

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE  
ZOOM MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2022 AT 11 AM**

**Present:** Cllr. Anne Ferris (remote), Cllr. John Mullen, Cllr. Melanie Corrigan, Cllr. Vincent Blake, Irene Sweeney (IS), Kevin Mann (KM), Mai Quaid (MQ), Niamh Wogan.

**Apologies:** Brendan Martin, Clara Jenkinson, Cllr. Gail Dunne, Cllr. Miriam Murphy, Deirdre Whitfield (DW), Jenny Sherwin (JS), Máire Halvey (MH), Michael Nicholson, Patricia Reilly, Sandra Dunne.

**In Attendance:** Aisling Hubbard (AH), Caroline Fox (CF), Gráinne O'Neill (GON), Lisa Mc Mahon, Mary Murphy on behalf of Brendan Martin (MM), Meadhbh Cahill (MC), Sheena Hubbard (SH).

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Cllr. Vincent Blake opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Cllr. Blake noted his new role as chair of the SPC and looks forward to the next two years. Cllr. Blake thanked Cllr. Gail Dunne for all his work over the last two years and wished him well.

Cllr. Blake welcomed new members Mai Quaid and Niamh Wogan to the SPC.

The list of apologies was given by CF.

**{1} Adoption of the Minutes**

Adoption of the minutes of the meeting of 13<sup>TH</sup> December was proposed by IS and seconded by Cllr. Blake.

**{2} Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**{3} Covid Update**

CF advised that council staff are back in the office almost full time, with one day of remote working per week. It is expected everyone to be back full time over the next few weeks with the option of hybrid working being considered for the future. CF noted that it is great to be back in person for the SPC meetings and good to see everyone in person.

CF introduced new staff members, Sheena Hubbard and Meadhbh Cahill to the SPC. Cllr. Blake wished both well in their new positions.

**{4} Project Ireland 2040 Rural Regeneration Programme Updates**

- **CLÁR**

GON advised that the CLÁR scheme for 2022 has been announced with three different measures:

Measure 1: Developing Community Facilities & Amenities

Measure 2: Mobility, Cancer Care and Community First Responders Transport

Measure 3: "Our Islands"

Measure 1 will be the local authority with a closing date of 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2022.

**CLÁR Updates:**

Rathcoyle MUGA completed.

Askanagap and Knockananna car parks are almost complete.

Knockananna Community Hall Allotment Garden is almost complete.

Knockananna Community Pitch Flood Lights – contact has been made with Youth Group for updates.

Knockananna Footpaths – Dermot in MD working on this and will give GON an update.

Cllr. Mullen noted that the footpaths and flood lights have been delayed a long time and enquired if the footpaths and streetlights were funded by CLÁR. Cllr. Blake advised they were part of a previous CLÁR scheme. CF advised that the issue may be due to the delays with the ESB connection. GON will follow up with the MD ahead of the next meeting.

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- **Town & Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS)**

DW sent her apologies. Update circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting.

Three County Wicklow projects were successful in funding of €310,000 - Wicklow town, Ballinaclesh and Donard. One or two projects were not successful but these will be revisited next year following feedback from the department. Cllr. Mullen noted this was disappointing compared to neighbouring counties and agreed it would be beneficial to get feedback for future success. Cllr. Blake acknowledged this disappointment and hopes it can improve in the future.

- **Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)**

CF advised that all current projects are underway or almost completed.

WCC has been very successful over the last few years with ORIS funding but delays have held up the progress and completion of projects, particularly with the recent pandemic.

Carol Coad is working on the 2022 applications and WCC is looking for new schemes for Measure 1. Any ideas for projects up to €30K are welcome and can be discussed with CF. The closing date for Measure 1 applications is 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2022. CF will circulate the guidelines to committee members. The deadline for larger funding measures is 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2022.

Cllr. Corrigan noted that she contacted Carol Coad in relation to the possibility of submitting an application for the Scalp Trail. CF advised that the Feasibility Study may need to be completed in advance of an application but will consider this option.

CF suggested that Carol Coad could join an upcoming meeting to give a rundown on the ORIS projects.

- **Community Enhancement Programme (CEP)**

MH sent her apologies. Update circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting.

The Community Activities Fund applications are being compiled and will be assessed over the coming weeks. The Community Awards Scheme for 2022 has not been advertised yet. It will be in the local paper and on the WCC website.

- **Urban Regeneration & Development Scheme (URDF)**

DW sent her apologies. No update provided.

CF advised that Wicklow is being resubmitted. IS asked if the feedback and resubmission is definite. CF advised it was - there were meetings with the department in the last week or two but does not know the details. Feedback will be given to members as soon as possible.

