



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Miontuairiscí Coiste Polasaí Straitéiseach Pobal & Cultúr

Minutes of the Community and Culture Strategic Policy Committee Meeting

Dé Máirt 14ú NOLLAIG 2021 14:00

on Tuesday 14th December 2021 at 2 p.m. via Microsoft Teams

Members in attendance:

Cllr. Shelly Herterich Quinn (Chairperson)	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
Mairtin Davy	PPN Representative
Megan Flynn	PPN Representative

Staff in attendance:

Liam Hanrahan	Director of Services
Michael Owens	Director of Services
Sharon O'Grady	Arts Officer
Mary McGann	Administrative Officer
Bernie Kelly	A/County Librarian
Siobhan Arkins	Executive Librarian
Josephine Vahey	Executive Librarian

Apologies:

Cllr. Padraic Mac an Iomaire	Galway County Council
Cllr. Ivan Canning	Galway County Council



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Cllr. Herterich Quinn welcomed everyone to the Community and Culture SPC 2021 and thanked everyone for their attendance online and noted the apologies received.

1. Minutes of Community and Culture SPC meeting held on 26th Nov 2021

Cllr. Herterich Quinn asked if there were any matters arising from the Minutes of the last meeting of the SPC. No queries arose. On the proposal of Cllr. Andrew Reddington seconded by Helena McElmeel, the Minutes were agreed and adopted.

2. Galway Public Libraries' Interim Development Plan 2022 - 2023

Director of Service Michael Owens gave a brief introduction to the Interim Development Plan which follows on from the previous five-year plan 2016-2021. The plan set out an ambitious approach for the future of the public library service in Galway City and County and proposes measures to continue to develop and deliver a library service which meets the information, learning, and cultural needs of individuals and communities and, in so doing, contributes to economic recovery and social and cultural improvement. The Interim Plan 2022-2023 will bring the library service up to 2024 when a new 5-year development programme will be developed in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, staff and the citizens of Galway.

Ms. Bernie Kelly, A/County Librarian, gave a presentation on the Interim Plan outlining that Galway Library Service was established in 1924 under the auspices of a Carnegie committee. In 1926 it transitioned to a Galway County Council committee and in 2024 will celebrate one hundred years in existence.

Vision: Each of our libraries to be a centre of light and learning in their locality.

Mission: To provide a public library service for the whole community. Public libraries for everyone without exception and our core activities will focus on building sustainable communities, establishing partnerships, cultivating discussion and the sharing of knowledge in an open and non-judgemental manner.



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Priorities of Interim Plan:

- 1) Make the local library the community/cultural hub of the city, town or village
- 2) ensure the democratic and inclusive nature of the library,
- 3) provide quality book collections and access to digital media within the service,
- 4) a repository for local history and local studies materials,
- 5) make each library a special place for children,
- 6) develop event programming and service support resources
- 7) provide staff training
- 8) enable and develop technology & digital services
- 9) make arrangements for proper care, conservation & management of archives and
- 10) promote and market the library & archive service.

Cllr Carroll thanked Ms Kelly for her presentation. He acknowledged the challenges the library service faced over the past few years due to funding restrictions, he supported sourcing additional funding from the department to stock the libraries. He commended the library team on their fantastic service and particularly expressed his delighted to see the prioritising children in the service. Libraries are also a great source of venue for gatherings and for our new families as a connection point. Looking forward to 2024, this will be a huge year of celebration for Galway libraries.

Helena McElmeel thanked Ms Kelly for the great presentation and supported the role the libraries played as a valued service for children. Ms. McElmeel questioned whether there might be scope for the libraries to become more of a social space for young people to gather and noted that the library development plan has a strong overlap with the Healthy Ireland strategy. The library programme is very important for the broader members of the community in particular for older people.

Cllr Herterich Quinn noted that our libraries are now being used effectively to highlight and support wellbeing programmes for the community.



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Cllr. Andrew Reddington thanked the library staff for the excellent presentation. He requested an update on whether there were any plans to upgrade the library in Headford.

Cllr. Peter Keaveney congratulated Ms Kelly on the launch of the jam card. He acknowledged the passion and love the library staff have for their work, and that libraries are not only a centre of learning, but he commended the team on how they adapted their service to reach the community during Covid.

Ms Kelly thanked the speakers for their positive comments. She confirmed children and young people were very much the focus of this development plan, stressing the importance of bringing children to libraries when they are very young. She also reiterated that the library is for everyone and have services for everyone. Its usual offering of hang-out spaces for teenagers has been challenging over covid; services have been curtailed but hopefully it will change over the coming year. The Library team is really looking forward to their centenary. Ms Kelly thanked her team and wished to publicly acknowledge all the staff for their commitment to the library service. She did note that the library does need additional resources to support its ambitious but achievable plans.

3. PPN Intercultural Forum

Megan Flynn Dixon, Member of the SPC and Chair of the PPN's Intercultural Forum presented an update on the newly re-grouped Intercultural Form. Ms. Flynn Dixon confirmed that Migrants now make up 13% of our population. There has been overwhelming feedback from the group that they want to more involved in society and want more consultation. There have been 12 meetings in total with 53 people attending these meetings.

Membership:

Some of our members include representatives from AMDAF (foundation for women of African descent), Ballinasloe Women's Space, Gort Resource Centre, Shining Light and 3 Elected Representatives have attended meetings to date.



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Achievements to date:

- 1) Political Participation workshop with Immigrant Council and followed on workshop to the Africa Untitled Galway:
- 2) Joint Submission with Galway City Community network to the National Action Plan against Racism, and,
- 3) Councillor survey – received only 8 responses and will try and re-survey the Councillors including the City Council.

Issues Identified:

- Integration and Inclusion
- Education health Outcomes
- Racism
- Housing
- Domestic Violence
- Economic empowerment

The next Meeting of the Intercultural forum is scheduled for Saturday 15th January and the focus going forward will be on inviting guest speakers from other intercultural fora, locking down the best structure for our Forum, raising our profile and primarily to be consulted by the Council.

Cllr Herterich Quinn thanked Ms Flynn for her presentation stating that she was not aware of the work being carried out and it was very informative. Cllr Carroll commented that it was great to see the Intercultural group coming back to the fore and re-iterated its importance.

Mr Hanrahan outlined that the national anti-racism strategy is currently being formulated and the role of the Intercultural forums and representational bodies for migrants and work of the PPN is important. Ms O'Grady outlined that the Arts Office is working directly with the Intercultural forum on a project for Cúirt literary festival in 2022. Ms McGann confirmed that the PPN have recently completed an election process to appoint 2 representatives of the Intercultural Forum to the Interagency Group dealing with the Refugee Resettlement Programme and the development of a Migrant Integration Strategy. In addition, under SICAP,



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New Communities were one of the 3 priority areas identified until the end of 2023, and consultations to date, have also identified that some of the primary issues are language barriers, lack of digital skills and consequent issues regarding difficulties in accessing information.

6. Date for next meeting

Due to the consultations processes on the County Development Plan, it was agreed to postpone setting the date for the next meeting until early 2022

7. Any Other Business

Cllr Carroll to wish everyone a happy Christmas and this was echoed by Cllr Shelly Herterich Quinn.

The meeting then concluded.