

**Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee 5- Community, Cultural and Fire Services held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> of November, 2020 at 3.00p.m. via Microsoft Teams.**

**Present:** Cllr. John Brennan (Chair), Cllr. Martin Brett, Cllr, Pat Dunphy, Cllr. Peter Cleere, Cllr. John Coonan, Cllr. Tomas Breathnach, Kathy Purcell.

**In attendance:** Josephine Coyne (Library Service), John Collins (Chief Fire Officer), Annette Fitzpatrick A/Senior Executive Officer and Cora Nolan, Kilkenny County Council.

**Apologies:** Fergal Canton and Mary Mulholland.

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**1. Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2020.**

Proposed by Cllr. Peter Cleere, Seconded by Cllr. Pat Dunphy.

**2. Town & Village Update**

Annette gave an update on the Town & Village applications. In total 15 applications were approved under Town & Village and work is underway on a number of projects. An extension had to be applied for under some of the applications, as outdoor seating/furniture etc is in huge demand and delays expected, it is hoped to have the majority of projects complete by the end of the year.

No word yet on the further 10 applications that were submitted under Town & Village 2020.

Cllrs. Peter Cleere and Martin Brett would like to express their thanks on the great work of the community section staff on the achievement under Town & Village so far.

**3. Creative Ireland Programme**

Annette gave an update, since the last SPC meeting in September the majority of the projects went ahead with a few extra projects added, it is envisaged that all funding will be spent by the end of November.

#### **4. Keep Well Campaign**

On Thursday October 29<sup>th</sup> the “Keep Well” campaign was launched which aims to support people and communities to mind their physical and mental health over the coming months. Working groups are being set up under each theme, which will be supported by other agencies. The teams will meet over the next 2 weeks. A dedicated webpage will also be set up. The themes are as follows:-

- **Keeping active** - keeping active and being outdoors, even during the winter, is important to help physical and mental health and wellbeing, this will be led by KRSP.
- **Staying connected and minding your mood** - staying connected with people, addressing isolation, supporting volunteerism and initiatives that support person-to-person connection is important to our wellbeing, equipping people with information on where to go if they need support. This will also be linked with the local community helpline to ensure that people can access the support they need being led by Josephine Coyne County Librarian.
- **Switching off and being creative** - switching off and being creative or learning something new, getting back to nature and finding ways to relax can help our general wellbeing, Annette Fitzpatrick will lead this theme.
- **Eating well** - by nourishing our bodies and minds, we can develop a better connection between the food we eat and how we feel and positively impact our physical and mental wellbeing will be led by Janette Boran Healthy Ireland Co-ordinator.

#### **5. Update from Fire Service**

##### **Community Fire Safety**

As per the Chairman’s request at the last meeting, Kilkenny fire station used their social media platforms and the Kilkenny People to highlight the importance of cleaning your chimney.

During the build up to Halloween, public messaging campaigns were maintained through social media channels (Twitter and Facebook) of Kilkenny County Council to highlight the dangers of fireworks and bonfires. Liaison with the Environment Section and An Garda Síochána took place to reduce the risks associated with bonfires. Thankfully from a brigade point of view it was a quiet day and night as they attended only 1 no bonfire on Halloween.

##### **Fire Brigade Operations**

At present, they have 1 confirmed case of Covid-19 in the brigade which has resulted in 9 close contacts.

To-date the close contacts have to restrict their movements for the 14 days. They all have had 2no tests, so far, the tests that have come back have been negative. They still await 1no. second result for one individual. The use of facemasks, physical distancing, washing hands by all personnel looks like having prevented the spread of covid-19 in the brigade.

Fire Brigades responded to 690 turnouts up to the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020. The same period last year we responded to 631 turnouts.

Fire personnel received initial and refresher training in the use of chainsaw operation and emergency first responder training during the month of October.

### **Fire Safety Certificates**

104 applications for fire safety certificates were received up to 3rd November 2020. This was a 19% increase in 2019 applications for the same period last year. These applications are administered by staff working from home and from our Headquarter station due to Covid-19.

### **Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003**

- To date Fire Prevention staff have made 37 inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation.
- As of 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020, 86 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003.

## **6. Community Helpline**

Josephine Coyne gave an update as the helpline is now managed through the library services the helpline is available 7 days a week from 8.00a.m to 8.00p.m. to provide practical supports to people while working closely with other agencies especially the HSE. The helpline number is 1800 326 522 or 056-7794145.

The Library doors may be closed but a lot of work is taking place inside the libraries with a door to door delivery service over 3000 items been delivered to 800 users. The mobile service is also back delivering books to schools.

## **7. AOB**

- No submissions were received in relation to the %Art Scheme.
- The CCFCS Scheme is not going ahead this year.
- Christmas lights going up in Castlecomer Discovery Park
- If any committee members have any issues which would like brought back to Council to let any of the Elected Representatives know.

## **8. Date for Next Meeting**

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> of January, 2020 at 3.00p.m.**