheál Lowry, Cllr Micheál Anglim, Cllr John Crosse, Cllr Siobhan Ambrose, Cllr John Fitzgerald, Brian Beck, Eamon Clancy, Peggy O'Brien, Matt O'Meara, Evelyn Noonan, Patrick Hanley, John Butler

Councillor Andy Moloney opened the Meeting and welcomed those in attendance.

## **Item 1: Minutes from previous meeting, 11th June, 2021**

Proposed: Cllr Niall Dennehy

Seconded: Cllr Fiona Bonfield

## **Item 2: Update on Royal Sites Tentative List application:**

Róisín O'Grady presented an overview of the progress made to date regarding the Royal Sites bid to get onto the tentative list for World Heritage status. She stated that the Royal Sites bid was submitted at the end of June. It was anticipated that the Department would be in a position to announce which applications made the tentative list by October. She also thanked the SPC members for their support throughout the process. Cllr Moloney wished Róisín O'Grady well with the bid and stated that he hoped it was successful.

### **Item 3: Update on Library and Museum re-opening**

Damien Dullaghan gave an update on the national position regarding Library opening. He outlined the background relating to Libraries over the past 12 months. He stated that the Library Service had reopened on 10th May for a book lending service. The latest Government advice stated that Libraries will be able to offer further services from 20th September. Limited study spaces will be available and a limited number of internet PCs will also be on offer. The reason for putting in limits was to ensure that social distancing was maintained. There would be a gradual return to services in line with the Government's plan to ease restrictions and it is anticipated that full access to services such as PCs, study spaces and events could be brought back from October 22nd onwards subject to government guidelines. Plans are now in place to relaunch full Library Services and a publicity campaign would be commenced to let the public know that full services had resumed. Damien Dullaghan further stated that Tipperary Libraries continues to offer online services including storytime, arts and crafts and lectures using their online social media platforms. Cllr Ryan enquired about the My Open Library project and the sensory area which were installed in Tipperary Town Library but could not open because of the lockdown. Damien Dullaghan stated that the Open Library system was installed and fully commissioned in Tipperary Town Library. He stated that current guidance indicated that both services would be allowed to commence on 22nd October and that he would inform Elected Members in advance of the launch of these new services.

Marie McMahon gave an update on the Museum's re-opening. She stated that the Museum re-opened at the end of May and that like the Library Service, it was anticipated that a return to full services would commence on 22nd October.

### **Item 4: Update from the Arts Office by Melanie Scott**

Melanie Scott, Arts Officer gave an update on the actions being taken by the Arts Section.

#### **Poetry Town Initiative**

In late July, Poetry Ireland announced Carrick-on-Suir, Co Tipperary, as one of 20 'Poetry Towns' across Ireland. This new initiative will see more than a hundred free poetry-related activities take place in 20 towns across the island of Ireland between 10<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Carrick-on-Suir in Co Tipperary will be among the Poetry Towns, with activities for the town being organised by Poetry Ireland in partnership with Tipperary County Council Arts Office. Tipperary Arts Office has partnered with Linda Fahy of Tudor Artisan Hub and Margaret O'Brien of Writing Changes Lives to coordinate the programme locally. As part of the initiative, Poetry Ireland, together with its local authority partners, have appointed a Poet Laureate for each participating town, with local writer Billy Fenton representing Carrick-on-Suir. The chosen Poet Laureates, will be commissioned to write a

poem honouring their Poetry Town and its people. Each poem will be revealed and presented to the people of the participating towns at a series of flagship online events, one of which will be hosted in each town, which will feature contributions from local poets, artists and musicians.

There will also be a wide variety of additional activities in the Poetry Towns. These will include a series of poetry events involving local poets; poetry workshops; public poetry displays, including 'Poetry Underfoot'; and a range of physical activities called 'Poems that Move You', which will vary from town to town. Local businesses, including cafés and chemists, will also be participating in the activities to celebrate their towns by distributing 'pocket poems' to customers. The full programme for each town is available on the Poetry Town website.

