

Minutes of SPC 5 Meeting held on Thursday 6th of May, 2021 via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Cllr. John Brennan (Chair), Cllr. Pat Dunphy, Cllr. Martin Brett, Cllr. Tomas Breathnach, Cllr. John Coonan, Murty Brennan, Annette Fitzpatrick, Josephine Coyne, Cora Nolan, John Collins, Mary Butler and Dearbhala Ledwidge.

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

Proposed by Cllr. Martin Brett, Seconded by Cllr. Pat Dunphy.

(a) Matters Arising

Town & Village – will be discussed under AOB

2. Public Art Policy

Annette highlighted the two main amendments to the policy document: -

- The limits under the scheme are set to a maximum of 1% of the overall capital budget before VAT and subject to the various limits, as outlined in the National Guidelines on Public Art:
 - Projects below €5,000,000: 1% of the cost to a maximum of €50,000
 - Projects between €5,000,000 and €20,000,000: 1% of the cost to a maximum of €125,000
 - Projects between €20,000,000 and €50,000,000: 1% of the cost to a maximum of €350,000
 - Projects in excess of €50,000,000: 1% of the cost to a maximum of €500,000
- All decisions relating to the Public Art in Kilkenny City & County are the responsibility of the Public Art Management Group (PAMG)
Two members to be appointed from SPC 5. Cllr. Martin Brett was proposed by Cllr. John Brennan and Seconded by Cllr. Pat Dunphy.
Cllr. John Coonan was proposed by Cllr. J. Brennan and seconded by Cllr. Pat Dunphy and agreed.

It was agreed that Cllrs. Martin Brett and John Coonan would be the two SPC 5 representatives on the Public Art Management Group.

3. Library Update

County Librarian Josephine Coyne gave a presentation from the Library Department and highlighted the following from 2020: -

- eBooks borrowed 49% up on 2019, 72,666 newspapers borrowed 99% up on 2019, audio books up 45% on 2019, online course sessions 61%, covid has shown the power and reach of digital services.
- The phased reopening in 2020 saw 57,254 books borrowed through collect and book and browse services. Door to Door service a huge success people served in 2020 1,107, in 2021 so far 922, items delivered 2020 in 4,829 and 2021 4,507 this has proved an invaluable service to people.
- The mobile library service delivered 2,653 books by developing a drop off model to 30 primary schools and learning units across the County. The library service also involved in supporting the Keep Well Campaign through, Dial a story, Creative Poetry and Creative writing workshops for adults, Ireland reads author series for adults and children, Door to door service, the art of writing stationary kits, sending a smile early learning centre project and virtual book club.
- Praise must go to the library staff for their resilience and creativity. Staff have produced quality driven relevant content targeted at those who need it most. With 4,286 posts and 42,848 engagements. The future role of the library post covid, continue with the door to door, the value of the library as a community hub helps to support people who are lonely, isolated etc.
- The capital funding for Thomastown library is very welcome and highlighted the need to keep investing in libraries and increasing the book budget year on year.

The Chair thanked Jo for her very comprehensive presentation and it was noted by all present especially Cllrs. J. Brennan, J. Coonan, M. Brett and T. Breathnach the vital role the libraries have played especially over the last 15 months or so.

The Mayfair building will be advertised on e-tenders this week and work hopefully commence mid-late summer.

Cllr. T. Breathnach asked if a communal diary/archive will be kept of the last 15 months during covid. Josephine advised that the library had requested poems, stories, etc for people to contribute which will be kept as an archive for people to access in time to come.

4. Fire Service Update

John Collins gave an update from the Fire Services.

He thanked Cllr. J. Brennan for attending the car accident demonstration/training which took place. Cllr. Brennan was amazed at the professionalism and the speed of the emergency services in a crisis situation. John will send the dates and times for future training events to Cora to issue if any committee member would like to attend and observe.

John gave an update on figures for the fire station during 2020, which Cora will circulate to the committee after the meeting, it highlighted some the following: -
701 total incidents, Fires attended 220, special services 365, 116 false alarms, 3 malicious, 113 good intent.

John thanked John Collins for the figures and update and a number of observations were made from Cllrs. J. Coonan and M. Brett on false alarms, abusing the service and misuse of time.

A query was raised on new site for Fire Station, still looking at possible sites on the ring road

John will liaise with Cllr. Pat Dunphy regarding fire cover in the South of the County especially, Piltown/Fiddown.

5. Decade of Centenaries

Dearbhala Ledwidge Heritage Officer, gave an update from Heritage which included the following: -

Cruinniu na Nog Programme 2021- June 12th, National day of free creativity for children and young people, this day is co-ordinated by the Culture section and funded by the Kilkenny Creative Ireland Programme via public grant scheme. Dearbhala also outlined the grants awarded for this year.

Decade of Centenaries Programme 2021

The Heritage office and the Library service collaborated on a number of projects including, The History Fix on KCLR, 14 history podcasts on events in Kilkenny in 1921, a local history film and a brochure about the Kilkenny Gaol break-out and a grant scheme.

Cora will circulate a list of the 1st round of grant offers after the meeting as requested.

6. Biodiversity Programme

National Hedgehog survey, Citizen science hedgehog survey by researchers at NUI Galway and the National Biodiversity Data Centre is co-funded by the Heritage Office.

Pledge your garden for pollinators

Put your garden on the map, the pollinators plan online mapping system tracks actions for pollinators across the country. You can add your pollinator friendly garden to the map at pollinators.biodiversityireland.ie

John Brennan as chair thanked Dearbhala for her presentation.

7. AOB

Town & Village Renewal Schemes

The 2021 scheme was announced on Monday 4th of May, with a change of focus on project support and remote working. Advertisement for Expressions of interest will be in the Kilkenny People within the next 2 weeks with a closing date for the middle of June, we are awaiting further information, up to 8 applications can be submitted. A minimum of 2 applications for areas who have not previously received funding and projects that can be delivered within an 18-month period.

Nationally €5m announced for connected Hubs. BCP Broadband connecting port, maximum grant of €75,000, 90% of funding available.

A PR video is being promoted through Social Media on projects funded by Town & Village and under RRDF. Annette will forward video clip to committee.

Cllr. T. Breathnach asked that SPC 5 be mindful of all the funding streams available and to work closely with community groups.

Date for next meeting Thursday 15th of July.

Cllr. John Brennan advised the committee that this is last meeting as Chair and Cllr. Pat Dunphy would be taking over the position of Chair. John thanked all the staff for their help and courtesy over the last 2 years and appreciated all the great work the staff do, he also thanked all the members of the committee.

Annette thanked John for his work as Chair and it was a pleasure working with him, very pleasant and had a good working relationship.

John was thanked by all committee members present for always being a fair and pleasant Chairman.

Cllr. Tomas Breathnach proposed a motion for the next agenda on rural Post Offices.

This concluded the business of the meeting.