

Minutes of Meeting of Community, Culture and Library Services Strategic Policy Committee held on 11th June, 2021 at 2.00 pm via Zoom

Present:

Councillors: Cllr Micheál Lowry (Chairman), Cllr Niall Dennehy, Cllr Andy Moloney, Cllr Anne Marie Ryan

Sectoral Interests: John Butler

In Attendance: Brian Beck, a/Director of Services
Damien Dullaghan, County Librarian
Marie McMahon, Museum Service
Eddie Meegan, AO, Community and Economic Development
Roisin O'Grady, Heritage Officer

Apologies: Cllr Micheál Anglim, Cllr Fiona Bonfield, Cllr Ger Darcy, Eamon Clancy, Cllr John Crosse, Cllr Siobhan Ambrose, Cllr John Fitzgerald, Peggy O'Brien, Matt O'Meara, Evelyn Noonan, Patrick Hanley

Councillor Micheál Lowry, Chairman, opened the Meeting and welcomed those in attendance.

Item 1: Minutes from previous meeting, 26th March, 2021

Proposed: Cllr Anne Marie Ryan

Seconded: Cllr Andy Moloney

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 a website (www.royalsites.ie) had been setup and a survey for public consultation on the Royal Sites bid was put on this website for the month of May. There were over 1,550 responses and these were overwhelmingly positive with over 94% of respondents supporting the Royal Sites bid being put on the tentative list. There were responses received from the United States, Europe and Asia. Róisín O'Grady stated that this showed that these sites have a global impact. She also thanked the SPC members for their support at the last meeting. This support was replicated when she presented to the Elected Members of Tipperary County Council in April. She has now received letters of support from both the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive of Tipperary County Council and was due to receive letters of support from the Cashel Chamber of Commerce and the Cashel Heritage Centre. The final steps in the

process are to complete and submit a joint application for the Royal Sites by the end of June. There are weekly meetings taking place between the Royal Sites bid team and Dr. Christopher Young who is assisting with the bid. It was planned to put an executive summary of the bid and survey results on the website on 30th June. There was broad support for the application amongst the SPC members. Cllr Lowry 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. Library users can visit the full-time branches and avail of a contact and collect service in the part-time Library branches. There would be a gradual return to services in line with the Government's plan to ease restrictions and it is anticipated that services such as PCs, study spaces and events could be brought back from July onwards subject to government guidelines. 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. Government guidelines on the My Open Library project stated that they should not open at this time but that this will be reviewed at a later date. He also stated that Tipperary, Roscrea and Carrick-on-Suir Libraries are ready to proceed with the My Open Library project and this would happen as soon as the current restrictions are lifted. He stated that the sensory area in Tipperary Town Library was completed and ready to be used as soon as the restrictions are lifted. Cllr Moloney queried when the move to the new library at the Craft Granary would take place. He also asked about remedial works to the front of the Market House which would be required following exploratory works which were carried out by the project design team for the Market House project. Damien Dullaghan stated that it was anticipated that the move to the Craft Granary would take place in late 2022. He further stated that he would liaise with the District Administrator regarding the remedial works required for the front of Market House.

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 they had received visitors from several parts of the country including Donegal and Galway. She stated that the publicity from the Mick Delahunty CD was a major factor as it had raised the Museum's national profile. However, visitor numbers are still down on previous years and it would take time for people to get back into the habit of using services such as libraries and museums. She then gave an overview of the new War of Independence Museum exhibition. Museum staff have worked on this for several months. Marie McMahon displayed some of the images in the exhibition including newly colourised images from the time. She stated that it was a highly visual

exhibition and that the vinyl storyboards were of a very high quality. A Civil War exhibition will follow the current War of Independence one. Cllr Lowry wished Marie McMahon well and stated that it will take time for Museums, Libraries and retail centres to bring back the visitor numbers seen before the pandemic. Cllr Andy Moloney enquired as to when the Civil War exhibition will be in place. Marie McMahon stated that it would be installed in the latter half of 2022.

Item 4: Update from the Arts Office by Damien Dullaghan

Damien Dullaghan gave an update on the actions being taken by the Arts Section. He began with the Bealtaine Festival. Bealtaine is a festival celebrating creativity throughout our lives and the Tipperary theme of this year's Bealtaine Festival was "Give Me Shelter", echoing the fact that we have all been cocooning at home but looking to each other, for comfort, reassurance and conversation. There were over 40 events ran during the month of May. These events were run online and the Arts Section worked with nursing homes and care centres to ensure that residents were able to both view and participate in the workshops. Damien Dullaghan highlighted one particular event which took place. The **Lockdown Demons** project in Holycross was led by Philip and Liz Quinn. Lockdown Demons played with the rich monastic heritage in Holycross and a much beloved feature of these buildings, Gargoyles and Grotesques. Phillip and Liz Quinn worked with a mixed aged group via zoom workshops to produce 21st century Gargoyles, 3-D figures complete with embellishments such as earrings and nose-rings. A temporary exhibition was held at The Green in Holycross once restrictions eased where each gargoyle was exhibited, mounted on a stake. After the exhibition each Gargoyle was returned to the makers for their own gardens.

Damien Dullaghan updated the members on a new book which was supported by the Art Service. *Around Each Bend*, a collection of poetry and prose by Tipperary writers was launched on 1st June by Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael Smith. This collection brings together the work of forty-eight Tipperary writers.

Cllr Moloney enquired about Local Live Performance Programming Scheme which was launched this year and what was planned by Tipperary County Council in relation to same. It was agreed that Melanie Scott would provide an update for the SPC members on her return from annual leave.

Item 5: Update from C&E by Eddie Meegan

Eddie Meegan gave an update on a Consultation for a Migrants Integration Strategy for Co Tipperary which commenced in May 2021. The methodologies were in an online survey and focus groups targeting specific nationalities and migrant demographics. In the region of 130 migrants living in Co Tipperary have been engaged with through the consultation and those participants reflect the view of diverse nationality and immigrants' types i.e. Economic

Immigrants (Eastern Europeans, Asian), those in Direct provision and the Syrian Resettlement.

The consultation process shows that most have a very positive experience of living in Co Tipperary. However, some issues that are emerging include:

- Migrants have been significantly impacted by Covid restrictions as a result of poor family supports and reliance in the retail and hospitality sector.
- Difficulty accessing PPS numbers, Drivers licences and subsequently opening bank accounts which can impact in employment opportunity)
- Difficulties having their qualification recognised and accessing high quality employment
- Limited engagement in the community sector either through lack of time (many work long hours), language difficulties or a poor understanding of the sector. The community and Voluntary sector often acts as a springboard for public participation and subsequently we see a lack of presence of the migrants structure on the PPN or Local Authority committees such as SPC
- Some have experienced racism (mostly from teenagers)
- Language difficulties and access to information and lack of understanding of some of the Irish systems.

Eddie Meegan stated that LEADER funding is in a transition programme for 2021 and 2022. The funding was increased and is at the same level as the previous programme. The emphasis is on Animation in line with new themes and objectives such as Smart Villages, enabling new applicants, Broadband Hubs the green Economy.

Eddie Meegan outlined a new programme being run by C&E. Digital Connections is a programme providing a tablet device (Irish made and designed) to older persons. The tablet is designed to be easy to use and easy to navigate. These tablets will be distributed by the C&E section.

Eddie Meegan gave an update on the Healthy Ireland programme. The Community Mental Health Small Grant Scheme actions are continuing until October 2021. The Keep Well campaign will end on June 30, 2021. The HSE Healthy Communities Programme will commence later this year.

Item 6: Presentation on Public Library Supports for Marginalised, Socially Excluded and Disadvantaged Communities (DAF) by Ann-Marie Brophy, Library Service

Ann-Marie Brophy, Senior Executive Librarian gave a presentation on the Library programme for marginalised, socially excluded and disadvantaged communities which has been funded under the Dormant Accounts Fund. She outlined how the initial programme in 2019 had concentrated on two projects which were the *Carrick-on-Suir Tapestry Project* and *Growing Imaginations* project. These were very successful and there was very positive

feedback received. The Library Service successfully applied for further funding in 2020. Further programmes such as Touch-Type Read and Spell (TTRS), Leabhar Liom and Baby Talk: Literacy talks for parents and childcare providers were rolled out over the past year.

In addition, funding was also obtained for Library Sensory facilities. The aim of this funding is to improve the library experience and services for children, teens and adults with sensory impairments, additional needs, learning differences, those on the Autism spectrum, and their parents, guardians and carers. Funding will be used to provide a sensory toy collection and to provide quiet time / quiet spaces in our main Libraries. Cllr Lowry thanked Ann Marie Brophy for her presentation and welcomed this new initiative.

Date/Time of next meeting:

Friday 17th September at 10:00am.

Venue: TBC

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

Signed: _____

**Councillor Micheál Lowry,
Chairperson.**

Date: _____, 2021