Cllr. Ferris noted that the funding for Bray Harbour was very welcome as the work was deemed urgent and necessary. It will also develop the public realm around the harbour. Cllr. Ferris added that the intention is not to build apartments but to make the harbour safe in consultation with businesses and residents. Cllr. Blake acknowledged this good news.

- **Rural Regeneration & Development Scheme (RRDF)**

DW sent her apologies. No update provided.

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CF advised that Blessington was successful in funding of over 1 million for the regeneration of the town and a feasibility study is to be done for Bray Harbour (7.4 million investments).

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Cllr. Mullen noted that a number of applications were unsuccessful with the communities disappointed - feedback would be beneficial including whether or not it would have been more beneficial to put the three towns in one application. CF agreed the applications were very good so there is huge disappointment. There will be a few meetings with the department feedback will be requested in the hope of resubmitting.

## {5} Strategy Updates

- **Food & Beverage Strategy**

DW sent her apologies. No update provided.

CF advised that the focus of the strategy is on food, poverty and sustainability. This was highlighted by the Community Response team during the pandemic and research is now being done in this area to identify the needs of the community. A working group has been formed to work on food poverty and sustainability in the county.

- **Greenway Strategy**

### **Blessington eGreenway**

CF advised that this was a community led project that was in development for a number of years. There is currently 6.5km of trail. The project was successful in securing 15 million and the environmental assessments had been completed. More recently, the application was submitted to An Bord Pleanála and is on public display. A number of submissions were received by ABP which will be sent to WCC in the coming weeks. One point that has come up is the traffic lights on bridges which will be looked at by WCC.

Cllr. Mullen thanked all the staff and CF for the work on greenways throughout the county and Blessington. He noted there have been some difficulties in the last few weeks but that it is a fantastic project. Cllr Mullen asked if a stakeholder group will be set up as it will be important for communication and resolving any problems in a positive and pro-active way. CF acknowledged the problems with communication and advised that the project is under the remit of CCSD but will come back to John about the communications working group. In the meantime, CF has asked SH to

get involved with this and identify who should be on the committee. Councillors will be involved with this.

### **Wicklow to Greystones Greenway**

CF advised that the feasibility study is complete with a preferred route identified. Further reports and studies will be required for submission as part of the planning application to An Bord Pleanála. Funding has been received to complete these studies which will hopefully be progressed in 2022.

### **Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway**

CF advised that this project is currently at Phase 1 - a route has been identified and documents are being prepared for An Bord Pleanála. As there are quite a number of landowners, this makes the process a little different in securing the lands for the greenway – more detailed documents are required. There has been a lot of negotiation with landowners to date.

KM shared that there is great excitement about this proposed project as it would greatly enhance the area. IS Irene shared concern that this is still described as Phase 1 (as is Wicklow to Greystones) and noted that it needs to be a second priority after Blessington. KM agreed and wants to keep the momentum going on this.

CF advised that there is funding for a Feasibility Study on Wicklow to Greystones but work needs to be done before an application could be worked on for An Bord Pleanála. Arklow to Shillelagh is further ahead in this process and would definitely take priority.

- **Play & Recreation Strategy (Playgrounds and Leisure Centres)**

CF advised that there are a number of playgrounds across the county that need to be maintained going forward. A framework will need to be established with area engineers.

MQ noted that the Baltinglass playground is badly in need of attention and any help from the SPC would be much appreciated. CF will speak to Baltinglass MD about this.

Cllr. Blake noted that a motion was passed some time back and the maintenance need was recognised. A resolution was passed to set up a structure on a county wide basis. CF advised that MD staff do carry out inspections but contractors are outsourced due to specialised equipment, so it would be more streamlined for area engineer to get the work done. Cllr. Blake requested a report on maintenance for the next meeting.

- **Age Friendly Strategy**

GON advised that the new strategy is due next year – working with a consultant on this currently. A report is due at the end of March and feedback from groups will be looked at.

Avondale Forest Park is an exciting new project coming up with Coillte – a tourist destination due to open in July. It will be the first age friendly destination in Ireland (possibly Europe) as it will be totally accessible.

Athy and Baltinglass now age friendly and a launch is due to take place soon.

Senator Pat Casey is the new age friendly representative in Wicklow.

The Older People's Council are due to meet at the end of the month.

ALONE service is an inter-departmental project with housing which allocates to get houses ready for older people and those with disabilities coming out of hospital. It is a simple project but will work very well for vulnerable people. Cllr Mullen enquired about retro fit for housing and how is the best point of contact for this. GON will need to meet with housing on this and will be the liaison with the hospitals to get the grants through quicker.

- **Arts Strategy**

JS sent her apologies. Update circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting.

CF advised the committee of the appointment of Síle Stewart as Arts Services Coordinator which will be a great support to JS and the Arts Office.

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The Local Live Music Performance Scheme is in its third phase of investment in County Wicklow and there will be a tender soon for services required to be fulfilled by June 2022.

