

Minutes of SPC 5 Meeting held on Wednesday 13th April, 2022 via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Cllr. Pat Dunphy (Chair), Cllr. John Brennan, Cllr. Martin Brett, Cllr. John Coonan, Cllr. Tomas Breathnach, Kathy Purcell, Michael Rice, Fergal Canton, Annette Fitzpatrick, Dearbhala Ledwidge, Mary Butler, Laura Murphy and Mary Ellen Morgan, Kilkenny County Council.

Apologies: Denis Brophy, Josephine Coyne, John Collins, Murty Brennan, and Mary Mulholland

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

Proposed by Cllr. M. Brett, Seconded by Cllr. J. Brennan

(a) Matters Arising

None.

2. CCFCS Grant Scheme.

The scheme was discussed at the CPG meeting. The following addresses the points raised at February's SPC meeting:

- (a) Reduction in grant amount – the current minimum grant is €9,000.00.
Discussed at the CPG and recommended that it remain the same. There are other funding streams available for community groups for smaller grants such as the Community Enhancement Programme Grant.

It was agreed that the minimum grant of €9,000.00 remain.

- (b) Repairs to community facilities are not covered under CCFCS. The following concerns were raised:

- Repairs to community facilities would help regenerate facilities for them to continue to be utilised particularly in rural communities.
- Smaller community groups may not have the means to prepare applications
- That community groups are clear about which stream of funding to access.

The CCFCS Grant scheme is a capital grant scheme facilitated by capital funds from the Development Contribution Scheme. There are other funding streams available to fund repairs and maintenance. The Community Section assist with the application process and providing information regarding the schemes available.

- (c) It was agreed that a list of valid applications be provided to elected representatives prior to evaluation.
- (d) Advertisement of the scheme is deferred.

The CCFCS scheme was agreed – proposed by Cllr. Martin Brett, seconded by Cllr. John Brennan.

3. Creative Ireland Programme 2022

Dearbhala gave a presentation and updated the committee on the Creative Ireland Programme for 2022.

Funding is provided for three programmes – CI Programme (€145,000), Cruinniú na nÓg (€30,000) and Creativity in Older People (€43,800). The public grants were advertised and 11 CI grants and 6 Cruinniú na nÓg applications were received. They have been assessed and applicants will be notified. The Culture Team manages the funding under the CI Programme. There are currently a number of projects being progressed including a documentary film to be aired on TG4. The Creativity in Older People programme is managed by Mary Butler. The ‘Knitted Together Project’ is in its third phase. They are also liaising with Men Sheds in making traditional stools. Proceeds from both projects go to charities.

Creative Ireland announced another 5-year programme 2023-2027 and a new 5-year County Strategy to be developed. The draft strategy will be brought to SPC 5 for comment in the Autumn.

Cllr. Dunphy thanked Dearbhala for her presentation and the great work.

Cllr. John Coonan praised it as a fantastic programme for young and old and stated that there is a very active group in the age friendly Older Peoples Council group. It was confirmed that information would be circulated to interested groups.

4. Decade of Centenaries Programme 2022

Dearbhala gave a presentation and updated the committee on the Decade of Centenaries Programme 2022. The budget for the programme is €50,000. It is used to fund the county programme which is managed by the Culture Team and also the public grant scheme. There is €30,000 for public grants – 11 applications were received and 8 grants were awarded. Dearbhala gave details of projects under the county programme such as radio series, podcasts and school booklets and also diverse programme of projects taking place under the grant scheme. The programme provides good coverage around the County. Some events also reflect events from 1921 as a number of projects could not be held due to COVID restrictions.

Fergal Canton commended the amount of work carried out. He suggested that the school booklet should be provided to schools in soft copy for use by teachers in the classroom. Dearbhala confirmed that this would be the case and would be available on Library website.

Enquiry about when the podcast about civil war and life in Kilkenny in 1922 will be available – no dates to hand but it will be circulated through the library. Notification will be sent out once they are ready to launch.

5. Heritage and Biodiversity Programme

Dearbhala gave a presentation on the Heritage and Biodiversity Programme and the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP).

Kilkenny County Council and in particular the Heritage Office have a role in Biodiversity through policy, heritage and biodiversity plans, advice and support, strategic programmes and projects. Many other areas in the Council also have an input in biodiversity such as Planning, Parks, Environmental Awareness Officer, Water/LAWPRO, Community, Roads and Outdoor Crews.

The NBAP will be a 5-year strategic plan dealing with conservation and sustainable use of Ireland's biodiversity. It is committed to stopping the loss of biodiversity by 2030 and achieve recovery and restoration by 2050. The new plan looks to provide for the following, a whole of government approach, value of biodiversity to society, natural capital accounting, climate action and links in with other programmes and policies e.g. Sustainable Development Goals, National Planning Framework Ireland 2040. Information sessions have already taken place and a feedback survey was returned in March 2022. A public consultation is due to take place in May ahead of the National Biodiversity Conference in June with a view to publishing the new plan by end 2022. Preliminary thoughts around the plan are:

- We welcome the plan
- The vision is ambitious
- Need to strengthen and implement legislation
- Follow Climate action approach
- Need to recognise the significant role of Local Authorities
- The plan needs to be resourced – staff and financial – both nationally and locally

Nationally there are 6 Biodiversity posts to be created – hopefully Kilkenny will secure one of these.

Cllr. Dunphy thanked Dearbhala for her presentation. He suggested that Peter Walsh should be invited to a meeting to speak on the topic.

Cllr. John Coonan acknowledged that there is a huge amount to be done and a huge contribution required from the public. He suggested that local radio and press are key to including the public.

Fergal Canton commended Dearbhala on her presentation.

6. AOB

- **Ukrainian Refugee Crisis**

Fergal Canton raised the situation with the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis and what is the SPC 5's role in relation to it – presently it is to provide community support. Their integration into communities is very important through schools, GAA, Foroige, Scouts, etc. They also face the challenge of learning a new language. It was confirmed that Library have sourced Ukrainian books.

Michael Rice stated that IFA are also providing assistance to the Ukrainian refugees.

Cllr. Dunphy stated that an emergency committee has been put together to discuss strategy, solutions and recommendations. This is being led by Colette Byrne, Chief Executive.

Annette Fitzpatrick also informed the committee that the Community Response Forum is to be re-established to provide a coordinated response and to avoid duplication of services. This forum worked really well throughout COVID.

- **Castlecomer Discovery Park**

Kathy Purcell informed the committee of the new free app digitising the coal mining museum is available to download. This was funded through a Community Heritage Grant from the Heritage Council. They hope to build on this resource in the future. They hope to get word out about the new app. Kilkenny County Council would be happy to circulate information. Dearbhala congratulated the CDP on securing the grant from the Heritage Council.

The Castlecomer Discovery Park would love to be involved with biodiversity. There is an Education Officer commencing work in the park who is a trained ecologist.

- Men Sheds

Cllr. Dunphy enquired about who to contact to set up a new Men Shed. He was advised that Community offer grants and support to existing Men Sheds but that they should contact KLP about setting one up.

Date for next Meeting is Wednesday 15th June at 3.00p.m.

This concluded the business of the meeting.