

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE
COUNCIL CHAMBER/ZOOM MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 19th SEPTMEBER 2022**

Present: Cllr. Vincent Blake, Cllr. Melanie Corrigan, Cllr. Anne Ferris (remote), Cllr. John Mullen, Kevin Macann (KM), Mai Quaid (MQ), Niamh Wogan (NW), Brendan Martin (BM), Caroline Fox (CF), Clodagh Whelan (CW), Jenny Sherwin (JS), Síle Stewart (SS).

Apologies: Cllr. Gail Dunne, Cllr. Miriam Murphy, Carina Holmes, Irene Sweeney, Aisling Hubbard, Deirdre Whitfield, Lisa Mc Mahon, Máire Halvey, Michael Nicholson

In Attendance: Carol Coad, Clara Jenkinson, Sandra Dunne

Cllr. Blake opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Cllr. Blake gave the list of apologies.

Cllr. Blake welcomed Carol Coad and Síle Stewart to the meeting.

{1} Adoption of the Minutes

Adoption of the minutes of the meeting of 27th June was proposed by MQ and seconded by NW.

{2} Matters Arising

Cllr. Mullen requested an update on the legal status of the courthouse. BM is not aware of any progress and will follow up with MN.

{3} Project Ireland 2040 Rural Regeneration Programme Updates

- **CLÁR**

CW provided an update as per report circulated in advance of the meeting.

Five applications approved under CLÁR totalling €169,200. Tranche 2 successful projects will be announced in the coming weeks. CW confirmed that, going forward the department require additional reporting documentation including summary of invoices in addition to the finance report.

Cllr. Blake enquired if it is possible to target additional areas under CLÁR. CW confirmed the grant scheme is for small-scale rural programmes. The department specify the areas targeted for funding, therefore, this cannot be extended. CF advised she has in the past tried to extend the funding to other areas. CF advised that she will issue a letter to the Department to see if the areas can be extended. Cllr. Blake confirmed that we should identify any areas that will benefit from the funding and confirm these areas in the letter. Cllr. Blake welcomed any input from Councillors.

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

DW sent her apologies. An update was circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting.

Cllr. Mullen requested a full list of projects applied for under T&V - some projects have been dropped and it is not clear why. If a project is not going ahead, the committee require feedback as to why the project was unsuccessful. This will allow Cllr. Mullen to answer questions in relation to T&V at the MD meetings. CF will follow up with DW to review projects and provide feedback to Cllr. Mullen and the committee prior to the next MD meeting. Cllr. Mullen will confirm if DW is required to attend the meeting or if feedback is sufficient.

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

CF provided an update as per report circulated in advance of the meeting.

Funding has been announced in respect of ORIS 2022 Measure 1 projects. CF thanked Coillte for their support and noted that Wicklow County Council (WCC) hope to build on this great relationship with Coillte. CF gave a summary of ORIS M3 projects applied for and advised that confirmation from the Department is outstanding.

Cllr. Blake introduced Carol Coad (Rural & Recreation Officer) to discuss outdoor recreation further and to take questions.

CC confirmed that €2.2m has been approved for projects to date. Work is carried out closely with Coillte and the National Parks. CC works closely with private landowners on various projects and would like to recognise their generosity in allowing access to their land.

Some of the projects include:

- Coillte are on board to support an equestrian trial in Ballyboy near Glenmalure.
- A steel handrail will be installed to ease access for kayakers at Avonmore River, Rathdrum.
- Funding was used to make a guided video on the stages of the Wicklow Way and is hosted on the Wicklow Tourism website. Future projects include St Kevin's way.
- Funding will be used for the purchase and installation of 10 automatic people counters to track trail numbers.

CC works with 79 landowners as part of the Wicklow Way. There is a budget of €60k per annum and an additional material budget. There is a Walk Scheme Support Fund that allows a grant up to €10,000. CC had two drawdowns under this fund the last year. The scheme assists elderly landowners that may find it difficult to maintain land to receive funding to clear land.

