

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE  
ZOOM MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER AT 11 AM**

**Present:** Cllr. Gail Dunne, Cllr. John Mullen, Cllr. Melanie Corrigan, Cllr. Vincent Blake, Gertie Salley & Irene Sweeney.

**Apologies:** Cllr. Anne Ferris, Cllr. Miriam Murphy, Anne Gregory, Celine O'Neill, Kevin Mann, Aisling Hubbard, Deirdre Whitfield, Jenny Sherwin, Michael Nicholson, & Patricia Reilly.

**In Attendance:** Brendan Martin, Caroline Fox, Máire Halvey, Gráinne O'Neill & Lisa Mc Mahon.

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Cllr. Dunne opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Brendan Martin (BM) advised on the change of Chair for the SPC Committee in 2022 from Cllr. Dunne to Cllr. Blake. Cllr. Dunne thanked the committee for all their support over the last two years, acknowledged all of the projects that have been delivered through CCSD and wished Cllr. Blake all the best for the next two years as Chair.

BM also thanked PPN representatives Gertie Salley (GS) and Celene O'Neill (CON) and acknowledged their contribution to the SPC Committee. They will be replaced by new members in 2022.

Cllr. Dunne finished up at 11.30am and Irene Sweeney (IS) stepped in to chair the meeting.

**{1} Adoption of the Minutes**

Adoption of the minutes of the meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021 was proposed by GS and seconded by IS.

Adoption of the minutes of the meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021 was not possible due to absence of quorum.

**{2} Matters Arising**

Cllr. Mullen advised that he and Cllr. Blake could not attend the last SPC meeting due to Municipal District meetings and suggested to keep this in mind for future SPC meetings so as to avoid a clash of dates.

Cllr. Mullen also acknowledged GS's work on the SPC Committee and thanked her for all the support over the last few years.

**{3} Covid Update**

BM advised that libraries are open to the public with some slight restrictions on study spaces. Open Library is not yet reinstated in Arklow or instated in Wicklow. BM will keep everyone updated as the guidelines progress.

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

- **CLÁR**

BM welcomed Gráinne O'Neill (GON) to the SPC meetings.

GON directed the committee to Deirdre Whitfield's (DW) comprehensive report on CLÁR.

CLÁR 2020: Two car parks. Works just about finished on these 2 projects.

CLÁR 2021: Three projects funded. All three are community led - Askanagap Astro Turf, Knockananna Community Pitch Flood Lights and Knockananna Community Hall Allotment Garden.

Cllr. Blake acknowledged that a lot of work has been done but enquired about some of the projects that are not yet completed including Knockananna Footpath.

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

GON directed the committee to DW's comprehensive report on the TVRS.  
2021 results not yet announced.

The Streetscape Enhancement Measure deadline has been extended until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 to enable applicants to go through the planning process and complete works. Time constraints and availability of traders is impacting on the completion of works.

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

Caroline Fox (CF) advised on some good news on ORIS; 4 measures now approved for funding.

1. New funding stream for project development: Three Trout Route  
Feasibility study funding of 45K
2. Measure 2: Jubilee Loop and Avonmore Way link  
Accessibility funding of 162K for Samuel Hayes Bridge (access ramp)  
Full environmental assessment needed
3. Measure 2: Cliff Walk Protection Scheme  
Reroute project funding of 198K  
Repair works badly needed for this
4. Measure 3: The Sugarloaf Repair  
Repair project funding of 450K

The hope is to get all projects done in 2022.

All in all almost 1 million was received over the past year under ORIS – the 7<sup>th</sup> highest in the country. CF acknowledged the excellent work carried out by the Rural Recreation Officer, as the applications submitted under this funding scheme were at a very high standard.

- **Community Enhancement Programme (CEP)**

Máire Halvey (MH) gave an update on the CEP for 2021.

Good news is that tranche 1 payments are almost completed.

Tranche 2 was recently announced with an allocation of 252K funding for Wicklow. Tranche 2 will support groups in disadvantaged areas with costs, and those affected by Covid. It will be administered by the LCDC in each area. The closing date is 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022. Information has been sent to the PPN and members of the Oireachtas.

IS asked if the deadline could be pushed out if needed, due to groups not being able to meet at the moment. MH advised that this deadline does need to be put in place which has been approved by Michael Nicholson (MN) but that this will allow for a little wiggle room and applications that arrive in the first week of February won't be refused.

