

# **Minutes of Meeting of Community, Culture and Library Services Strategic Policy Committee held on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2023 in Thurles MD Offices and via Zoom**

## **Present:**

**Councillors:** Cllr Andy Moloney (Chairperson), Cllr Niall Dennehy, Cllr Siobhan Ambrose, Cllr Fiona Bonfield, Cllr Ger Darcy,

**In Attendance:** Brian Beck, Director of Services  
Damien Dullaghan, County Librarian  
Marie McMahon, Museum Curator  
Melanie Scott, Arts Officer  
Fiona Crotty, AO, Community and Economic Development  
Marie Cox, AO, Community and Economic Development  
Geraldine Manning, AO, Community and Economic Development

**Apologies:** Cllr Anne Marie Ryan, Cllr Micheál Anglim, Cllr Micheál Lowry, Cllr John Fitzgerald, Cllr John Crosse, Eamon Clancy, Matt O'Meara, Patrick Hanley, John Butler, Michelle Lawrence, Róisín O'Grady

Councillor Moloney opened the Meeting and welcomed those in attendance.

## **Item 1: Minutes from previous meeting, 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2023**

Proposed: Cllr Niall Dennehy

Seconded: Cllr Fiona Bonfield

**Matters arising:** None

## **Item 2: Feedback on Draft CCTV policy (previously circulated)**

Brian Beck, Director of Services addressed the meeting regarding the draft CCTV Policy. He gave a brief recap of his previous presentation which he gave at the October 2023 SPC meeting. He stated that if the members were happy to proceed with the policy, it would need to be approved by the SPC in order for it to be brought forward to a full council meeting for adoption. Cllr Moloney stated that he was satisfied with the policy and asked if

member were happy to let the policy proceed to full Council. It was agreed that the policy should go before the Council for adoption.

**Item 3: Presentation on New National Public Library Strategy by Damien Dullaghan**

Damien Dullaghan, County Librarian gave a presentation on the new national Public Library Strategy, *The Library is the place: Information – Recreation – Inspiration 2023-2027*. He commenced the presentation by reviewing the previous national *Public Library Strategy, Our Public Libraries 2017-2022* in terms of the benefits for County Tipperary. These included:

- A New Schools Mobile Library vehicle which was 100% grant funded at a cost of €100,000 in 2017
- A new roof for Carrick-on-Suir Library which received €150,000 funding in 2017.
- A grant of €232,000 was received in 2018 to implement RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) technology in all twelve Branch Libraries. This grant also funded self-service kiosks and has greatly improved the speed for staff in customers in checking in and out books.
- An ICT Grant of €309,000 was received in 2019 for ICT equipment. This included digital hubs in Nenagh and Clonmel Libraries and the purchase of 3D printers, 65-inch displays, laptops and tablets for Branch Libraries.
- A series of grants for sensory equipment including sensory toys, c-pens and associated equipment.

Damien Dullaghan then gave an overview of the new strategy. He stated that the strategy was launched by Minister Humphries at the opening of the new Library in Portlaoise in July 2023. The strategy was prepared by the Libraries Development Unit, LGMA in conjunction with the Department of Rural and Community Development, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Local Authority Libraries and the City and County Management Association (CCMA). A Strategy Working Group was set up with representations from the Department of Rural and Community Development, Directors of Service, County Librarians and senior staff from the LGMA.

An external facilitator brought in to develop and run consultation workshops. Almost 3,000 questionnaires were completed by the public and a series of focus groups were held with Library staff throughout the country. Feedback from these consultations was quite positive particularly in terms of the quality of book stock; customer service and high-quality Library buildings and spaces. The feedback also showed a need for improvement in the areas of communications and marketing; climate action and increased opening hours. The consultations also sought feedback on areas to be prioritised in the new Strategy. The feedback highlighted the following areas for prioritisation:

- Teenagers

- Older people
- Irish language materials
- Local studies and digitisation
- User-centred service design
- Climate Action/SDGs
- Evening and weekend hours
- Workforce development
- Enjoyment, stories and reading

Damien Dullaghan stated that the new strategy has three strategic themes: People – Place – Connections. Under the People Theme, the strategy sets out the following objectives:

