

# **Minutes of Meeting of Community, Culture and Library Services Strategic Policy Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March at 10:00am in Tipperary – Cahir - Cashel MD Offices and via Zoom**

## **Present:**

**Councillors:** Cllr Micheál Lowry (a/Chairperson), Cllr Andy Moloney, Cllr Niall Dennehy, Cllr Anne Marie Ryan, Cllr Siobhan Ambrose, Cllr Micheál Anglim

**In Attendance:** Damien Dullaghan, County Librarian  
Melanie Scott, Arts Officer  
Margo Hayes, AO, Community and Economic Development  
Greg MacDonald, Library Service

**Apologies:** Cllr John Crosse, Cllr Ger Darcy, Cllr Fiona Bonfield, Cllr John Fitzgerald, Eamon Clancy, Peggy O'Brien, Matt O'Meara, Patrick Hanley, John Butler, Marie McMahon, Stephane Duclot, Róisín O'Grady, Michelle Lawrence

Councillor Lowry opened the Meeting and welcomed those in attendance.

## **Item 1: Minutes from previous meeting, 02<sup>nd</sup> December, 2022**

Proposed: Cllr Niall Dennehy

Seconded: Cllr Siobhan Ambrose

**Matters arising:** None

## **Item 2: Update on the Heritage Service by Damien Dullaghan**

Damien Dullaghan, deputising for Róisín O'Grady gave an update on the Heritage Service. He stated that the priority for 2023 will be the revision of the Heritage Plan. The SPC was briefed in their December meeting and work on this will commence this month. It is expected to have a draft in place by the end of Q3.

The Heritage Office received confirmation from the Heritage Council in January that Tipperary County Council has been accepted onto the Heritage Councils Biodiversity Officer Scheme. Recruitment for the post will take place very shortly. In advance of the recruitment

of a Biodiversity Officer application will be made to the National Biodiversity Action Plan fund which is now open which will be handed over when they are in post.

Damien Dullaghan informed the members that the Tipperary Culture & Creativity Strategy 2023-2027 was launched in February in Farmleigh House by Minister Catherine Martin and Minister of State Kieran O'Donnell. This strategy will inform the roll out of the programme over the next 5 years. He further stated that Community Grant and Project Award Schemes have been advertised and assessed and letters will issue in the coming week. An open call has also been issued for Cruinniú na nÓg 2023.

Damien Dullaghan stated that Tipperary County Council has been accepted onto the pilot Biodiversity Officer programme which is being run by the Heritage Council and recruitment is to take place. An application for funding was also submitted under the Local Biodiversity Action Fund and the Heritage Office are awaiting notification of results.

Damien Dullaghan updated members on the Royal Sites of Ireland process. He stated that Discussions will begin shortly with Department about a MoU. A number of key actions are being progressed by the Working group in relation to the OUV (Outstanding Universal Value) and project coordination.

### **Item 3: Presentation on new Library Services by Greg MacDonald**

Greg MacDonald from the library service gave a presentation outlining some of the new assistive technologies being offered to library members throughout the county. He began by talking about the C-Pen Readerpen. These pocket-sized learning tools scan text and then read it aloud making them particularly useful for anyone who has dyslexia or other reading difficulties. He mentioned how popular these items already were, highlighting that every Readerpen in the county was currently out on loan with most branches already having waiting lists to fulfil once they were returned. He also read a testimonial from one of the first library members to borrow a Readerpen (a man who suffered with dyslexia) wherein they remarked upon the life-changing effect that the Readerpen had had on them. Councillor Michéal Lowry mentioned he was familiar with the Readerpens and had heard similar reports regarding their effectiveness.

The presentation next moved on to the Acorn Age-Friendly Smart tablets. It was explained that these were designed for anyone unfamiliar with tablet technology. Their purpose was to make it as easy as possible to learn how to use tablets by having uncluttered screens and large text. It was mentioned that many older library members have found them to be a simple but effective way of learning how to navigate tablets. It was stated that these devices were particularly useful when it came to learning about how to set up and use an e-mail account. Once again, the popularity of these items in branches throughout the county was underscored.

Finally, the presentation moved to focus on L.O.T.E. for kids – an online service that free access to books in Languages Other Than English. LOTE titles are translated and narrated in English to help with reading and literacy development. This was hoped to be of use with regard to the reading needs of refugees arriving into local communities.

Cllr Ann Marie Ryan welcomed the new technology and in particular the C-Pens. She asked about the loan duration of the borrowable items, how many items were currently in the county and whether or not they were available to everyone or just specific cohorts. Greg MacDonald stated that they could be borrowed for up to three months by anyone who needed them. He stated that there were eight C-Pens and Acorn Tablets. Cllr Ryan stated that he would like to the Library Service acquiring more of these devices. Damien Dullaghan thanked the members for their positive comments and stated that he would look to seek more funding under the 2023 callout under Dormant Accounts Funding.