Cllr. Mullen had a question regarding community trails funding for maintenance grants and how they are administered and would like to know how the committees supply the receipts. CC will get back and confirm how the funding and reporting works for the community groups.

Cllr. Corrigan congratulated CC on all the work and projects completed to date. Cllr. Corrigan asked if the Walking Scheme is available for anyone leasing land, specifically the Bogmeadow Loop in Enniskerry, which is not a rural location. Following discussion Cllr. Corrigan advised she would investigate T&V funding. Cllr. Corrigan asked CC to meet with the IFA in her local area and go through the Walking Scheme. CC welcomed this suggestion.

MQ asked CC to talk to a local landowner regarding a Walking Scheme at Baltinglass Ringfort. CC is currently working on creating access for the Ringfort. CC welcomed MQ's suggestion to forward contacts to her. CC confirmed she is working on projects for West Wicklow. There is a Measure three application submitted for an Equestrian Trail project for West Wicklow.

SS of the Arts office suggested collaboration with CC for Baltinglass under the Creative Ireland project. CC welcomed this collaboration.

- **Community Enhancement Programme 2021 (CEP)**

MH sent her apologies. An update was circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting. CF advised if anyone has any questions to email MH.

- **Community Awards Scheme 2022**

MH sent her apologies. An update was circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting. CF advised if anyone has any questions to email MH.

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

DW sent her apologies. BM provided an update as per report circulated to committee prior to meeting.

Blessington has been awarded just over €1m funding under RRDF. The funding will be used for major regeneration of Blessington Town Centre and related projects, and will link in with the Blessington Lakes eGreenway.

Two additional applications were submitted under RRDF Category 1 and a decision is expected in October 2022. The two projects are Rathdrum RISE and Baltinglass; Looking Back and Moving Forward.

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

DW sent her apologies. BM provided an update as per report circulated to committee prior to meeting.

€7.14m has been announced for Bray Harbour Area Integrated Regeneration Project from the URDF.

Cllr. Mullen stated there is no mention of Category 2 funding for Tinahely Shillelagh project. CF will check the status of these projects.

Cllr. Ferris asked for clarification on what percentage of funding WCC will provide in relation to Bray Harbour. BM confirmed WCC will provide 20% funding. The cost of this project will be monitored on an ongoing basis due to the cost of materials. RPS contractors believe that the overall cost will rise.

{4} Strategy Updates

- **Food & Beverage Strategy**

DW sent her apologies. An update was circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting.

- **Greenway Strategy**

Blessington eGreenway

CF provided an update as per report circulated in advance of the meeting.

The planning application is with An Bord Pleanála. A total number of 293 submissions were received by the Bord by the deadline of the 4th March 2022. There is no update from An Bord Pleanála on likely decision date. It is envisaged that there will be an Oral Hearing for this project.

Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway

CF provided an update as per report circulated in advance of the meeting.

WCC are currently incorporating the published December 2021 “Code of Best Practice for National and Regional Greenways” and the associated “Greenway Sustainability Payments” documents to the proposed Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway Scheme. The options are being revisited for a few sections of the proposed greenway with updated ecological surveys underway on those sections. Tenders have been sought for the role of Independent Agronomist. It is anticipated that the

independent agronomist will be appointed in the very near future. Once the Independent Agronomist is appointed, the Agronomist's details will be communicated to Landowners.

Wicklow to Greystones Greenway

CF provided an update as per report circulated in advance of the meeting.

WCC is seeking to appoint consultants to this project. Tender submissions are due on the 20th September 2022. The successful consultant team will carry out detailed environmental surveys and bring the project to statutory approval stage.

Cllr. Blake would like to pass on best wishes to Margaret Hartnett in her new role and would like to thank Margaret for all the work she completed on these projects. CF confirmed that Declan O'Brien has replaced Margaret Hartnett.