### **1. Reading and Literacy is at the Heart of What We Do**

- Increased bookfund
- Irish languages
- Bookclubs
- PLR

### **2. Libraries for All**

- Increase active use
- Opening hours and My Open Library
- Programmes: Healthy Ireland at your Library, Little Library

### **3. Skills for Life**

- Digital skills, media literacy, health, business, financial literacy, green literacy

### **Item 3: Update from the Community Section by Margo Hayes**

Margo Hayes gave an update on the progress made with the LECP. She stated that the purpose of the LECP Local Economic and Community Plans, as provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the relevant Local Authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

Margo Hayes further stated that the new LECP 2024-2029 for Tipperary is near completion and will go to a meeting of Tipperary County Council for adoption on December 11<sup>th</sup> following a year or extensive consultation and a submission process. The first implementation plan under the LECP will be published in January 2024. This will set out the action under the LECP High level Goal and Objectives both in the Community and Economic areas.

Margo Hayes then gave an update on the Community Support Fund. She stated that 156 of 179 projects are drawn down, but that she was still waiting for final documentation to be supplied for a number of projects. She further stated that she was expecting a new iteration in early 2024, and that these were likely to be capital projects only.

Margo Hayes gave an update on the Local Development Strategy. She stated that the Local Community Development Committee and the partners of South Tipperary Development Company and North Tipperary Development Company with Tipperary County Council as lead financial partner have been approved to deliver the LEADER Local Development Strategy 2023-2027 in the county. The programme implementation will commence once the funding agreement and final operating rules are issued by the Department of Rural & Community Development

Margo Hayes spoke about the *Comhairle na n-Óg* AGM 2023 which was held in TUS Thurles on Friday 20th October. 107 young people attended with a great atmosphere on the day and some area and delegates back for 2023 including 2 from Roscrea who got elected. All vacant seats were filled and now all 40 seats are filled across Tipperary with a very diverse grouping from urban/rural areas and including members of the Syrian, Roma & Traveller communities.

Margo Hayes gave an update on Tipperary Age Friendly Programme. She stated that Tipperary Older Peoples Council will host its work plan meeting for 2024 & 2025 on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> of December in the Anner Hotel. This event will focus on the voice of the older person on actions that they would like to have included in the Age Friendly Alliance Action Plan. The Age Friendly Alliance will then meet on 14<sup>th</sup> December to review these actions and consider any additional actions. This action Plan will complement the Local Economic and Community Plan's implementation plan

Margo Hayes gave an update on the ORIS – Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme. The Scheme was launched in early June and is similar to the 2022 scheme with 4 levels of funding. The scheme supports the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure and the necessary repair, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreation infrastructure in countryside areas. In line with 'Embracing Ireland's Outdoors', outdoor recreation is defined as activities that take place in the natural environment, such as walking, canoeing, mountain biking, orienteering and wild swimming. On 21st November, Minister Heather Humphreys TD announced the successful projects under the Project Development Measure of the 2023 ORIS fund and this included the projects

- the Roscrea River Rooms. The project involves consultancy for the detailed design, planning and feasibility of a series of connected spaces along the riverside in Roscrea with a grant of €49,999.50.
- Garrykennedy Inner Harbour Upgrade. A grant of €49,500 was approved towards consultancy services to undertake planning and design works for the upgrading of the inner harbour in Garrykennedy,

Margo Hayes gave an update on The IPB Pride of Place Community Awards which took place in Armagh on Friday night 10th November 2023. Fethard Town Park came runner-up in the Community Wellbeing Initiative Category, We love Nenagh won in population over 4,000 categories.

Cllr Moloney thanked Margo Hayes for her update which he stated was very comprehensive. He further stated that the Community Section put in a great deal of work in many different areas which was making a real impact.

