

# **MINUTES OF SPC FOR TOURISM, RURAL & COMMUNITY DEV., AN GHAELIGE & CULTURAL SERVICES MEETING HELD AT 2.30pm on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025, MTek 1**

## **Present**

Cllr. Sean Conlon	SPC Chairperson, Elected Member Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Pat Treanor	Elected Member Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Niamh McCooey	Elected Member Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Aidan Campbell	Elected Member Monaghan County Council
Cllr Raymond Aughey	Elected Member Monaghan County Council

Packie McCarville	Business / Commercial (Tourism/Hospitality Sector)
Fiona McGuinness	Business / Commercial (Tourism/Hospitality Sector)
Emer Brennan	PPN – Environment Electoral College
Carol Smyth	PPN – Social Inclusion Electoral College
Noel Treanor	PPN – Community & Vol Electoral College
Seán Ó Murchadha	PPN – Community & Vol Electoral College

## **Apologies**

Cllr. Paul Gibbons	Elected Member Monaghan County Council
Deirdriu McQuaid	County Librarian Monaghan County Council

## **In Attendance**

Gareth McMahon	A/Director of Service Monaghan County Council
Patricia Monahan	Director of Services Monaghan County Council
Olga McConnon	Director of Services Monaghan County Council
Leona Keenan	Administrative Officer Monaghan County Council
Dympna Condra	Tourism and Marketing Executive Monaghan County Council
Somhairle MacConghail	Arts Officer Monaghan County Council
Liam Bradley	Museum Curator Monaghan County Council
Nial O'Connor	Senior Executive Officer Monaghan County Council
Kara Ward	Heritage Officer Monaghan County Council
Aoife Duffy	Clerical Officer Tourism Monaghan County Council
Mairéad Treanor	Senior Executive Librarian Monaghan County Council
Marcella Babington	Clerical Officer Heritage Monaghan County Council
Yvonne Kelly	Assistant Staff Officer Tourism Monaghan County Council
Lisa Connolly	Assistant Staff Officer Community Monaghan County Council

## **1. Welcome & Introductions**

Cllr. Conlon welcomed everyone to the inaugural meeting and all members introduced themselves. He encouraged all members to fully participate in the meetings and that everyone is equal around the table.

## **2. Review of Standing Orders 2025-2029**

Cllr. Conlon updated members on the Adopted Standing Orders 2025-2029 and the contents of same.

A hard copy was provided to the members.

## **3. Nial O'Connor Irish Language Officer An Ghaelige Annual Report**

Nial O'Connor Irish Language Officer delivered a presentation on the An Ghaelige Annual Report. Nial informed members that An Ghaelige is new to the SPC's and this addition reflects the council's commitment to the Irish Language. Nial gave members an overview of the activities and initiatives such as Gaeltacht scholarships which will be happening over the next year. Monaghan County Council provide funding to students to participate in An Gaeltacht annually.

Seán Ó Murchadha asked if the Council would consider increasing the budget for An Gaeltacht scholarships to allow disadvantaged families avail of the scheme to enable equal opportunities of young people to attend.

The Chairman and members thanked Nial for his presentation.

## **4. Presentation of Draft County Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2025 – 2030**

Cllr. Conlon introduced Aideen Martin and Karen Coulter from Outscape Consultants who are developing the County Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2025-2030. Local Authorities have been asked to prepare this strategy following publication of "Embracing Ireland's Outdoors" the National Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Outscape outlined how the Strategy is being developed and the processes involved to do this. Following the presentation by Outscape members posed questions to the consultants.

Cllr. Conlon encouraged Outscape to engage with Monaghan Integrated Development (MID) and they replied this engagement is happening. Noel Treanor said that site-based activity can discourage people from walking on our roads for safety reasons. Karen Coulter replied that they are aiming to provide plenty of opportunity for walking in the Strategy.

Cllr. Campbell thanked Dymrna and Outscape for the presentation. He said the success that Monaghan has had in Town and Village Renewal Funding and Outdoor Recreation Scheme signifies the need for this Strategy.

Cllr. Treanor reiterated other members positive feedback and commended everyone involved in the development of the Strategy. He asked if Waterways Ireland and Coillte are involved with process to which Karen replied they are very engaged.