Cllr. Mullen asked if sporting clubs can apply. MH advised that voluntary and sporting organisations can apply.

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

DW sent her apologies and provided a report update for members prior to the meeting.

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

DW sent her apologies and provided a report update for members prior to the meeting. CF advised that applications have been submitted and now awaiting a decision. Information can be found in DW's report and if there are any questions they can be addressed at the next meeting.

## {5} Strategy Updates

- **Food & Beverage Strategy**

DW sent her apologies and provided a report update for members prior to the meeting. CF advised that a subgroup has been formed to work on food poverty and sustainability in the county and some reports have been carried out.

- **Greenway Strategy**

### **Blessington eGreenway**

CF advised that Blessington eGreenway has received funding. Reports are being worked on for a planning permission application to An Bord Pleanála which has progressed a little slower than hoped. CF had hoped to submit this before Christmas but it will likely be the New Year. However, the Christmas break won't affect the timeline too much. The goal for works to commence is summer 2022. More information can be read in the report update.

### **Wicklow to Greystones Greenway**

CF advised that a feasibility study is being carried out on the route and is subject to funding. There is no funding in place currently for this greenway.

### **Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway**

CF advised that this is currently at planning stage and a Natura Impact Statement will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála. CF advised the committee it is anticipated that this application to ABP will be made in quarter 1 or 2 of 2022. This application will be slightly different to Blessington as there are some land access issues.

No funding secured yet but CF is hopeful for another call on this. Construction expected in early 2023 with a completion timeframe of 18 months (subject to funding).

Cllr. Mullen stated that there is a lot of concern over the lack of progress on the Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway as it has been going on 15 years now, with a repeat of the NIS report, and is way behind on commitments to the public and landowners. An allocation of staff was given for Active Travel – Cllr. Mullen enquired if those extra resources have been allocated to Outdoor Recreation.

Cllr. Mullen advised that in speaking to Margaret Hartnett (MH), MH advised that a letter is due to go out to the landowner before Christmas. Cllr. Mullen asked if this promise will be honoured.

CF stated that she understands the concern of Cllr. Mullen and how the community feels, and will bring the letter query to the team and the senior engineer.

CF advised that resources can be limited but has no knowledge of additional staff coming in to Outdoor Recreation – not to the greenway projects anyway. While it is advantageous for the county to develop so many outdoor recreation projects, it is difficult to complete the projects with the staff resources available.

CF advised that the team are working on all of this and agrees it is a long process. There is a lot of work involved and a lot of documents to be prepared when going to An Bord Pleanála. In addition working with consultants and awaiting their recommendations, reports, amendments, the review process etc. can be very time consuming. The overall goal is to submit a strong application with fewer questions as a result, so the aim is to spend more time getting everything correct now before submitting the application, so as to be able to stand over it.

IS acknowledged the frustration on both sides but also feels that if applications don't go in, the funding strands may no longer exist.

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

MH advised that inspections were being arranged in 2022 but insurance cover was an issue for the organisation carrying out inspections.

Cllr. Blake referred back to a previous discussion about maintenance of playgrounds in which a central structure within the council to maintain the playgrounds was discussed. MH will check within the MDs and get back to Cllr. Blake. This will be added to the agenda for the next SPC meeting.

The Play Policy and a few other areas need to be updated. DW and GON to work on this in the future.

CF updated on leisure centres (Arklow, Wicklow and Shoreline Greystones are leased out). These centres are back open with restrictions. They have struggled during lockdown but members have come back. There will be push for new memberships in Jan 2022. Swimming is becoming busy again. There is support from the council to ensure facilities are available to the public.

- **Age Friendly Strategy**

The new strategy for 2022-2027 is still in process and at consultation phase. Public consultation is ongoing and surveys are still active. A new national strategy will be coming towards the end of 2022.

Rathcoran Estate in Baltinglass are in the process of applying for the 1<sup>st</sup> Age Friendly Lifetime Community. Implementation of a steering committee to take place next year after the resident's association is formed.

Avondale House will be applying for the 1<sup>st</sup> Age Friendly Tourist Destination. This process is due to start in the New Year.

- **Comhairle na nÓg**

A Mental Health Campaign was launched - this came out of their training course with Lust for Life during Mid Term. They'll be producing their own Podcast called "it's not taboo to talk" which will focus on youth mental health and they'll have a website to go with it.

