



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Miontuairiscí Coiste Polasaí Straitéiseach Pobal & Cultúr

Minutes of the Community and Culture Strategic Policy Committee Special Meeting

Dé Céadaoin 29ú Fomhair 2023 12:15pm

Wednesday 29th November 2023 at 12:15pm

Venue; Boardroom, Centrepoint, Liosban

Members in attendance:

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| Cllr. Dermot Connolly (Chair) | Galway County Council |
| Cllr. Andrew Reddington | Galway County Council |
| Cllr. Liam Carroll | Galway County Council |
| Cllr. Peter Keaveney | Galway County Council |
| Helena McElmeel | Business Representative |
| Máirtín Davy | PPN Representative |
| Megan Flynn Dixon | PPN Representative |

Staff in attendance:

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| Kieran Coyne for Alan Farrell D.O.S | Senior Executive Officer |
| Mary McGann | Administrative Officer |
| Liz Keane for Jo Vahey County Librarian | A/Senior Executive Librarian |
| Una Kelly | A/Senior Executive Librarian |
| Helen Melia | Senior Staff Officer |
| Claire Connolly | Assistant Staff Officer |

Apologies:

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Cllr. Pádraig Mac an Iomaire | Galway County Council |
| Cllr. Ivan Canning | Galway County Council |
| Sharon O'Grady | Arts Officer |

Cllr. Connolly welcomed everyone to the third meeting of SPC Community and Culture 2023 and thanked everyone for their attendance in person and noted the apologies received.

1. **Minutes of Community and Culture meeting 22nd February 2023.**

Cllr. Connolly asked if there were any matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting of the Community & Culture SPC. On the proposal of Cllr. Reddington seconded by Cllr. Keaveney the minutes were agreed and adopted.

Ms. McElmeel had a query regarding update on beach byelaws? Ms. McGann advised that there has been staff movement, and any queries will be forwarded to Corporate Department for update.

Ms. McElmeel stated that she had a previous query regarding update, to which she had received an update.

Cllr. Connolly advised Ms. McElmeel to forward any new email query and it will be dealt with by Corporate department.

2. **Age Friendly Libraries**

Ms. Kelly gave a PowerPoint presentation on Age Friendly Libraries

Key Points ;Age Friendly Programme, Galway Public Libraries 2019 pilot Programme,

First Steps included appointment of age friendly ambassador, audited physical buildings, spoke to staff, talked to groups of older people in the community to get an overall view of current services.

Main observation: The main observation was that it does not cost a lot to improve services and the impact of changes can make a huge difference to older people.

Survey results, performed well in areas of lighting, heating, physical access, Signage.

Suggested areas of improvement identified; Age friendly parking spaces, visual aids, more age friendly events.

Age Friendly Champion identified in each library who undertook training, observations, reviews, consultations and identified what libraries do well, range of activities, Positive Ageing week 2023, Decade of Centenaries and Galway's Great Read

Recommendations, Actions and looking forward.

3. **National Public Library Strategy 2023-2027 "The Library in the Place"
Information,, Recreation, Inspiration**

Ms. Keane gave a PowerPoint presentation on the National Public Library strategy 2023-2027

Key Points include;

Consultation findings – Out Libraries today

1.90% of public survey respondents gave positive feedback.

Highest satisfaction levels:

2. Books

-Standard of Customer Service

-Range of Resources

3. Libraries widely recognised as a central community hub, a place of sanctuary playing a crucial role in delivering services

The Vision

“enabling and supporting all people across all communities to be informed, connected, literate individuals, skilled for life”

330 plus Nationwide locations, staff, and resources.

Library Strategy

Our Values; quality and excellence, intellectual freedom, trustworthiness and integrity, civic participation, universal accessibility, equality, inclusivity and diversity, creativity, innovation, and imagination.

Galway County Council values;

Core values; Democratic, inclusive, helpful, sustainable, accountable, value for money.

Strategic Themes; People- Right to read programme – book fund annual reach target €4 per head of population, Galway spend €0.47. Galway ranked 4TH highest nationally for youth participation in the Summer Stars Reading Campaign 2023

Spaces- strategic actions

Connections- 17 sustainable development goals

Explorers ocean literacy Principles & SDGs

Explorers Stem & Steam – Our favourite ocean projects

Photovoltaic system installed, Led luminaires installed, upgraded windows to Pilkington to suncool 70/35 glazing, landscaper review, the living office.

Digital Offer- extensive ebook collections, online learning platforms, online language courses, digital literacy.

Culture-Create and hold activities as part of national festivals, cultural heritage and local history, creativity and celebrate cultural memories.

Our Public libraries- Inspiring, connecting, and empowering communities.

Cllr. Connolly thanked both Ms. Kelly & Ms. Keane for presentations and commented on the magnificent work the libraries continue to provide involving all community groups. He mentioned that from time-to-time issues arise with parking and they are dealt with in an orderly fashion. The library as a resource in the rural community should never be underestimated and particularly the importance of the mobile library. No price could be put on the staff service in the library that they deliver to the community. He mentioned that libraries could play a role arising from misinformation in this digital age.

