

Minutes of Meeting of Library Services, Culture and Biodiversity Strategic Policy Committee held on 21st March, 2025 in Thurles MD Offices and via Zoom

Present:

Councillors: Cllr Andy Moloney (Chairperson), Cllr Siobhan Ambrose, Cllr Phyll Bugler, Cllr Niall Dennehy, Cllr Louise Morgan Walsh, Cllr Pamela Quirke O'Meara

Sectoral Interest: Theresia Gushychlbauer, Brendan Keogh, Sean O'Farrell, Aislinn O'Keeffe

In Attendance: Brian Beck, Director of Services
Damien Dullaghan, County Librarian
Jayne Sutcliffe, Museum Service
Melanie Scott, Arts Officer
Róisín O'Grady, Heritage Officer
Ann-Marie Fleming, Biodiversity Officer
Caitriona O'Connor, Royal Sites of Ireland Officer

Apologies: Cllr Kay Cahill Skehan, John Connors, Cllr John Crosse, Cllr John Fitzgerald, Cllr Richie Molloy, Martin Quinn

Councillor Moloney opened the Meeting and welcomed those in attendance.

Item 1: Minutes from previous meeting, 26th November, 2024

Proposed: Cllr Niall Dennehy

Seconded: Cllr Siobhan Ambrose

Matters arising: None

Item 2: Presentation on Music Generation Tipperary by Aidan O'Donnell

Cllr Andy Moloney welcomed Aidan O'Donnell to the meeting. Melanie Scott then gave a brief overview of the project in County Tipperary to date before handing over to Aidan

O'Donnell. Aidan O'Donnell gave a detailed presentation outlining the role of Music Generation Tipperary. He stated that the aim of Music Generation is to create access to performance music education for children and young people in Tipperary, from age 0 to 18. The project started in Sep 2019. Aidan O'Donnell outlined the in-school programming which Music Generation runs for five secondary schools. These schools are:

- Coláiste Mhuire Thurles,
- Coláiste Dún an Iascaigh, Cahir,
- Coláiste Phobail Rós Cré, Roscrea,
- St. Ailbe's, Tipperary Town,
- Presentation Clonmel

In addition, Music Generation also runs 11 hubs (afterschool settings) across the County, again many in partnership with local schools.

These include:

- Gaelscoil Bríde, Thurles
- CTI, Clonmel,
- Scoil Ruain, Killenaule,
- Newport College, Newport,
- St. Ailbe's, Tipperary Town,
- Nenagh Community College, Nenagh,
- Uilleann Pipes Hub, Templemore College of Further Education,
- Cashel Community College, Cashel,
- Presentation Primary, Carrick on Suir
- Presentation Guitar hub, Clonmel,
- Nenagh CBS Rock Hub, Nenagh

Aidan O'Donnell then outlined a music instrument lending scheme in Templemore College. Students can now rent an instrument for a nominal sum of €5 per week. This allows students to work with an instrument and try it without having to purchase it initially. Aidan O'Donnell then played two videos which outlined some of these projects and showed young people participating in the programmes. Cllr Moloney thanked Aidan O'Donnell for the presentation which he said was excellent. Cllr Louise Morgan Walsh also commended Aidan O'Donnell for the positive engagement Music Generation has with young people. She also stated that being able to play a musical instrument is a great skill which can be brought anywhere in the world. Cllr Dennehy asked if Music Generation worked with both Primary and Secondary schools and also asked about the genre of music they focussed on. Aidan O'Donnell confirmed that Music Generation worked with both Primary and Secondary Schools. He also stated that Music Generation worked on all genres of music from rock and pop to classical. Cllr Pamela Quirke O'Meara praised the creativity of the Music Generation Programme. She stated that music can bring joy to families and it can break down barriers.

Item 3: Presentation on Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN) by Róisín O’Grady

Róisín O’Grady, Heritage Officer gave a presentation on the iCAN project. iCAN was established by the National Museum of Ireland in 2009 and has been developed in partnership with participating local authority Heritage Officers and with support from Creative Ireland.

In 2023, to facilitate an expansion of the initiative, the Heritage Council came on board as a new funding partner.

The concept of iCAN is to encourage and support communities in collecting, preserving and making accessible their local history and heritage online. In addition to documenting information about local people, places, folklore, customs and traditions, community archives are also a valuable resource for genealogy and ancestry projects. Much of this material is either in people’s homes, memories, or in resources specific to their local community.