The Youth Attitudes towards Drugs Online Survey is being promoted far and wide this week so the hope is to receive a good few responses across the county so that a report can be produced which will inform work happening in drugs prevention and education in Wicklow.

- **Arts Strategy**

JS sent her apologies and provided an Arts report update for members prior to the meeting. BM read through some of the points on the report for the committee.

The final two programmes under the LLPS (Local Live Performance Scheme) are a 20 minute TV quality broadcast by County Wicklow artist Cora Venus Lunny and a project called the 12 Days of Christmas which will be a five minute video each day for the twelve days of Christmas all by some of Wicklow's finest artists - spoken word and musicians.

The N81 Per Cent for Art Commission will be placed on E Tenders prior to Christmas.

The Arts Office secured the Outdoor Spaces Scheme for Bray MD in partnership with the Bray MD Team.

- **Creative Ireland Strategy**

Jenny Sherwin (JS) sent her apologies and a report update will be circulated to members after the meeting. Any questions on this can be directed to JS. BM read through some of the points on the report for the committee.

A tender for Project Manager for Creative Ireland for 2022 is out for quotations currently and will be selected in the final weeks in December.

Rathdrum Play Fest was on the Halloween weekend and had 2,500 visitors in line with safe Covid 19 Protocols on the 30th and 31st of October.

A Climate Action project in the Uplands is at research stage.

The Sonamus Music Residency Programme was initiated.

- **Library Strategy**

BM gave an update on the reopening of libraries stating that figures are currently at 60% with a variety of outreach activities and initiatives taking place including Children's Book Festival, First5 Little Library Bags, Tips for Lowering Cholesterol Zoom Talk, Junior Explorer Nature Walk, STEM Family Activity, Parents Plus Special Needs Course, Nature Walk, Mandarin Dual Language Story Time and Wicklow Naturally's October Feast.

IS congratulated BM on the Wicklow Library opening event and stated that the archives are fabulous.

- **Migrant Integration Strategy**

No update provided.

## **{6} Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership**

- **Wicklow Sport & Recreation Partnership Update**

Aisling Hubbard (AS) sent her apologies and provided a report update for members prior to the meeting. MH read through some of the points on the report for the committee.

Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership made a submission to Sport Ireland under the Covid -19 Grant Scheme and has been approved for funding. New schemes will begin again in 2022.

Approval has been granted for two permanent staff members and a temporary Sports Development Officer. The positions will be formalised going forward. Interviews are taking place for a Sláintecare Communities Officer.

- **Healthy Ireland & Healthy Wicklow Update**

DW sent her apologies and provided a report update for members prior to the meeting. MH advised that Healthy Ireland funds have been allocated and works will start in the first quarter of 2022.

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

Three applications for funding have gone in through the Disability Participation and Awareness Fund and now awaiting a decision.

Registration forms have gone in for the changing rooms in Wicklow Library. As the library was retrofit of an existing building, this will more than likely be a 'step down' facility due to the space constraints. Awaiting a decision – hope to hear in the next few weeks.

International Day of Disabilities on 3rd December was marked with Purple Lights display with the lighting up civic buildings throughout the various MDs.

The AD caller initiative for Wicklow was also launched on 3<sup>rd</sup> December. This will now be rolled out to businesses.

**{8} Ronnie Delany Statue Update**

CF advised that the statue was unveiled on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and acknowledged the amount of work that Arklow MD did on the project. There were delays due to Covid-19 but the end result was amazing. It was great to have Dr Ronnie Delaney attend in person for the unveiling as well as the sculptor Paul Ferriter. It is a great feature for Arklow and gives a positive presence in the town.

CF hopes to be able to have more events similar to this in 2022.

IS congratulated CF and all the team on the work carried out. IS has seen tourists taking pictures and thinks it is a fantastic piece of Art.

**{9} Any other business**

Cllr. Mullen thanked all his fellow SPC members and the staff in CCSD for their continued work on the SPC. Also Cllr. Mullen wished everyone a Happy Christmas.

IS wished GS all the best for the future. Also IS acknowledged the huge amount of work that goes into the CCSD department and would like to see more publicity for all the projects that take place, which the public are not aware of. IS wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

BM echoed the well wishes, thanked everyone and sent apologies on behalf of Michael Nicholson on this occasion.

**{10} Date for future meetings**

Date set for Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a horizontal line that extends to the right.

Date:

23/3/22

