

# **Minutes of Meeting of Library Services, Culture and Biodiversity Strategic Policy Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> December, 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 John Crosse, Cllr Niall Dennehy

**Sectoral Interest:** Theresia Gushychlbauer, Brendan Keogh, Martin Quinn

**In Attendance:** Damien Dullaghan, County Librarian  
Pat Bracken, Library Service  
Marie McMahon, Museum Service  
Melanie Scott, Arts Officer  
Ann-Marie Fleming, Biodiversity Officer

**Apologies:** John Connors, Cllr John Fitzgerald, Cllr Shane Lee, Cllr Louise Morgan-Walsh, Aislinn O'Keeffe, Cllr Pamela Quirke-O'Meara, Sean O'Farrell, Róisín O'Grady

Councillor Moloney opened the Meeting and welcomed those in attendance.

## **Item 1: Minutes from previous meeting, 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2025**

Proposed: Cllr Kay Cahill Skehan

Seconded: Cllr John Crosse

**Matters arising:** None

## **Item 2: Presentation on Media Literacy and the growth of AI Produced Books by Pat Bracken, Library Service**

Pat Bracken, Senior Executive Librarian, delivered a presentation on the rise of AI-generated books and the growing importance of media literacy skills within the library profession. He

noted a recent *Vice.com* report showing that 81 of the top 100 bestselling eBooks in the Teen & Young Adult Contemporary Romance category were AI-generated rather than legitimate titles. While platforms like Amazon work to remove such items, it is increasingly difficult to detect all AI-produced eBooks before they are listed. Pat Bracken highlighted that modern librarians must now be able to identify AI-created books, with Adult Non-Fiction and Children's Non-Fiction being the most affected areas. Because non-fiction is easier to paraphrase without triggering plagiarism detection, it is a more common target for AI-generated content. He explained how physical AI-produced books are created, often using simple prompts to summarise or re-write existing works. Once generated, the text is printed through "vanity" or subsidy publishers, where authors pay for production. As these authors invest little effort in writing, they have no issue paying printing costs and pricing the books for profit.

Pat Bracken emphasised that while the practice is unethical, it is not technically illegal, as many of these works are paraphrased rather than directly plagiarised. Some AI-generated books also appear as "companion guides" or summaries of established titles, designed to imitate legitimate publications with minimal effort. The library service has already encountered several suspicious items from vendors. Indicators of AI-generated titles include poor formatting, inconsistent typesetting, excessive bullet points, and low-quality or distorted images—such as figures with extra facial features or unnatural poses. Over the past two years, the library has identified six AI-produced items, four of which appeared in the last year. Staff guidelines have since been developed and shared during Training Day. He also noted that author credibility is a key detection method. Genuine authors generally maintain an online presence, while AI book creators often do not. One example cited was "Voltaire Lumiere," a supposed author of more than two dozen beginner-level programming guides, yet with no traceable public identity.

Pat Bracken explained that publishers can also provide clues. Some vanity presses, such as Lulu.com and Ingram Publishing, are frequently used to push AI-generated material. He concluded by noting that several ongoing high-profile copyright cases may eventually shape how AI-generated content is regulated. In the meantime, libraries must remain vigilant to ensure only high-quality, trustworthy materials are added to their collections.

Cllr Cahill Skehan thanked Pat Bracken for his presentation. She stated that AI is now everywhere in society including our smartphones. She further stated that she welcomed the fact that the Library Service were actively looking into AI. Martin Quinn also thanked Pat Bracken for his presentation which he found very valuable. He stated that AI is powerful but not always good. Cllr John Crosse thanked Pat Bracken for his presentation. He stated that over the next 12 to 18 months, AI could bring many changes and it is right that the Council are looking closely at this. Damien Dullaghan stated that the Library Service is keeping abreast of the many changes which AI is bringing. He further stated that the Library Service will probably need to bring a policy on AI before the SPC for consideration in the future.