- **Creative Ireland Strategy**

JS sent her apologies. Update circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting.

- **Library Strategy**

BM sent his apologies. Update circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting. MM provided an update on behalf of BM.

Architectural contracts have been awarded for the new library in Aughrim and the extension to Ballywaltrim in Bray. There is a two year time frame for completion.

Most in person events are back up and running but the benefit of online and hybrid events reaching a wider audience are evident.

Literacy programme is being built upon. 'My First Library Card' scheme allows pre-schools age children to access books from a younger age before they start primary school.

KM noted that the town is very excited for the Aughrim Library project and Cllr. Ferris noted more good news for Bray with Ballywaltrim.

- **Migrant Integration Strategy**

DW sent her apologies. No update provided.

CF advised that a committee meeting is due to take place tomorrow so as to prepare in advance for the arrival of Ukrainian refugees and identify the services needed. Some offers of accommodation have come in for Wicklow but need to discuss this in advance of any request coming from the department. CF will share the link to attend this meeting with members.

Cllr. Blake noted that it is a tragic situation and anything we can do to help will be welcomed.

## {6} Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership

- **Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership Update**

AH provided an update. Update circulated in advance of the meeting.

### Sport Ireland Funding

A number of large applications in at the moment but won't know the outcome until summer.

A Covid fund of €40K has been provided to support sports clubs and community groups with a maximum of €1500. Open to any organisation that provides sport for all ages and can be used for running costs. An ad will be going out and will be highlighted to groups that have not previously received funding.

Other funding streams are coming down the line for GAA and football clubs.

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### Sports Capital Grants

Wicklow received €3.7 million this year (an increase of 2 million). An online workshop was held to give information on how best to fill in application forms which was very beneficial.

### Other Updates

- Online courses continuing in 2022.
- A six week Dance Programme in collaboration with Ascend, was set up to support eight women who have recently moved to Wicklow Town from Afghanistan.
- The Learn to Cycle programme is in primary schools around the county however the costs associated are high so the structure is changing to include teacher and SNA training to carry out the work in future. This opens up the funding to be spent on balance bikes etc.
- Planning for Bike Week 2022 has commenced.
- Pilot Project with An Tochar GAA, Irish Deaf Society, WSRP & GAA Health & Wellbeing Committee with support from Inclusion officers of GAA, LGFA & Camogie, to identify how the deaf community can be included. The most commonly used phrases in GAA are being implemented into digital content as well as signing being used as part of training with children's groups.
- Tendering for lands in Rathdrum and Brides Head in Wicklow. DW manages the community sports audit in Wicklow which will be spread out to the remaining MDs.

IS raised an issue of safety when cycling and raising awareness at a young age – could this be combined into the Learn to Cycle scheme. There is also a potentially suitable area in Arklow that could be used for cycle training.

- **Healthy Ireland & Healthy Wicklow Update**

The Healthy Ireland funding is linked to Healthy Wicklow. It addresses health and inequality. MC will be working on this and will grow the programme in the coming years.

Cllr. Corrigan noted that it is great to see this funding coming to Bray.

### **{7} Disability Inclusion Steering Committee Update**

GON advised that the applications for funding were submitted before Christmas.

A new disability strategy is in the pipeline – tenders are in and a consultant will be chosen. It will be the first strategy in this area and will be a guide for communities on accessibility.

Wheelchair buggies are being looked at for beaches in particular access to Kilcoole Beach with the MD and Irish Rail.

**{8} Any other business**

- CF advised that Pride of Place applications for 2022 are coming up. This award recognises the work that groups, clubs and individuals do in their communities. Without these communities the work we do wouldn't be carried out and it is important to acknowledge this. Any suggestions for nominations can be sent to CF.

Kiltegan Village and Neighbourhood Network Time Capsule (intergenerational project set up during the pandemic that connected the older population with younger population in the area) were put forward. This was a successful project and has gone on to be implemented in 8 other councils.

- Cllr. Mullen enquired about the LECP public consultation and if this would be the only public consultation. He noted that committees are only now getting back on their feet post-Covid, so would be concerned if this is the only public consultation. CF noted Cllr. Mullen's comments and will bring this forward for consideration.
- On the Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Strategy, Cllr. Mullen noted that it needs to be amended to include provision for outdoor motor sports. CF advised this can be added to the agenda and will link in with CC.
- Cllr. Blake noted that ceremonies of remembrance will be taking place on Saturday in each MD, for those who lost their lives during COVID-19.

**{10} Date for future meetings**

Mon 13<sup>th</sup> June, 11am. Rescheduled to Mon 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2.30pm.

Cllr. Blake suggested meeting again in the chamber as there is good room for social distancing. Members happy to continue with this arrangement.

Signed:

*Robert Blake*

Date:

27.6.2022