#### **Item 4: Update on the Museum Service by Marie McMahon**

Marie McMahon provided an update on the Museum Service. She stated that the Museum Service has established a partnership with CALMAST who are the South East Technological University's STEM Engagement Hub. She stated that Maths Week was held from 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> October. Julia Walsh-Drohan, the Museum's Education and Outreach Officer worked with CALMAST to bring the Museum Maths trail to primary schools via the Maths week website and 217 students attended the Museum to complete the trail. The trail was featured on TG4 Cúla News. She also highlighted a second project which was run with CALMAST. The Museum hosted a Science Week event in The Talbot Hotel, Clonmel from 12<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> November entitled *The Science Behind the Past*. Six specialist archaeologists discussed and illustrated how science and history can work together to tell us about the past to over 300 students.

Marie McMahon gave an update on the Museum Lecture Series. The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Lecture series commenced in October 2023 with an introductory lecture delivered by Kevin McCarthy. The second lecture in the series was delivered by Molly Daly and focused The Mechanics Institute, Clonmel. Lecture 3 will be held on Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> and will be presented by Clodagh Grubb on Quaker Education. Marie McMahon further stated that the new venue for the lectures – TUS Digital Campus, Clonmel is proving very successful.

Marie McMahon outlined how the Museum loaned a number of items which were brought to RTE studios in Cork for appearance on the **Today Show** in October. These included a pair of goggles owned and used by Rachel Blackmore which were donated to the Museum by 11-year-old Dylan Goldbach. Dylan is the son of Ruth Maher, IT Section, Tipperary County Council.

#### **Item 5: Update on the Arts Service by Melanie Scott**

Melanie Scott, Arts Officer gave an update on the Arts Service to the SPC. She referred to the Tipperary Artists Scheme 33 Artists were awarded funding through the Tipperary Artist Award scheme in 2023. The purpose of this scheme is to support professional artists under the following categories:

- a. Professional Development

b. Creation of new Work

Melanie Scott also gave an update on the Artists in Primary School Project. She stated that 11 Artist in Primary School Scheme projects were supported in 2023. 7 Artist in Primary School projects took place this term in primary schools throughout County Tipperary.

**Item 6: Update on the Heritage Service by Melanie Scott**

Melanie Scott, deputising for Róisín O’Grady gave an update for the Heritage Section. She stated that all projects funded through County Heritage Plan have now been completed and final drawdown has taken place. She further stated that 10 Griffiths Valuation Plaques were funded under the Templemore Heritage Plan in conjunction with the Heritage Group. In addition, a conservation report had recently been completed on the graffiti issue at St. Mary’s, Templemore. She also stated that the digital storyboard on Tipperary’s Medieval Walled Towns completed and will be online soon. Melanie Scott updated members on the Community Monuments Fund. Works completed on projects and funding in the region of €250,000 were drawn down for

- Boolabaun Castle
- Loughmore Castle
- Kilnarath Church
- Loughloher Castle
- Emly Monastic Site
- Kilsheelan graveyard
- Graves of the Leinsterman

Finally, Melanie Scott gave an update on the Creative Ireland Programme in Co. Tipperary. She stated that the programme had been very successful. Final drawdowns have been completed for the year and a total of approximately €163,000 has been drawn down

**Item 7: Update on the Library Service – Damien Dullaghan**

Damien Dullaghan gave brief update on the Library Service. He stated that the Library Service had worked very hard in 2023 to bring visitor footfall back to pre-pandemic numbers. He stated that in 2019, the Library Service recorded over 500,000 visitors. However, this had dropped back to 100,00 in 2021. This was due in part to the fact that Libraries were closed from January to May. However, the Library Service has made a concerted effort throughout 2023 to bring these numbers back up. Damien Dullaghan stated that the events organised for Bealtaine Festival, Children’s Book Festival, Science Week and

various other outreach initiatives brought in high numbers and that the statistics are showing a significant increase in usage.

**AOB**

Cllr Dennehy referred to the proposal to name Carrick-on-Suir Town Park after the Clancy Brothers. Damien Dullaghan stated that the Civic Memorial Policy does not allow for parks, fire stations, libraries and utility facilities to be named after individuals or events. A discussion then took place regarding this and it was acknowledged that this matter may be referred from the Plenary Council back to this SPC for further consideration.

**Dates of future meetings**

The next meeting has been scheduled for

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March at 10:00am

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

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

**Councillor Andy Moloney, Chairperson.**

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