Ms. Kelly advised that skills for life strategy is dealing with misinformation in the digital age across all mediums.

Mr. Coyne mentioned that he reengaged libraries and noted the libraries have moved with the digital age with very engaging staff. He sees libraries as a neutral space with super staff and often an underappreciated service.

Cllr. Carroll commentated on the superstars reading programme involving 1000's of children across all the libraries he visited. He commentated on the joy on children's faces receiving medals & certs and the pride of their parents.

Post Covid it is proving difficult to get people back into libraries and used an example of the men's shed that he knows post covid numbers have reduced significantly.

Cllr, Carroll complimented all library staff for their magnificent engagement and mentioned the importance of spending their allocated budget.

Ms. Keane confirmed that as at today euro 6725. sum unspent from their 2023 budget.

The summer stars programme is 4th highest numbers in the country which gives great confidence for growth into the future.

Cllr. Keaveney thanked both presenters and said that library give a brilliant experience, always reaching out to all sectors of society. It's a brilliant story, keep up the great work.

Ms. McElmeel noted that it is a significant challenge with physical buildings for space fit for purpose under reimaged programme.

Ms. Keane said that it is poses difficulties as the libraries don't own all the libraries and therefore is not in a position to apply for funding for premises that we don't own. It is also difficult where the library is in shared space situation.

Ms. Kelly outlined my open libraries, being a busy service outside normal hours available 365 days. The work in progress is ongoing in several libraries.

Ms. McGann mentioned that funding increase is being viewed for age friendly libraries and would hope to collaborate with libraries on spaces and other projects. It was also noted that post covid not all older generation are back out in the community.

4. Directory of Services for Older People in Galway

Ms. McGann gave an overview of the directory, and a hard copy was given to all present.

The directory was launched Friday ,24th November 2023 with over 200 in attendance with 15 stands.

The update of the directory came about from the age friendly programmed and previous versions 2010,2011, 2015.

This cumulated with regular meetings with joint working groups who have HPOP integrated centered care in the community, whereby the elderly are in their homes and are not required to attend hospital.

Each chapter was reviewed by older people council.

HSE staff constantly use previous version, and a common format was used throughout the directory – sign postbox with name & address of service for ease of use.

The online version will be updated annually. The hard copies are presently being printed and they will be delivered to Post Offices, Libraries, Community Centers for older people to easily access that do not use online facility.

Open for feedback for any improvements for the directory.

The first stage of the Age Friendly Strategy is expected in early 2024

5 Awards

Ms. McGann updated all present with **National Tidy Town Awards** ;

First place – gold medal in the County: Milltown

Second Place- Silver medal in the County: Abbey

Third Place-bronze medal: An Spideal

Endeavor Award: Tullycross

Special Award Categories as follows;

Williamstown Tidy Towns - national winner of National Heritage award

Monivea Tidy Towns – national winner of the Gum litter taskforce award

Northampton National School- regional winner of the Supervalu schools award

Woodford Parish Development-highly commended for their work towards the All- Ireland pollinator plan.

Ms. McGann gave an update on **IPB Pride of Place Competition.**

The All-Ireland Pride of Place awards took place in Armagh, 10th November 2023.

The awards began 21 years ago through a cooperative Ireland Programme to acknowledge the invaluable work undertaken by volunteers in local community development.

New category -Climate Action and Biodiversity category – First place – Creggs Rural Development Company

Previous overall winners in this competition; Lawrencetown 2022, Inis Meain 2018, Clonbur 2016, Clifden 2012.

National Age Friendly Recognition & Achievement Awards

Galway County Council entered 2 projects, one has been shortlisted and winners will be announced on 30th November, at awards night in Wexford.

This initiative included a series of health & wellbeing events on the four offshore islands of County Galway with more than 200 people in attendance. Healthy islands included twenty statutory and community& voluntary organisations all with a unified approach to promote health, wellbeing, improve communications, and enhance people's knowledge of services available to them. As a direct result of the events, agencies have experienced increased referrals and created relationships highlighting the project's direct and indirect benefits.

Award Category; Active and Healthy ageing

Entrants; Galway County Council & Galway Rural Development

Age Friendly Ireland have announced 2024 funding for counties which have of shore islands (Cork, Galway, Mayo, Donegal) for health & wellbeing events in the Age Friendly Programmes.

Cllr. Carroll noted the comprehensive document full of important information and the importance of HSE involvement for the potential accessibility and entitlement of services for older people, being more therapeutic in their homes rather than a hospital setting.

Cllr. Connolly congratulated all involved and that the HSE involvement was central to the document.

Cllr. Carroll noted the three awards but said the first ever digitization award for over 40,000 graves was a significant award for a body of work completed over 15 years and wished to have it noted in the minutes.

Ms. McGann said that the heritage department received the digitization award.

Cllr. Connolly noted inclusion in the minutes and congratulated all involved with all the awards.

Ms. Kelly said the mobile libraries are happy to distribute directory of services for older people.

6. Date of next meeting

Next meeting agreed for 11th December 2023 @11am in Centrepoint

7. A.O.B

No items arose.

Cllr. Connolly thanked everyone for their contributions and the meeting ended.