Fiona McGuinness enquired if there were any plans for South Monaghan for off road cycling trails. Karen replied that no specific action for this is identified. They are aware though of other projects being developed in Carrickmacross.

Cllr. McCooey mentioned the increase in number of visitors to forest in Castleshane and is there any plans for increase in parking and accessibility. Dympna replied this has been identified in the consultation process.

To conclude, Dympna informed the committee that the next step is for the Draft County Recreation strategy 2025-2030 to be presented to the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) for review.

Members thanked Outscape and D. Condra for their presentation.

## **5. Presentation of County Monaghan Arts Strategy 2025-2031**

Somhairle MacConghail, Arts Officer informed the committee that the Draft Arts Strategy 2025-2031 sets out the targets for the Arts sector for the coming six years.

Vincent O'Shea Consultant retained to develop the Strategy provided an overview of how the Strategy is being developed and the processes involved to do this. Vincent began his presentation by acknowledging the commitment to the Arts sector in Monaghan and that this came through strongly in the consultation process.

One of the main challenges is finding studios for artist rehearsals.

Cllr. Conlon asked are we considering inflation in the funding commitments for the Plan. Somhairle replied this is being considered as this has significant impact on artists.

Cllr. Treanor said that the Arts sector is very valuable to our society and great to see such great work ongoing in our county. He also said that engaging with schools is very important. Somhairle replied that the Creative Schools Programme is developed in Monaghan with Arts Council. If a school is successful in funding that additional supports are provided to the school. CMETB are very supportive also.

Carol Smyth asked that Vincent expand on Item 12 of the Strategy "Monaghan County Council will seek to support professional arts initiatives impacting on our Tourism and Heritage". Vincent replied outlining the positive impact that the Arts sector has on tourism in the county, highlighting many examples from across the county. He also outlined the impact on our hospitality sector.

Cllr. Campbell said that a successful Arts sector in a county has very positive impacts on tourism and highlighted the Patrick Kavanagh sector as one of these.

Seán Ó Murchadha drew attention to the Arts funding stream in relation to the Irish Language, The Irish-Language Theatre Award.

To conclude, Cllr. Conlon thanked Vincent for his informative presentation. The next step is to bring the Strategy to the CPG.

On the proposal of Aidan Campbell and seconded by Cllr Raymond Aughey, the County Monaghan Arts Strategy 2025-2031 was agreed for presentation to CPG.

## **6. Presentation of Monaghan County Museum Policies**

Liam Bradley presented to the committee Monaghan County Museum policies for their review. He also gave an informative overview of the new home for Monaghan County Museum and encouraged

members to attend. Liam also offered to talk to community groups about the exhibitions and initiatives of the Museum.

Monaghan County Museum has been selected to host the National Museum Conference in 2026 which is a great honour and will be very beneficial to the County.

Cllr. Conlon thanked Liam and all his staff and congratulated them on producing such a large body of work.

Cllr. Campell congratulated Liam on his role with Project Children.

Carol Smyth asked Liam to outline role between Museum and community sector. Liam replied that the PPN will play an important role in development of the Strategic Plan and Stakeholder Plan. He outlined the many initiatives the Museum has delivered on in recent years with support of PPN in promoting these. The roles Museums play now in interacting with people has transformed and this will be even more so now in the home of Monaghan Peace Campus.

The Monaghan County Museum Policies was approved which was proposed by Cllr. Aidan Campbell and  
Seconded by Cllr. Sean Conlon.

## **7. County Monaghan Heritage Plan 2026-2030**

Kara Ward Heritage Officer introduced herself to the committee and informed the meeting that it is her intention to prepare a Draft Heritage Plan 2026-2030 which will be brought before SPC members later in the year.

The Chairman and members thanked Kara for her update.

## **8. Work Programme**

Leona Keenan circulated a Draft SPC Work Programme to members. This will be updated regularly throughout the term of the SPC, and the members will be updated on any amendments.

## **9. Schedule meetings 2025**

Cllr. Conlon said SPCs typically meet 4 times a year. He encouraged members to communicate with each other in advance of meetings and to ask for support if required.

Noel Treanor asked the Chair to consider people who work when scheduling meetings. His point was noted.

## **10. Date of the next meeting**

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May @ 3.00pm

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:   
CHAIRPERSON

Date: 25-9-25