Cllr. Mullen highlighted the importance of getting the greenway website live and the importance of setting up a public consultation group. It is essential that the agreement with the IFA does not exceed the 9-month delay. Cllr. Mullen stated that it is essential to that we lodge the planning early in the New Year in order to move this project on. CF confirmed that the website will cover the three greenways with basic information on each.

CF advised it was her understanding that we would not progress with the Public Consultation meeting until the elected members confirmed who they wanted on the committee. Cllr. Mullen confirmed the PPN members may be on committee.

- **Play & Recreation Strategy**

Playgrounds

CF provided an update as per report circulated to committee prior to meeting.

Efforts are ongoing to engage a specialist in playground inspection so the WCC has a complete and up to date report on the current status of the playgrounds, multi-use games areas (MUGAs) in the county. CF apologised for the slow progress. Unfortunately, it has proved difficult to finalise agreement as this is a specialised area of activity and practitioners were already thin on the ground prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Leisure Centres

CF confirmed Wicklow and Arklow Coral centres are doing really well. Swimming lessons are proving very popular and the membership numbers have increased. CF highlighted the increase cost of ESB is having an impact on the leisure centres and they are struggling to hire staff and retain staff. The leisure centres receive subventions on an annual basis. It is likely that they will require higher subventions in 2023.

Maintenance of Playgrounds

Update under playgrounds above.

- **Age Friendly Strategy**

CW provided an update as per report circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting.

Strategy 2023-2025

The development of the new Age Friendly Strategy 2023- 2025 is ongoing. Consultation with individual members of the Age Friendly Alliance and other stakeholders took place over July and August, to define the strategic goals and actions that will underpin the strategy. Over 70 actions

were identified, defined and categorised under the eight WHO High Level themes. A draft of this Action Plan was presented to the Alliance on 7th September, for discussion and agreed. The full draft to the Strategy document will be presented to the next meeting of the Alliance on 7th December.

CW confirmed it is anticipated that Age Friendly Ireland will receive accreditation for Avondale – Beyond the Trees as the first Age Friendly Tourist destination in Ireland, in October/November. The Park has enjoyed an increase in visitors to the area. CW will liaise with Fred Verdier from a tourist perspective.

Two trishaws have been ordered by CCSD, with funding under the ORIS fund. The Age Friendly programme Manager is in discussion with two community hospitals regarding effective deployment for community use – Baltinglass Community Hospital and Rathdrum Hospital. They are preparing a memo of understanding that they will look after the maintenance and insurance.

- **Arts Strategy**

JS provided an update as per report circulated to committee prior to meeting.

The Arts Council are now supporting an additional staff member. JS welcomed SS to the Arts office as the Arts Services Coordinator.

JS confirmed the Arts Office received funding support during Covid but she is not confident that the level of funding will continue due to cost of living crisis.

Platform 31 is a new nationwide artist development scheme supported by the Local Authority Arts Office, in collaboration with the Arts Council. 31 artists receive a bursary of €8,000 to support coaching, mentoring and general growth. This scheme was so successful, that 2 additional funding streams were announced.

Culture Night takes place on Friday, 23rd September 2022. Wicklow Arts Office is working with the Mermaid Arts Centre, Whale Theatre, Tinahely Courthouse Centre, Arklow Music and Arts, West Wicklow Chamber Music Festival, Bray Jazz Festival, Killruddery House and Wicklow Library Services to curate and manage a diverse range of artistic and cultural activities and performances across County Wicklow. Details of the various events are available on www.culturenight.ie/wicklow.

- **Creative Ireland Strategy**

JS provided an update as per report circulated to committee prior to meeting.

JS confirmed €270,000 funding this year:

€200,000 General Programme

€70,000 funding for older person initiatives

JS confirmed that Wicklow Arts Office is one of 3 Councils receiving funding of €375,000 for Baltinglass over a 3-year period.

MQ enquired if it is possible for the Arts office to provide funding for a choir in Baltinglass. They previously had a choir in West Wicklow which was very successful and new funding to continue with this would be beneficial for the area. JS will review and revert to MQ. NW confirmed she is also interested in the development of a choir.

