

Minutes of Meeting of Library Services, Culture and Biodiversity Strategic Policy Committee held on 19th September, 2025 in Thurles MD Offices and via Zoom

Present:

Councillors: Cllr Andy Moloney (Chairperson), Cllr Siobhan Ambrose, Cllr Phyll Bugler, Cllr Kay Cahill Skehan, Cllr Niall Dennehy, Cllr Louise Morgan-Walsh,

Sectoral Interest: Aislinn O’Keeffe, Brendan Keogh

In Attendance: Damien Dullaghan, County Librarian
Jayne Sutcliffe, Museum Service
Melanie Scott, Arts Officer
Ann-Marie Fleming, Biodiversity Officer

Apologies: John Connors, Cllr John Crosse, Cllr John Fitzgerald, Cllr Shane Lee, Cllr Pamela Quirke-O’Meara, Sean O’Farrell, Martin Quinn, Theresia Gushyhlbauer, Róisín O’Grady

Councillor Moloney opened the Meeting and welcomed those in attendance.

Item 1: Minutes from previous meeting, 20th June, 2025

Proposed: Cllr Niall Dennehy

Seconded: Cllr Kay Cahill Skehan

Matters arising: None

Item 2: Presentation on the recently established Tipperary Local Creative Youth Partnership by Nuala Martin, Tipperary ETB

Nuala Martin, Tipperary Creative Youth Partnership Coordinator commenced her presentation by stating that all Creative Youth Partnership coordinators are based in local

Education and Training Boards. The scheme is funded by the Department of Education and Youth, the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport, and the Department of Children, Disability and Equality through the Creative Youth Plan. The overarching remit of this post is to ensure every young person, no matter their background, has access to creativity. Tipperary Creative Youth Partnership are bringing together youth workers, educators, artists, community groups, and other statutory organisations to create exciting, inclusive opportunities in creativity. Nuala Martin stated that this collaboration is key to the partnership. She stated that Tipperary Creative Youth Partnership has invited organisations and artists to initiate and grow creative programmes co-designed by young people. It will support programmes with a human rights approach to expression of creativity. Nuala Martin stated that the project vision is that every young person in Ireland will have the opportunity to realise their full potential. In addition, the project aims to show how culture and creativity contribute to wellbeing, social capital and economic development. The project's target groups include those:

- Experiencing poverty
- Early years
- Additional Needs
- Migrant/Minority Background
- Experiencing Rural Isolation

Finally, Nuala Martin stated that the project is youth led and is committed to youth input into decision making.

Cllr Andy Moloney thanked Nuala Martin for her presentation and stated that he can see real opportunities with this programme in terms of youth groups throughout the county.

Item 3: Presentation on the Heritage Stewardship Project by Jayne Sutcliffe, Tipperary Museum of Hidden History

Jayne Sutcliffe gave a presentation on The *Hands of Heritage* initiative, led by Tipperary Museum. This is an award nominated programme designed to revive and share traditional Irish skills with diverse communities. It is funded by the National Lottery and Heritage Council (€107,000 for 2022–2025) and is a three-year pilot focused on cultural engagement and heritage preservation through hands-on learning.

Jayne Sutcliffe then gave a programme overview. The project spans three years (pilot) each introducing new crafts and techniques:

- **Year 1:** Stone carving and textiles with Syrian communities and School and public workshops.
- **Year 2:** Wood and stone carving, embroidery, basketry and textiles, engaging Ukrainian communities and schools.

- **Year 3:** Expanded to include wire sculpture, felt making, sewing, crochet, and historic textiles, involving groups such as Knockanrawley Resource Centre, Moorehaven Centre, Irish Wheelchair Association, Nenagh Library Group and Men's Shed

Jayne Sutcliffe then gave an assessment of the programme impact. She stated that the programme collaborates with schools like Coláiste Sliabh na mBan and Raheen College, addressing social challenges and fostering inclusion. Activities range from stone masonry and wood carving to folklore, oral history and digital skills, promoting confidence and cultural identity. Public workshops during Heritage Week further broaden participation.

Jayne Sutcliffe then outlined the future plans for the project. The museum aims to extend the initiative through the Local Authority Museums Network (LAMN) and partnerships with institutions like Kerry College and Tipperary ETB. Plans include developing modules on traditional Irish skills such as thatching, coopering, carpentry, dry stone building and textile crafts. She also stated that *Hands of Heritage* has earned national acclaim, becoming a finalist in the National Lottery Good Causes Awards (Heritage Category) and representing Tipperary at the 2025 awards ceremony.

Cllr Moloney thanked Jayne Sutcliffe for her presentation and said that this project was a credit to the Museum. He stated that he welcomed and supported the idea of teaching traditional Irish skills to new communities in Ireland.

