

**Comhairle Contae Fine Gall
Fingal County Council**

Minutes of Community Development, Heritage Culture & Creativity Strategic
Policy Committee

Tuesday, 13th December, 2022

The Chairperson, Cllr. Joan Hopkins presided.

OFFICIALS PRESENT

Robert Burns	Director of Services	Community
Naomi Weir	Senior Executive Officer	Community
Betty Boardman	County Librarian	Libraries
Lilian Whelan	Senior Executive Librarian	Libraries
Linda Ennis	Principal Community Officer	Community
Gerard Reardon	Principal Sports Officer	Sports
Tricia Matthews	Administrative Officer	Community
Rosanne Martin	Senior Staff Officer	Community

ELECTED MEMBERS

Councillor Joan Hopkins – Chair
Councillor John-Kingsley Onwumereh
Councillor Cathal Boland
Councillor John Walsh

PPN Representatives

Abi Wise

Apologies

Councillor Grainne Maguire
Councillor Seána Ó Rodaigh

SPC/37/22 (Agenda Item No 1)

**Confirmation and Re-Affirmation of Minutes of Meeting held on
Wednesday 30th March 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th March 2022 were considered. It was proposed by Councillor Boland and seconded by Councillor Walsh.

SPC/38/22 (Agenda Item No 2)

**Confirmation and Re-Affirmation of Minutes of Meeting held on
Wednesday 28th September 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th September 2022 were considered. It was proposed by Councillor Boland and seconded by Councillor Walsh.

SPC/39/22 (Agenda Item No 3)

Update from Libraries

County Librarian Betty Boardman gave a presentation to the committee on the review of Fingal Libraries in 2022 and the libraries plans for 2023. This included an update on the new County Library in Swords Cultural Centre, the construction timeframes at Skerries Library, the 'My Open Library' programme, and the Makerspace Initiative at Blanchardstown Library. Betty also discussed the programme of events held in 2022, specifically the History Festival, Writers' Festival, Children's Literature Festival, Cruinniú na nÓg, Summer Stars Reading Programme, Healthy Ireland at your Library, Europe Direct, Age Friendly & Bealtaine events, Culture Night, and the Exhibitions: Frank Lawless & Howth Tram.

There was an update provided on the new services introduced to the library in 2022, which included a Pilot project to introduce sensory toys, C- pens, LOTE (Languages Other than English), the Jam Card, Irish Times Digital Access, free access to a wealth of genealogical resources named 'FamilySearch', a photographic collection titled 'Fingal and the Fight for Irish Freedom' and updated Library services for Ukrainians.

Betty advised that the new Fingal Libraries Development Plan for 2024 – 2028 consultation process will begin in 2023.

Library Action has been included in the European Commission Culture Programme 2023-2026. It is the first time, after 21 years, that a specific European programme for libraries is listed again as a priority area in the actions

of the European Commission. The actions will involve building bridges and strengthening the multiple roles of libraries as gateways to and transmitters of cultural works, skills, and European values.

Betty opened a discussion for questions.

Councillor Boland enquired on the Open Library Facility and sought an update on the move of Donabate Library to the Credit Union building.

Councillor Walsh enquired on the availability of C-Pens at all libraries and the extension of opening times at other libraries.

Councillor Hopkins enquired on the numbers attending at 'My Open Library', and the possibility of a tools/thing's library in line with the concept of a circular economy. She also enquired if water fountains were available at Libraries and if a similar sculpture at Skerries could be placed at Baldoyle.

Betty advised there is currently one Open Library facility in Fingal with 78 members signed up to date, there have been no anti-social behaviour issues so far and only minor technical issues. There is an induction process to use venues in other Local Authorities. It is also hoped that Donabate Library will be an Open Library once completed.

Betty informed the committee that the Credit Union building was not ideally suitable for Donabate Library as it is over two floors & has a lot of concrete walls. Architects will be assessing viable options in 2023.

C-Pens are available in all Libries, and it is hoped to bring all Library opening hours on par with Blanchardstown Library.

Betty advised that there are no water fountains at libraries, however if a member of the public requested a drink of water it would be provided by staff. The idea of a tools / thing's library seems more of a social enterprise and Betty expressed concern that the Public Library facility and promotion of literacy, reading and books could be diluted. In relation to the sculpture request, as further works are required at Baldoyle Library, a sculpture could be considered in this context.