### **Culture Night**

Melanie Scott then gave an overview on Culture Night Tipperary. She stated that it will present a broad range of live and online events throughout Tipperary. Culture Night is seen by the Tipperary Arts Office as an opportunity to support artists in the county and to encourage audiences to connect with their place. The Tipperary Culture Night 2021 programme will present 44 events across the county, 5 of which will be available online. There will be a new approach in Clonmel which sees three organisations come together to plan and present a packed programme of music at a new outdoor venue which will extend the audience experience with the support of additional night time economy funding. There will also be two new radio plays developed in Carrick on Suir inspired by stories generously shared by nursing home residents recorded remotely during lockdown three. A collaboration of artists will present "Found Links" at Derrynaflan which will bring together of traditions in music, print, storytelling and the exploration of our Tipperary landscape through guided walks enhanced by creativity. In total 61 artists and 27 non-artists/curators/technicians are involved in the delivery of Culture Night Tipperary 2021.

### **Local Live Performance Programming Scheme 2021- Round 1**

Melanie Scott gave an update on this scheme. In June 2021, Tipperary Arts Office were notified that their application for funding under the Local Live Performance Programming Scheme was successful with an award of €143,000. As the live performance sector was very adversely affected by the restrictions due to COVID-19, this scheme was established with the aim of supporting local event management companies to host live events outdoors between July – October 2021. Tipperary Arts Office put out an Open Call to event management/professional production companies for the delivery of services in relation to live outdoor performances to take place in the 5 Municipal Districts of Tipperary.

Events will take place across all of the five municipal districts providing employment for musicians, crew and creative's and providing audiences with a safe return to events.

Through this scheme 213 individuals will be employed over 274 days employment over 32 events across the county.

Cllr Moloney welcomed the progress made Local Live Performance Programming Scheme and stated that it was very important to support the performance sector.

**Item 5: Presentation on Migrants Integration Strategy by Margo Hayes, Community**

Margo Hayes gave a presentation on the Migrants Integration Strategy for Co Tipperary and gave a detailed overview of the strategy.

This research for this strategy is based on a mixed methods approach combining a series of interviews and focus groups with over 70 migrants with an online survey completed by 68 migrants. A total of 16 interviews and focus groups were conducted with migrants in Tipperary. Participants included 68 adults and 7 children. The participants were evenly split between men and women. The largest group comprising approximately a third of participants were from Syria. Other significant groups included those from India, Romania, and Belarus. Smaller groups of participants were from Croatia, Poland, Latvia, the Gaza Strip, and Rwanda.

Limited integration appears to be occurring between immigrants and the native Tipperary population. Migrants largely appear to mix within their own cultural groups. Few migrants appeared to have voted or be registered to vote in elections. Migrants reported very positive experiences with the school system and library provision in Tipperary. After-school and homework clubs were seen as particularly positive. Further education options were seen as more limited and potentially prohibitively expensive given materials cost. Health/hospital services were also viewed positively by migrants

Many participants were working, although the non-recognition of foreign skills, experience and qualifications has forced many to retrain, with some others giving up hope of securing employment. Migrants wanted more information on jobs, more language training, more information/ mentoring on starting a business, and how to do job interviews in Ireland.

Although migrants from Eastern Europe felt they had relatively good access to shops selling food that was familiar to them, migrants from the Middle East found this issue much more challenging. Access to a variety of Halal food was particularly challenging, and those in direct provision found the food on offer poor.

Many respondents reported negative housing issues. This varied from houses having increased in price beyond their ability to become homeowners, to issues of over-crowding, poor maintenance, and the need for downstairs bathrooms to cater for household members with serious health conditions.

Finally, the significant impact of COVID-19 on new migrants cannot be under-estimated. Many recent migrants have been left in an extended limbo and have found themselves unable to progress down the usual pathways of integration because of administrative closures. Thus, respondents have been unable to access Public Service Cards, PPS numbers, work permits and provisional driving licences, or the required lessons. COVID-19 has also forced language classes online for adults and with school closures meant children were unable to integrate and improve their language skills at the usual speed

**Date/Time of next meeting:**

Friday 3rd December at 10:00am.

Venue: TBC

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Councillor Andy Moloney,**

**Deputising Chairperson.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2021