**Item 4: Update on the Guide to Inclusive Community Engagement – Margo Hayes**

Margo Hayes Guide to Inclusive Community Engagement. She stated that a review of the SICAP programmes (North and South Tipperary) and an examination of the Annual Plans for 2023 was carried out by the LCDC in January of this year. The annual plans set out how the Development Companies will deliver their targets across 11 actions (including Ukrainian work) to support Community groups and marginalised communities. Budgets for 2023 include specific funding for the Ukrainian Community NTDC have a budget of €748,715 which included €90,747 for Ukrainian supports while STDC have a budget in 2023 of 921,353 with €109,053 ring fenced for Ukrainian integration

**Item 5: Update on Community Recognition Fund – Margo Hayes**

Margo Hayes provided an update on behalf of the Community Section on the Community Recognition Fund. She stated that the Community Recognition Fund 2023 is a capital fund which aims to support the development of community infrastructure and facilities in recognition of the contribution being made by communities across the country. She further stated that Ireland is welcoming and hosting significant numbers of arrivals from Ukraine and other countries. Funding is specifically targeted at projects that are located in communities, towns and villages that are hosting the Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection and International Protection Applicants including towns identified for the rapid build homes programme. The Fund aims to support the development of facilities that will be used in the future by all members of the community. Tipperary County Council have been awarded €997,861 under this funding

**Item 6: Update on Migrant Integration Strategy Action Plan – Margo Hayes**

Margo Hayes provided an update on behalf of the Community Section on the Migrant Integration Strategy Action Plan. She outlined progress made by the Community Section on

the plan. She stated that the Diverse Tipperary Migrant Integration Strategy and action plan is at an advanced draft stage and was put to the Community and Housing SPC for input on March 3rd. A number of Migrant groups have been approved for Community Activation Grants including the Islamic Cultural Centre Cashel and the Federation of Indian Communities of Ireland. Minster O'Brien visited Roscrea's Direct Provision Centre, Corville House in February to meet the residents there and to look at the projects they are involved in. Cllr Moloney welcomed the plan and stated that Cahir was a good example of where migrants can move to a town and integrate with the community. It was agreed that the work on the plan should continue with a view to bringing to the Plenary Council for adoption.

#### **Item 7: Update on the Museum Service – Damien Dullaghan**

Damien Dullaghan, deputising for Marie McMahon gave an update on the Museum Service. He updated members on the collaboration between the Museum and An Post on an online exhibition which was about to go live. This online exhibition was designed to commemorate 100 years of Irish stamps. It examines how these small pieces of paper allow a unique perspective on how we see ourselves as a nation. Damien Dullaghan also outlined how the Museum accepted a donation several stones from the Franciscan Friary, some highly decorated with detailed carvings and water fonts. Included in the donation was a water font originally from Old St. Mary's Church which has now been returned to the Church

#### **Item 7: Update on the Arts Service – Melanie Scott**

Melanie Scott provided an update on behalf of the Arts Section. She stated that the Artists Support Schemes closed in the first week of March. She stated that there had been a lot of interest and increased demand. She was working on establishing independent assessment panels to assess the applications.

The Arts Act Grant Scheme which are awards to community and voluntary arts organisations was currently being finalised. Melanie Scott stated that recommendations would go before the April Plenary Council meeting.

Melanie Scott stated that the application deadline for Festivals & Events scheme closing date was 31<sup>st</sup> January. She further stated that applications are currently being assessed and notifications would issue shortly.

Melanie Scott outlined how Visual Artists Ireland facilitated Professional Development Training for Tipperary Artists in 2023. The following information webinars were held in the first quarter of 2023.

- Funding & Applications Session (Webinar & Clinics) took place on Thursday 12th January 2023.
- Socially Engaged Practice facilitated by Áine Phillips. (Webinar & Clinics took place on Thursday 2nd February 2023)

- Starting and re-starting your career (Webinar & Clinics) took place on Monday 2nd March

She stated that there had been a very good take-up from Tipperary artists to date in 2023.

Melanie Scott outlined how First Music Contact in association with Tipperary County Council has developed a programme of professional development workshops. First Music Contact is the lead national music organisation for resourcing musicians and the independent music sector in Ireland. They deliver projects at key stages of an artists' development, helping them develop real careers. Tipperary musicians were invited to an Introduction to the Music Industry and First Music Contact supports workshop and panels on Approaching Irish Media, Reaching Online Audiences, Gigging outside Ireland and Management. Ukrainian Support Programme- 16 workshops took place during February and March reaching 340 people across age groups engaging in a range of artistic activity.

Melanie Scott stated that The Tipperary Arts office recently secured funding to coordinate a series of art engagement opportunities at congregated Ukrainian rest centres across Tipperary. The funding for this intervention has been made available through the Ukrainian Refugee Health and Wellbeing support fund, the purpose of which is to promote health and wellbeing of Ukrainian refugees who have sought protection in Ireland.

#### **Item 8: Update on the Library Service – Damien Dullaghan**

Damien Dullaghan gave an update on the Library Service. He gave details on the upcoming Mná Month Library Festival. He stated that Cashel library will host a series of free events over the course of the month. This festival is supported by the Creative Ireland fund.

Damien Dullaghan also gave a brief overview of the current events and outreach activities which were scheduled to take place throughout the county

Damien Dullaghan outlined the current situation with the new national Library Strategy. He stated that the launch of the new strategy had been delayed and there was no indication when it would now be launched. He stated that he would present an overview of the strategy to the SPC once it was launched. He also confirmed that the Libraries Unit in the Department of Rural and Community had requested that all local authorities delay the preparation of their own local strategies until the national strategy was launched. This will mean that in future, local strategies will be prepared after the national one was launched.

#### **Dates of future meetings**

The next meeting has been scheduled for

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> June.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

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

**Councillor Micheál Lowry,**

**Chairperson.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2023