Gerard Reardon, Principal Sports Officer remarked on the 'library of things' mentioned by Councillor Hopkins and advised the committee of an upcoming initiative from the Sports Office called 'Box Up'. The concept being a vending machine of things that will be placed in Fingal parks, things may include a tennis

racket, skateboard, or ball etc. This initiative will be presented to the SPC at a future date.

All councillors present commended the library for their outstanding services with Councillor Onwumereh calling the Library at Blanchardstown an amazing hub for all things academic and educational.

SPC/40/22 (Agenda Item No 4)

Fingal Sports Development Strategy 2022 - 2026

Gerard Reardon gave a presentation on the Fingal Sports Development Strategy 2022 – 2026.

He outlined the previous strategies to date, the six key strategic goals going forward, the specifications and the timeframe for the implementation of the strategy.

Gerard opened a discussion for questions.

Councillor Hopkins enquired if the audit on Sports Facilities starts with playgrounds. She advised that she receives a lot of queries regarding there not being enough basketball courts, she enquired if the Council could use the sports facilities at schools. Councillor Hopkins also enquired if Fingal have a policy on a 'safe space for girls'. She also enquired on what the Council can do for children who cannot afford to get involved in Sport.

Naomi Weir, Senior Executive Officer advised the committee that the Councils approach is to conduct a comprehensive Sports Facilities Audit in 2023 to identify gaps and areas of need which will guide future provision of services. In relation to using Schools facilities for community gain, it was acknowledged that this can be a challenging area due to a number of reasons including insurance, liability, maintenance, staffing – recruitment into CE schemes is challenging and practicalities of opening, closing, and maintaining such facilities. The Council has a number of Shared Facilities with the Department of Education and the focus in this area is to strive to render these facilities available to the community outside of school hours. Negotiations are ongoing in some of these centres, for example in Lusk. Once the issues surrounding the current shared facilities are rectified and a good operational model is attained the use of other School Facilities could be investigated bearing in mind the challenges involved.

Regarding a policy on 'safe space for girls', Naomi was not aware of one within Fingal, however any programmes or projects ran by the Community & Sports Dept is ran with safety at the forefront, regardless of gender. Community and

Sports work with the JPC (Joint Policing Committee), Our Balbriggan, and the Community and Sports Officers to ensure the highest safety standards at all events and programmes.

In relation to supporting those on low incomes to access sport, the Sports teams offer sports equipment grants, these are available to clubs as opposed to individuals, these grants enable the club to seek less subvention from the public which assists in playing Sports more available to all.

SPC/41/22 (Agenda Item No 5)
Update on Draft Creative Ireland/Fingal Strategy

Lillian Whelan, Senior Executive Librarian, gave a presentation on the Draft Creative Ireland / Fingal Strategy which included details on the Creative Ireland Programme, the new Fingal Strategy, the policies, the strategic themes, the five pillars and the proposed date for the launch.

Councillor Hopkins commented that she is looking forward to the launch of the final document.

SPC/42/22 (Agenda Item No 6)
Councillor J. Hopkins - Random Acts of Kindness Month February 2023 - AI086057

The following motion was passed with an amendment from Councillor Boland "That the motion be amended by the deletion of Chief Executive and replaced by the word County Council"

"That the Chief Executive designate February as "Fingal, Random Acts of Kindness Month," and the month will be declared and supported through various social media and traditional methods i.e., radio etc."

Naomi Weir, Senior Executive Officer, relayed the work involved in a month's long campaign, however the committee advised that 28 pre prepared messages, one for each day would suffice.

The motion was passed by the Committee in full.

SPC/43/22 (Agenda Item No)

A.O.B.

Robert Burns, Director of Service requested the Chair and other committee members discuss the formation of a subcommittee to address the issue of Community Childcare in Fingal. Robert advised he is keen to get started so work can be brought to the Corporate Policy Group and Full Council.

Councillor Hopkins advised they are hoping to start in January 2023 and Councillors Maguire & O'Rodaigh would also need to be consulted.

The Meeting concluded at 6.00pm.

CHAIRPERSON

DATED