Item 4: Update on Library Service by Damien Dullaghan

Damien Dullaghan provided the meeting with an update on the Library Service. He first gave an update on the Library Capital Programme. He stated that there were three Library Capital Projects at different stages. The new Library in Templemore which received RRFD funding was completed and officially opened in December 2024. He further stated that Tipperary County Council applied for RRDF funding for multiple projects in Cahir including a new Library. This funding application was successful and the Council intended to appoint a building contractor within weeks to convert the historic Craft Granary building in Cahir into a new modern Library facility. Damien Dullaghan stated that both the Templemore and Cahir projects were completed using the RRDF funding stream rather than the Library Capital Programme. He said that Tipperary County Council was one of the only Local Authorities to complete multiple Library projects using RRDF funding and that this was testament to the work of the Council's Capital Programme team. It meant that two historic buildings that were vacant and in disrepair were being brought back into use which was very positive. Damien Dullaghan then gave an update on the Clonmel Library project. He stated that in 2022, Tipperary County Council made the decision to fund the appointment of a design team to design a new Library for Clonmel and bring this design through the planning process. Following a competitive tendering process, ABK were appointed as the design team. He stated that they had now completed a full design and were ready to commence the planning process for the project. Furthermore, in June 2023, the Department of Rural and Community Development issued a call for projects for new Library projects. The Library Service prepared a very detailed proposal and in April 2024, the Department announced that Tipperary County Council were successful in receiving a grant of €3m which was the

joint highest grant in the Country. Damien Dullaghan stated that there was still a significant funding shortfall between the grant and the project costings and that Tipperary County Council were exploring all options to try to bridge this funding gap.

Damien Dullaghan then gave an overview of the Summer Stars Library programme. He stated that Summer Stars is the free national reading programme for children that takes place in all public libraries and online each summer. It runs from 13th June - 31st August. All children throughout the county are invited to join the adventure and to enjoy the fun and pleasure of reading and writing over the summer. Summer Stars is non-competitive and every child who reads even one book/e-book is regarded as having completed the programme. He stated that the programme had seen very high levels of participation in 2025 and that this was down to the hard work undertaken by Branch Libraries to promote the programme.

Item 5: Update on the Arts Service by Melanie Scott

Melanie Scott provided an update on the Arts Service. She gave an overview of a new Art Installation entitled Bee Lines which was designed and fabricated by the artist, Kevin Killen. It was installed on N24 Cahir Road, Roundabout, Clonmel on 16th July 2025 and was funded under The Per cent for Art Scheme associated with the Clonmel Flood relief Scheme. Melanie Scott stated that the town's traditional association with bees and honey inspired the "Flights of Discovery" concept, and Bee lines responds to these ideas with a contemporary artwork that has relevance to the town.

Melanie Scott then gave an update on Culture Night, 2025. She stated that the event is celebrating its 20th edition, and was coordinated by Tipperary Arts Office in partnership with the Arts Council. The events were delivered by arts organisations, creative practitioners, artists, performers and community groups across the county. Melanie Scott stated that there were 51 events across the county. Melanie Scott also gave an update on Culture Night Late in Clonmel. Additional funding was secured from The Arts Council for a Culture Night LATE event in Clonmel. This event was held 8pm to Midnight in Kickham Plaza. Local Choirs, Young Bands/Music Generation/ Local Performance Groups and up and coming local artists in addition to invited artists performed at the event.

Cllr Moloney thanked Melanie Scott for her update.

Item 6: Update on the Biodiversity Service by Ann-Marie Fleming

Ann-Marie Fleming, Biodiversity Service gave an update to the meeting. She commenced with an update on the Biodiversity Action Plan. She stated that She stated that the primary aim in 2025 was the completion and adoption of the Tipperary Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030. She also stated that the July workshop with the SPC member was very helpful in terms of suggestions and feedback and that these had been incorporated into the draft

plan. It is hoped that the final draft of the plan will be completed by Q4 and will then go before the Plenary Council meeting for adoption in early 2026.

Ann-Marie Fleming gave an update on biodiversity events which took place during Heritage Week. These included Wild Child Day. This was held at the Cabragh Wetlands Centre on the 23rd August. The aim of Wild Child Day is to encourage children and families to spend time outdoors, discovering and exploring nature. This year there were 35 in attendance and families enjoyed activities including: Moth trapping, foraging walks and a nature-based scavenger hunting. On Sunday the 24th of August, a Butterfly and bee identification walk was held at Lough Dhoire Bhile. The walk was facilitated by Tipperary based entomologist Louise Garcia, the walk was very popular with 18 in attendance on the day. Ann-Marie Fleming also highlighted the Tipperary County Council Heritage and Biodiversity conference 2025 which took place on 6th September at the Horse & Jockey Hotel. This event was hosted by Tipperary County Council's Biodiversity and Heritage department and included presentations on Ireland's natural and cultural heritage.

Item 7: Update on formation of Irish Language Committee (Referred to SPC by TCC Plenary Meeting)

It had been agreed at the previous SPC meeting that Damien Dullaghan would meet with Irish Language Officer, Tipperary County Council and the matter would then be discussed further at the June SPC. However, Damien Dullaghan advised members that the Irish Language Officer was still on long-term sick leave. It was then agreed that this issue would be dealt with at the December SPC meeting

AOB

None

Dates of future meetings

The next meeting will be held on 19th December, 2025.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

Signed: _____

Councillor Andy Moloney, Chairperson.

Date: _____, 2025