Anyone, anywhere in the world, can contribute their photos, maps, letters, records, stories and documents to help build these local collections. Róisín O’Grady stated that the key to the success of iCAN is when communities take on the sourcing, researching, digitizing, uploading & formatting content. She further stated that the Heritage Council have devised a full training programme to assist groups in doing this. The following Tipperary community and historical societies have participated in the iCAN programme and uploaded content since 2023:

- Borrisoleigh Heritage & Cultural Society
- Cahir social & Historical Society
- Ormond historical society
- Slieveardagh Coalmining history& heritage
- Tipperary in the decade of revolution

Cllr Moloney thanked Róisín O’Grady for her presentation and stated that he looked forward to seeing the impact of the iCAN programme.

Item 4: Update on the Library Service by Damien Dullaghan

Damien Dullaghan gave an update on Library Capital Projects. He stated that Minister Heather Humphreys officially opened the new Library and Enterprise Centre for Templemore on 3rd December. The new Library offered a suite of new technology solutions to the public. These include a dedicated Makerspace room which has technologies such as Robotics and 3D Printing. There is a glazed reading area for both adults and children which offers a view directly into the Library. The building also includes a meeting room for

Templemore Community Development Association who have collaborated with Tipperary County Council on this project. The support of the Templemore Community Development Association was a major contributing factor in RRDF funding being received for this project. The landmark project received funding of €3 million under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF). An additional investment of €1 million was provided by Tipperary County Council. Damien Dullaghan further stated that works would commence on the Craft Granary building in Cahir in June 2025. The building would be converted into a new Library over three floors and would transform the building. Damien Dullaghan stated that this project was also funded under the RRDF programme. He said that this funding had completely transformed Templemore Town Hall which dates back to 1810 and would transform the Craft Granary building which dated back to 1845. Damien Dullaghan also gave an update on the new Library in Clonmel. He stated that the project received €3m under the Library Capital programme and that the design team would be lodging a planning application later in the year.

Cllr Moloney thanked Damien Dullaghan for his update. He stated that converting buildings such as the Craft Granary transformed old buildings and brought them back to life. He further stated that the residents of Cahir were very much looking forward to a new Library which was badly needed.

Item 5: Update on the Arts Service by Melanie Scott

Melanie Scott gave an update on the Arts Service. She outlined how the Arts Service held a seminar in February for artists entitled 'Exploring Youth Arts' in Templemore. This was held in partnership with Tipperary Youth Arts Hub Arts Office, Tipperary ETB and the National Youth Council of Ireland. Tipperary-based artists with an interest in youth arts were invited for a day-long workshop to explore youth arts practice, introduce the youth work context in Tipperary and develop professional practice with artist Chelsea Canavan. Thirteen artists attended for a full day training.

The Arts Office also held an Artists Networking - Creative Engagement Event on 6th March in Thurles. The Arts Office invited artists and creative practitioners working across all disciplines to a networking and information sharing event to explore socially engaged arts practice with special guest artist Marie Brett. The event was designed for those starting out as well as artists with experience in socially engaged practice and collaborative working. There was a huge response to this initiative and all places were filled. Melanie Scott stated that thirty-seven artists attended and feedback has been very positive.

Melanie Scott gave an update on the Festival and Events Schemes which is co-ordinated by the Arts Office working with the five Districts. This work is ongoing with recommendations due to go to MD meetings in the coming weeks.

Melanie Scott gave a brief update on the Artists in Primary Schools Scheme. Twelve schools have been approved for projects during 2025 across artforms including visual arts, drama, music, animation.

Melanie Scott stated that the Tipperary Arts Act Grants applications have been assessed and recommendations will go to the April meeting of the full Council.

Finally, Melanie Scott stated that a funding application was made to The Arts Council in early March for additional funding for a Culture Night LATE event to take place in Clonmel in September. It will be about two months before it is known if this has been successful. Clonmel is the only town with the population to qualify for this stream of funding.

Cllr Moloney thanked Melanie Scott for her update. He also praised the Arts Service and stated that their contribution makes a significant impact in the County.