Cllr. Mullen raised a question in relation to Tinahely Court House and the charge of board. Is there any result of the legal search as the operation costs are increasing. JS is not aware of the result.

Cllr. Ferris thanked JS and team for all the work to date and the 89 grants secured for Artists.

- **Library Strategy**

BM provided an update as per report circulated to committee prior to meeting.

The public consultation element of the Part 8 Process for the proposed new Aughrim library is now completed. WCC Planning is currently preparing its report. Observations were returned from relevant bodies, but no public objections were received.

A number of options for the proposed Ballywaltrim library extension are currently being considered subject to grant aid.

A decision under RRDF regarding the proposed Baltinglass Courthouse project is anticipated by the end of September / early October. DRCD has requested clarification on some of the detail. A response is currently being prepared.

BM confirmed WCC, Library services Dormant Accounts Funding application was successful. New interesting initiatives and resources will now be possible:

- Pilot outreach intergenerational activity with a selection of nursing homes in the county.
- Program of events with men in Shelton Abbey Open Prison.
- A Minecraft course for children in the Bray/Ballywaltrim area.
- A Comic Book club and an early literacy range of activities for families with babies and pre-schoolers.
- Facilitate the purchase of a subscription to LOTE – an online database of children’s books in languages other than English.
- An online subscription to Times Tables Rock Stars – a virtual fun activity to support children in Primary schools as they learn their times tables.
- Purchase of “C-pens” which have a simple mechanism that lets the user scan text to have words read aloud and have words defined if needed. These will be available for borrowing at each of our branches. There is a waiting list in place at present.

MQ, Cllr. Corrigan and Cllr. Ferris commended BM on the work to date and the C-pens provided by the library services and suggest we invest in more pens for the libraries.

MQ requested an update on the Baltinglass project. BM confirmed this application remains under review and once grant funding is confirmed a review of costing will be completed.

- **Migrant Integration Strategy**

DW sent her apologies. No update provided.

{5} Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership Updates

- **Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership Updates**

AH sent her apologies. An update was circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting.

- **Healthy Ireland & Healthy Wicklow**

AH sent her apologies. An update was circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting.

{6} Disability Inclusion Steering Committee Update

CW provided an update as per report circulated to committee prior to meeting.

The new disability strategy development is ongoing. Public consultation workshops were completed in June. Draft strategy will be reviewed by DISC in December.

A consultant has been appointed to develop a toolkit/guide for communities on accessibility. Project is ongoing.

A handrail has been commissioned for installations at Wicklow Town beach to improve accessibility for swimmers.

{7} Pride of Place Update

CF provided an update as per report circulated to committee prior to meeting.

The Co-operation Ireland Pride of Place competition 2022 judging took place on 6th and 7th of September 2022. The following groups were assessed by two judges, under three categories:

- Community Wellbeing – An Tochar GAA and Wicklow Sports and Recreation Partnership for their collaborative on the “Irish Sign Language Project.”
- Community Resilience - The Wicklow and Arklow Ukrainian Hubs
- Community Creative Place – The Chatting Benches - An Garda Siochana’s project

The winners of the competition will be announced at a Gala Awards Ceremony, which will take place in January 2023.

{8} Any other business

- Cllr. Blake thanked CC (Wicklow County Partnership) for attending the meeting and invited CC to attend further meetings to provide updates on projects.
- MQ congratulated the Lords Wood, Baltinglass Project on their recent win at the RDS Community Woodlands Award.
- Cllr. Blake thanked CW for all her work on projects.
- Cllr. Blake would like SS to attend future meetings if JS is unavailable to attend.
- Cllr. Blake thanked BM and CF for assisting in the absence of the chair.
- Cllr. Mullen thanked all stakeholders who took part in the Tinahely Show. It was a very successful day and is a great opportunity for WCC to showcase their services.

{10} Date for future meetings

- Mon 12th December 2022 – Venue TBC.

Signed:



Date:

