

Minutes of Meeting of Community, Culture and Library Services Strategic Policy Committee held on 2nd December, 2022 at 10:00am in Thurles MD Offices and via Zoom

Present:

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

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

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

Councillor Moloney opened the Meeting and welcomed those in attendance.

Item 1: Minutes from previous meeting, 9th September, 2022

Proposed: Cllr Niall Dennehy

Seconded: Cllr Siobhan Ambrose

Matters arising: None

Item 2: Update on the new County Heritage Strategy by Róisín O'Grady

Róisín O'Grady gave a verbal update to the members on the new Heritage Plan. She stated that the County Heritage Plan is due for renewal. Up to 2022 this had been a Heritage and Biodiversity Plan in line with other Local Authorities without a dedicated Biodiversity Officer. She further stated that Tipperary County Council had applied for funding for a new Biodiversity Officer and that the job description for same indicates a Biodiversity Plan will be part of their remit. Therefore, this new plan would focus on Heritage. As the National

Heritage Plan was published mid-2022 and a new Heritage Council strategy will be launched early 2023, the Heritage Office delayed of commencing the process to 2023 so that the new plan can align with both. Róisín O'Grady then outlined the planned steps which would be undertaken to prepare a new plan. She stated that a meeting will take place with the Heritage Forum in March 2023 to review last plan and look at strategic objectives. Following the Heritage Forum meeting an online consultation will open and a programme of engagement will be decided. The Draft plan should be ready by September

Cllr Ryan thanked Róisín O'Grady for her presentation. She enquired as to when public consultations would commence? Róisín O'Grady stated that online engagement would commence in January. She further stated that public meetings for the last Heritage Plan were poorly attended but that online responses were excellent.

Cllr Dennehy raised the issue of boundary wall plaques not being maintained which he stated should not be happening. Cllr Dennehy also spoke about the Franciscan Abbey in Clonmel. He stated that he would like it to remain an ecclesiastical building but he understood that this might not happen. However, he stated that Tipperary County Council and the Heritage Office needed to be involved in any decisions taken relating to the building.

Cllr Ambrose stated that she would also like to see the Friary remain an ecclesiastical building. She further stated that Tipperary County Council should employ a full-time conservation architect as Clonmel has as many protected structures as Florence.

Cllr Ryan stated that she fully supported Cllr Ambrose's call for a conservation officer. She further stated that there is built heritage in many of the towns in Tipperary. She stated that the current solution of employing a conservation architect on a project by project basis is not sufficient to meet the needs of the county.

Róisín O'Grady stated that she had been contacted regarding the Friary Closure by a former colleague who had been contracted to assess the collection. She stated that the Archives stored in the building would now be moved to the Franciscan Office of the Provincial in Killiney, Co. Dublin. However, she stated that she had put the contractor in touch with both the Library and Museum Services with a view to receiving donations from the collection. She further stated that she was looking into ways of record the history of the Friary and would assess how to do this. Róisín O'Grady stated that the issue of the conservation architect was one she was aware of. She stated that Heritage Services are currently being reviewed at national level and this may lead to progress on the issue. She cited the biodiversity officer programme as an example where progress was made in recent years. Róisín O'Grady stated that boundary plaques need to be looked after as a condition of planning and can be referred to planning if this is not happening.

Cllr Ambrose asked for an update on the Royal Sites project and the Rock of Cashel. Róisín O'Grady stated that the process was going well. The Royal Sites Project including the Rock of Cashel was now on the Tentative List. The project team had met with the Department and a framework was now being put in place. A project officer would now be employed to co-

ordinate the five local authority bids and a job specification for the post was currently being prepared. She further stated that a UNESCO delegation was visiting Ireland from 8th – 10th December and that they would visit the Hill of Tara and the Navan Fort. She stated that a lot of work had already gone into the process and the team were focused on what had to be done going forward.

Item 3: Update from Arts Officer

Melanie Scott gave a presentation on the draft arts strategy which was currently being finalised. She stated that the work of the specialist team at Tipperary Arts Office in implementing Tipperary County Council's vision for the arts is multi-faceted and imaginative, and encompasses a wide range of services, actions, and activities. This includes provision of information and advice, advocating for the arts at a local and national level, brokering partnerships and collaborations, undertaking research and planning, seeking investment for the arts, and supporting artists, cultural producers and the arts infrastructure through the management of a range of schemes and programmes. Tipperary County Council supports a strong infrastructure of professional and amateur arts organisations, festivals and venues that present and promote arts work, so that the public can enjoy a wide range of excellent arts experiences both as audiences and as engaged participants.

She stated that the new plan was underpinned by three core principles:

Imagine

Be creative in our vision and ambition for the arts in the county. Harness the creative expertise of the arts office team; create, develop and implement strategies to continue to make Tipperary a creative place to live, work and visit.

Inspire

Collaborate with artists, creative practitioners, arts and community organisations and agencies to realise a shared vision for the arts in Tipperary; advocate the importance of the arts

Invest

Support artists, cultural producers, organisations and communities to realise their artistic ambitions through a range of funding and developmental actions.

The plan would also have four strategic priorities. These are:

- Strategic Priority 1: A space for Artists
- Strategic Priority 2: Creative Infrastructure
- Strategic Priority 3: Art Connecting Communities
- Strategic Priority 4: Placing Art

Cllr Moloney thanked Melanie Scott for the detailed presentation and stated that he welcomed the new plan. He stated that he was happy for the plan to be brought before the Council for adoption.

Proposed: Cllr Dennehy

Seconded: Cllr Moloney

Item 4: Update on the Community Section – Eddie Meegan

Eddie Meegan provided an update on behalf of the Community Section. He stated that Áine Roche, Healthy Ireland Co-ordinator and the Community Section was currently working on a funding plan for defibrillator units for the County and that a lot of work was being put into this project. Eddie Meegan also confirmed that the LECP was currently being finalised and that it was hoped that this would be ready in early 2023. Eddie Meegan updated the members on work being carried out with the Ukrainian community in Tipperary. He stated that the Community Section were working with the Housing Section to support them and that upgrades to the centres housing the Ukrainian Community in Tipperary were ongoing. He also gave an overview on the artistic supports being offered by the Community and Arts Section to the Ukrainian Community.

Item 5: Update from Museum Service

Damien Dullaghan, deputising for Marie McMahon, Museum Curator gave a brief update on the Museum Service. He stated that the Civil War Exhibition was launched 20th October 2022 by Cllr Roger Kennedy, Cathaoirleach, Tipperary County Council. The key note speaker at the launch was historian, John Flannery. The exhibition showcases high quality 1921 – 1923 colourised images from John Breslin and Matt Loughrey. He praised the quality and storyboarding of the exhibition and stated that he would recommend a visit to view it.

Damien Dullaghan gave an update on the Museum Lecture Series. He stated that The Museum celebrated its 10th lecture season and this year's theme is the Big House. The first lecture took place on 8th October and was entitled *Bringing Places to life* by Clare McGrath. The second lecture entitled *The Big House and the Irish Revolution* by John Dorney took place on 5th November and that the lectures would continue on a monthly basis until April 2023.

Item 6: Update from Library Service

Damien Dullaghan gave an update on the Library Service. He outlined progress made by the Library Service in obtaining funding from the Dormant Accounts Fund for a series of new

initiatives. These included LOTE (Language other than English) which is now available through the Library website. In addition, Damien Dullaghan stated that the Library Service now offered C-Pens which are a literary aid and can now be borrowed in Branch Libraries. The final initiative he detailed was the ACORN tablet which is Ireland's first Age-Friendly Smart Tablet. It is Irish made and designed with the older person in mind. Damien Dullaghan then gave details of the recent Children's Book Festival. He stated that this was the first full in -person Children's Book Festival since before the pandemic. He explained that the Library Service invested significant resources and staff time to run a series of events throughout the County. He stated that it was a very successful festival which received great praise.

Cllr Moloney thanked Damien Dullaghan for the update and praised the work done by Libraries. He further stated that he was aware that the Library had experienced staff shortages and asked for an update on this. Damien Dullaghan stated that the Library Service had recruited six new staff members. Three were due to commence on 6th December with the remaining three commencing in early January. Cllr Moloney welcomed this news. Cllr Moloney also stated that the RRDF funding for the Cahir project was issued on a staged basis and it was his understanding that the Cahir funding was in phase 2 of the current funding round. He stated that the Council would need to keep a close eye on this situation to ensure that the funding was received in a timely fashion.

Dates of future meetings

The next meeting has been scheduled for

Friday 3rd March.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

Signed: _____

Councillor Andy Moloney,

Chairperson.

Date: _____, 2022