Item 6: Presentation on the Museum Service by Julia Walsh-Drohan

Julia Walsh-Drohan, Museum Service gave an update on the Museum Service. She commenced with an update on ARTiculation, ARTiculation Ireland is a public speaking competition which promotes the appreciation and discussion of art, artefacts and architecture in secondary schools throughout Ireland. The competition seeks to engage students between 15-19 years. The Museum runs ARTiculation in County Tipperary. Julia Walsh outlined that there were regional events and a grand final. Seven schools from across County Tipperary took part with discovery sessions attended by over 300 students. The regional final of the public speaking competition was held in the Council Chamber, Clonmel on 26th February. First time Participating schools were Scoil Mhuire, Thurles, Comeragh College, Carrick-on-Suir and Raheen College, Clonmel. Repeat participating schools were Ursuline Convent, Thurles, Loreto, Clonmel, Gael Cholaiste, Clonmel and CBS High School, Clonmel. Two students representing Loreto and Ursuline were selected to represent Tipperary in the All Ireland Final which will take place in The Hunt Museum, Limerick on April 3rd. Six Counties from across the country will take part in the final – Carlow, Clare, Tipperary, Kerry, Cork and Dublin.

Julia Walsh-Drohan informed the meeting that the Museum celebrates 25 years in Mick Delahunty Square this year. She stated that she is currently working on a programme of events to mark the occasion. The first event will be a recorded podcast in association with History Ireland Hedge Schools on May 17th looking at the future of Museums. This will be a panel debate with representatives from the Museum sector from across the country, north and south. The event will be hosted on the History Ireland site which has average listenership figures of 393,000. Funding application made to ICOM Ireland for support, awaiting outcome. Other events will include a family fun day during the summer with reenactors, art and crafts etc.

Julia Walsh-Drohan stated that a grant application made to the Heritage Council under the Heritage Stewardship fund was successful. Tipperary Museum has been awarded €30,000. This funding allows Museum to bring traditional crafts and skills to diverse audiences and highlight similarities between various cultures and provide disadvantaged audiences with opportunity to acquire new skills.

Cllr Moloney thanked Julia Walsh-Drohan for her update and praised the work the Museum Service does.

Item 7: Update on the Heritage Service by Róisín O’Grady

Róisín O’Grady, Heritage Officer gave an update on the Heritage Service. She stated that work on a new five-year Heritage Plan for Tipperary has commenced. She also stated that the draft plan would be brought before the SPC by the end of the year. She stated that Ann-Marie Keaveney had secured SILAD (Shared Island Local Authority Development Funding) funding for a Cruinniú na nÓg project involving the Rock of Cashel and Navan Fort, Armagh

Róisín O’Grady stated that the Creative Ireland Programme was progressing very well. Cllr Moloney thanked Róisín O’Grady for her presentation and praised the positive impact that the Heritage Office was having on the County.

Róisín O’Grady stated that she had submitted twelve projects for funding under the Community Monument Fund.

Item 8: Update on the Biodiversity Service by Róisín O’Grady

Róisín O’Grady , deputising for Ann-Marie Fleming, Biodiversity Officer gave an update on the Biodiversity Service. She stated that Ann-Marie Fleming’s primary aim in 2025 was the completion and adoption of the Tipperary Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030. Sean O’Farrell stated that the farming landscape would need to be considered in this plan. He stated that the impact of the Nature Restoration Law should be discussed at the Biodiversity Forum and possibly bring in an expert to give an overview on this. He further stated that the Tipperary landscape is very diverse. There could be scope to discuss how farmers could be remunerated for not working their land. Róisín O’Grady stated that this was a very interesting area and that she would discuss this with Ann-Marie Fleming in terms of this being an agenda item on the Biodiversity forum.

Item 9: Formation of Irish Language Committee (Referred to SPC by Plenary Council Meeting)

Damien Dullaghan stated that at the Plenary TCC Meeting on 10th March, 2025, it was decided that the proposal to set up an Irish Language Committee was referred back to the Library Service, Culture and Biodiversity SPC for further consideration.

A discussion then followed among the members regarding the formation of this committee. Cllr Moloney stated that Tipperary County Council has an Irish Language Officer in place and

asked Members if they believed it was necessary to form a committee when this work was being carried out. It was decided that Damien Dullaghan would meet with David Coleman, Irish Language Officer, Tipperary County Council and the matter would be discussed further at the June SPC.

AOB

Brendan Keogh thanked all presenters for their reports. He further stated that there was merit in giving an update on Culture in Tipperary County Council, but he queried whether strategy or policy was going to be discussed. Cllr Moloney stated that there would be policies coming before the SPC and he felt it was important that it was important to discuss and input into cultural programming. Brendan Keogh thanked Cllr Moloney and Damien Dullaghan and stated that it was good to discuss these matters.

Dates of future meetings

The next meeting will be held on 20th June, 2025.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

Signed: _____

Councillor Andy Moloney, Chairperson.

Date: _____, 2025