### **Item 3: Presentation on GAA Digitisation Project by Pat Bracken, Library Service**

Pat Bracken, Senior Executive Librarian gave a presentation on the ongoing work by the Tipperary Studies Digitisation Team to expand access to historic GAA materials through digital collections. Pat Bracken stated that considerable work had gone into the digitisation of divisional match programmes and team sheets. Since 2016, match programmes and divisional finals have been gradually uploaded online as part of an effort to make historically significant GAA material more accessible to the public. This digitisation initiative recognises the breadth of the GAA community, which touches every parish in Tipperary and extends far beyond the county. To support the expansion of this work, permission has been sought from all four divisional boards—Mid, North, South and West Tipperary—to digitise their respective collections. As a result, a substantial body of material is now ready for release in 2026. The Mid Tipperary collection comprises 120 items dating from 1953 to 2025, North Tipperary contributes 93 items from 1964 to 2025, South Tipperary adds 103 items covering 1978 to 2025, and West Tipperary offers 81 items from the same period, collectively forming a comprehensive archive of local sporting heritage.

Pat Bracken stated that the digitisation project encompasses the full spectrum of match documentation, ranging from complete match programmes to single-page team sheets. One particularly noteworthy example is a team sheet from the 1994 meeting between Loughmore–Castleiney and Peil Durlas. This document highlights the value of preservation: one of the Thurles players listed, now a teacher in De La Salle in Waterford, had never previously seen the sheet and expressed genuine delight at finally accessing a copy. Pat Bracken stated that the GAA material forms an important addition to the wider Tipperary Studies Digital programme, which already houses an extensive variety of archival resources, including photographs, landed estate papers, family papers, graveyard registers, and gravestone inscriptions. The platform currently contains 8,102 items across 157 distinct collections, many of which have been made available through a loan-and-return model that encourages individuals and families to share privately held historical material. The inclusion of match programmes and team sheets strengthens the platform's appeal and broadens its relevance to a wider audience.

Finally, Pat Bracken stated that in 2026, several steps are planned to bring the divisional GAA collections to the public. A formal launch event will take place in early 2026 with representation from each of the four divisional boards. The project will also be promoted through National League match programmes, raising awareness among supporters and clubs. It is anticipated that this increased visibility will encourage members of the public to submit missing match programmes and team sheets, further enhancing the archive. Additionally, contact will be made with the Tipperary GAA County Board to request permission to digitise outstanding materials from the round-robin stages, which are expected to be of significant interest to clubs and individuals.

Cllr Moloney thanked Pat Bracken for his presentation. He stated that the GAA is represented in every corner in Ireland. He further stated that he welcomed this project and said it was very important to preserve the heritage of the GAA. Martin Quinn said that the project was a brilliant initiative. He said that the launch will raise the project profile.

#### **Item 4: Update on Library Service by Damien Dullaghan & Pat Bracken**

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 two Library Capital Projects at different stages, namely Cahir Library and Clonmel Library.

He stated that works had commenced on a new Library for Cahir which will be located in the Craft Granary building. Although the Craft Granary Building is almost two hundred years old, it will be transformed into a modern, highly energy efficient and sustainable building. These works will be overseen by Robin Lee Architecture, the project Architect and Mulcahy Construction, the construction company who will carry out all building works. Damien Dullaghan stated that the new Library will be the first in County Tipperary to provide a suite of new technology solutions to the public. These include a Podcasting Room, a dedicated Makerspace room which has technologies such as Robotics and 3D Printing. In addition, the Library will have a meeting room, Gallery Space and Sensory Room. The project received funding of €1.7 million under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF).

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.

Pat Bracken then gave an overview of the Children's Book Festival, 2025. He stated that the Children's Book Festival 2025 was officially launched by Cllr John Carroll, Cathaoirleach, Tipperary County Council in Nenagh Library on 1<sup>st</sup> October. The occasion marked the beginning of a month-long programme dedicated to promoting literacy and fostering a culture of reading among young audiences. The highlight of the launch was a performance by Arran Towers, appearing in character as the Big Friendly Giant (BFG). 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. Cllr Ambrose praised the work of the Library Service which she said was an essential service for the community.

