

Minutes of Meeting
SPC 5: Community, Integration, Cultural, Gaeilge, Heritage & Fire Services
Wednesday 19th March 2025 at 3:00p.m
Meeting Room 1, County Hall

Present: Cllr. Pat Dunphy (Chair), Cllr. John Brennan, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Cllr. Jenny Catt Slattery, Cllr. Tomás Breathnach, Mary Dolan PPN Rep, Guy Jones, PPN Rep and Fergal Canton, ICTU

In attendance: Fiona Deegan, A/Director of Services, Anne Marie Shortall, Senior Executive Officer, John Collins, Chief Fire Officer, Margo Hayes, Senior Executive Officer, Diane Seale, Community, Kilkenny County Council and Vincent O'Shea, Public Art Officer

Apologies: Josephine Coyne, County Librarian and Ian Gardner, A/Director of Services

1. Minutes of last meeting on Tuesday 28th January, 2025

Minutes were proposed by Fergus Canton, seconded by Cllr. Jenny Catt Slattery and agreed.

2. Matters arising

It was agreed Cllr. Pat Dunphy would chair the meeting on behalf of Cllr. John Brennan.

Mary Dolan enquired about the SPC making a submission to the Draft Heritage Strategy. Anne Marie Shortall advised a meeting can be arranged for any SPC members to make a submission. An email will be sent out for further details.

3. Fire Services

John Collins, Chief Fire Officer gave an update on the fire services in Kilkenny. The 'Procedure for Fire Charges' and 'Public Access to Fire Safety Certificate Applications – Building Control Procedure' documents were circulated to all members ahead of the meeting to review. Fire Safety clinics are offered to assist identifying any issues and help shorten the application process.

John Collins explained the fire charges policy and highlighted the changes in the policy.

Cllr. Jenny Catt Slattery queried about Fire Safety certificates with old buildings. John Collins advised buildings built before 1992 are exempt but they do have duty of care.

Cllr. Pat Dunphy queried about the number of calls out to date. John explained that the number of calls out to date this year are higher due to Storm Éowyn.

Fergal Canton enquired about schools and fire drills. John Collins advised.

Cllr. Pat Dunphy queried about Waterford Fire Service covering incidents in Kilkenny. John Collins advised that Kilkenny County Council have an agreement in place Waterford County Council. The nearest and available brigade at the time will cover the incident. A review of national policy may change the mapping of areas.

Cllr. Tomás Breathnach queried the Fire Service budget and running costs. John outlined that there is approximately €400,000 received annually through fire charges. It costs €7 million a year to run the fire service.

4. Public Arts Programme

Vincent O'Shea is the Public Arts Manager for the programme 2024 – 2027 and gave a presentation to the members. The Public Arts Management Group (PAMG) was established in Kilkenny County Council to provide an oversight and guidance and deliver new projects and programmes in a range of artforms. There were 84 applications received from across the world. The following five projects were selected.

Name	Amount	Description
Brown Mountain Diamond	€45,000	Commission a residency programme and exhibition of five artists who are known for their work in community engagement and social investigation. The project will be based in north Kilkenny and offers great potential and delivered by artists with an excellent track record.
Pauline O'Connell – From Hide to Heel	€111,000	Socially engaged public art project to explore and celebrate the intertwined histories of Kilkenny's industrial and agricultural sectors.
Fearghus Ó Conchúir – Extra Time	€113,000	Engage with Hurling and Camogie communities across county Kilkenny to create a diverse team of performers for a new dance film.
Asylum Productions - The Alice Project	€75,000	A multi-part, inter-disciplinary theatrical work examining the place of art in our community, and how we access it. Offers an outstanding level of community engagement based around

		the story, myth and legend of Alice Kytler and Petronella with a focus on the importance of that story.
Straymaker	€113,000	A county wide multi-disciplinary work, combining choral music, documentary, poetry, design and animation to create an immersive and evocative film.

There was positive feedback on the range of projects and types of projects that the community can engage with. The projects are due to commence in April 2025 and with Brown Mountain Diamond due to be completed in 2025 and the remaining projects in 2026.

5. Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021

Margo Hayes Senior Executive Officer gave a presentation on the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 and outlined the requirements of public bodies under the Act.

Fergus Canton suggested Kilkenny County Council organise an Irish language project for schools. Cllr. Jenny Catt Slattery mentioned there are many projects and competitions in schools in particular for Seachtain na Gaeilge. Guy Jones mentioned it can be difficult for foreigners to get the opportunity to learn Irish and suggested to have one day in Kilkenny to encourage everyone to speak a little Irish and get Kilkenny businesses involved. Cllr. Tomás Breathnach suggested a group be set up in the Council with initiatives to encourage the use of the Irish language and suggested a one day event in Kilkenny with storytellers, singers and Irish dancers for everyone to embrace and enjoy the language.

Anne Marie Shortall advised that groups are welcome to apply for funding next year under Creative Ireland grant scheme or the Community Event Grant Scheme and that Kilkenny County Council can play an active role in promoting any activities or events.

6. Training for SPC Members

Anne Marie Shortall provided information to the SPC members on the upcoming training being provided.

7. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the SPC 5 will take place on Thursday 5th June 2025.

8. AOB

Anne Marie Shortall informed the members of community grants - The Community, Cultural Capital Facilities Scheme grant and the Town and Village grant scheme with details available on the Kilkenny County Council website and from the Community Department staff.

This concluded the business of the meeting.