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

Melanie Scott provided an update on the Arts Service. She stated that the Artist in Primary School Scheme celebrated its 25th anniversary, acknowledging more than two decades of collaboration between artists and primary schools. A commemorative certificate, first presented to Boher National School, will now be awarded to all participating schools to recognise their commitment to creative learning. The Tipperary Rural Traveller Project

Residency concluded with the launch of 'Stories of the Wind', an intergenerational textile-based exhibition exploring connections to land and heritage. The Tipperary Youth Arts Hub continued to support youth arts practitioners, offering training including a full-day digital creativity workshop led by artist Michael Fortune. The 2025 Tipperary Dance Festival delivered ten days of performances, residencies, and masterclasses, reinforcing its role as one of Ireland's leading curated dance festivals. In addition, postgraduate researcher Esther Griffin – Van Orsouw received the LSAD Postgraduate Researcher of the Year Award for her work developed with the Tipperary Arts Office. A major new installation, 'Basking – The Nursery' by artist Tom Meskell, combined science, biodiversity, and community collaboration, engaging local artists, Foróige groups, and school pupils. The exhibition opened in mid-November and will run until December 2025. Nationally, the Arts Council and Ireland's 31 local authorities marked 40 years of partnership at a major event in Limerick, celebrating €2.6 billion in joint investment and the transformative impact of arts development across the country. The period also saw continued professional training for artists through Visual Artists Ireland, with webinars supporting collaborative practice and digital engagement.

Cllr Moloney thanked Melanie Scott for her update.

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

Ann-Marie Fleming reported that work is currently underway to finalise departmental drawdowns for a number of ongoing biodiversity projects. Planning for the 2026 programme has commenced, with several national grant funding schemes now open for applications. She confirmed that the Biodiversity Plan is progressing well and that public consultation on the draft plan will begin in the New Year. It is her intention to present the finalised plan to the Plenary Council at its May meeting for adoption.

**Item 7: Update on the Museum Service by Marie McMahon**

Marie McMahon provided an update on the Museum's Heritage Stewardship Project. She stated that it was a pilot initiative funded by The Heritage Council's Heritage Stewardship Fund. The project aimed to strengthen the museum's outreach, educational practice, and heritage skills development, aligning with the Museum's mission to deepen public engagement with Tipperary's cultural heritage. The initiative was fully compliant with the Heritage Council's Museum Standards. The programme enabled the Museum to explore new models of working with heritage in community settings, expanding the museum's educational remit and supporting its goals of improving accessibility, developing adult learning programmes, and strengthening partnerships. As part of the initiative, the museum delivered traditional skills workshops and community-focused activities, collaborating with craftspeople specialising in stone carving, basketry, textiles and other traditional Irish practices. These initiatives successfully engaged diverse communities and contributed to preserving heritage skills at risk of being lost. Independent evaluation of the project included interviews with artists, staff and partners, observations of sessions, participant

feedback and documentation of creative processes. Research into national and international evaluation methodologies informed the project's assessment and supported the Museum's goal of improving evaluation capacity. The project also developed insights for potential use across the Local Authority Museums Network (LAMN). Findings indicate that the project significantly enhanced community engagement, enriched the museum's educational offer, and strengthened institutional capacity. The evaluation concludes with recommendations to support future development, including expanding long-term partnerships, deepening adult learning provision, strengthening evaluation frameworks, and exploring opportunities for wider rollout across the national museum network.

**Item 8: Update on formation of Irish Language Committee (Referred to SPC by TCC Plenary Meeting)**

Damien Dullaghan provided an update on this matter. He stated that he had been in contact with the Tipperary County Council Irish Language Officer. The Irish Language Officer provided an overview of his core responsibilities within Tipperary County Council. His duties include coordinating Irish language training for staff, liaising with the Office of the Irish Language Commissioner on matters such as non-compliant signage, and ensuring adherence to the requirement that 20% of the Council's advertising expenditure is allocated to Irish-language media, including digital and social platforms. He also organises staff events as part of Seachtain na Gaeilge. The Irish Language Officer also noted that a variety of Irish-language programmes and activities continue to take place across the county, including Comhrá sessions in public libraries and cultural initiatives delivered by the Culture Team. Finally, the Irish Language Officer stated that the Council has demonstrated strong performance in promoting the Irish language, supported effectively by the Irish Language Office, the Library Service and the Culture Team. This item was then reviewed by the SPC and the proposal was considered at length. The SPC made the decision not to recommend an Irish Language Committee.

**AOB**

None

**Dates of future meetings**

The next meeting will be held on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2026.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

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

**Councillor Andy Moloney, Chairperson.**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2025**