



**Arts and Cultural Advisory Group
Notes of Meeting held on Monday 1st November 2021, 9.30 a.m.
Zoom Call**

Present: Cllr. Dearbail Butler; Cllr. Patricia Roe; Cllr. Claire Byrne; Ray Yeates; Ruairí Ó Cuív; Logan Sisley; Adekunle Gomez; Ross Keane; Willie White; Ciaran Taylor; Sunil Sharpe.

Apologies: Cllr. Cat O'Driscoll;

In Attendance: Paula Farrell

Chair: Cllr. Dearbail Butler

Minutes of previous meeting held on 30th August 2021 were approved.

Matters Arising: None.

A Presentation by Adekunle Gomez of the Africa Institute in Ireland on Cultural Diversity and the Arts.

Hugh Lane Report:

Logan Sisley represented the Hugh Lane Gallery at the meeting and reported that:

- There are approximately 7,000 visitors to the Gallery per month. This is approximately half the pre-pandemic numbers.
- Education Engagement: Planning is currently underway for the return of in-person in-gallery engagements from October 22nd and the resumption of their in-person Zoom@Hugh Lane Gallery primary school project.
- Plans are also underway for Artist led creative engagements with children and young people and with homeless people and the continuation of initiatives exploring VTS, art and literacy with the Dublin Adult Learning Centre.
- Exhibitions: **The Art of Negotiation: John Lavery's Anglo-Irish Treaty Portraits** was launched in the Embassy of Ireland, London on the 7th October. This exhibition from the HLG collection brought together in London for the first time, the portraits of the British and Irish signatories of the Anglo Irish Treaty, which was signed on the 6th December 1921. The exhibition continues for a month.
- The Bell Project 2007/2015: Is a collaboration by the Hugh Lane Gallery, the Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai and The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto. The exhibition is situated in the Front Hall of the gallery where the visitor encounters a large ceremonial bell case from disused landmines, bullets and other weapons employed during the Iran-Iraq war.
- The conservation Department will join the 2021-2022 Heritage Council Conservation Internship Programme. The one year shared internship with the National Gallery will offer the junior conservator a broader range of experience by being situated in each gallery for 6 months.
- Culture Night: The short film, *Amongst Ourselves*, exploring the dynamic of the Black Irish mother daughter relationship through Spoken Word performances was

commissioned by the Gallery's education department as part of the Culture Night programme.

The Arts Office Report:

- **Actions supporting the North Central Area:** As part of the Arts Council Partnership with Dublin City Council, The Arts Office is working to support artists, arts organisations and communities engaging in the Arts throughout the North Central Area. The Creative Ireland Committee in DCC has targeted funding in this area and allocated €10K in micro grants. The City Arts Office have commissioned research to investigate Arts infrastructure and Arts participation in this Area.
- **Dublin Venue Feasibility Study:** The Executive Manager has asked the City Arts Office to commission a Feasibility Study on a temporary 500 seater venue for Dublin. OBFA Architects have been asked to prepare the Brief.
- **Infrastructure Report:** Turley's /OBFA have submitted a draft of their final report to the Arts Office and Planning teams. The audit points to areas of geographical and sectoral deficit in the city and recommends that the forthcoming Dublin City Development Plan includes a policy for the development of a formal "Cultural Infrastructure Toolkit". The report will conclude in the coming weeks following review.
- **Street Art:** The Arts Office has been working with the Planning Department and the City Recovery Unit to bring new street art commissions to the city. Five sites were identified and three are now completed. The Arts Office has been supporting the creative committee for the Living Canvas. A new digital screen for art in the city at Wilton Park by IPUT will be launched on 12th November
- **George Bernard Shaw House:** Formerly a museum, this Victorian terrace house at No.33 Synge Street, is a protected structure and needs detailed conservation work to restore it back to a viable dwelling for 'artists in residence'. City Architects are working to complete a brief for restoration. It is estimated that works could commence on site early in 2022 and be completed by Q4.
- **Dublin Alive – Local Live Performance programme:** The Department of TCAGSM and Dublin City agreed a local roll-out for the LLPS which saw an initial SLA agreement provide €285,000 and a further €100,000 subsequently agreed by the Department TSAGSM. This budget has been augmented by CRES department by €100,000. The Department TCAGSM has recently invited Dublin City Council to enter into a second SLA for an additional €245,000 to support indoor or outdoor events, to be completed before end December 2021.
- **Creative Hubs:** Following on from the successful summer programme over seven weeks. Dublin City Libraries and Arts Office have now commenced the delivery of the Autumn/Winter programme for schools in the three Creative Hubs. The Arts Office is continuing its early year's partnership with The Ark and collaborating with local resource organisations, Northside Partnership and Ballyfermot Partnership.
- **Artists Workspaces:** The Arts Office in collaboration with Xestra Asset Management announced a new opportunity for artist workspaces in Artane Place, Dublin 5. Four potential Units have been allocated to Dublin City Council with a view to offering artists affordable rents for designated workspace. The Arts Office is engaging an open and competitive process to allocate these units. Closing date for applications is 22nd December 2021.
- **Creative Climate Action Crumlin:** Dublin City Council received €166K from Creative Ireland to support a climate action partnership with Crumlin through the local organisation Clean Up Crumlin. The working group has been established and the first meeting was held on 27th October. This Climate education and consultation programme hopes to develop a community-led programme of Climate Action.
- **Photographic Exhibition: Alen MacWeeney My Dublin 1963/My Dubliners 2020:** Dublin City Arts Office is collaborating with the New-York based, Irish photographer Alen MacWeeney, the Gallery of Photography, Creative Ireland and UCC on a photographic display on Digi-panels and bus shelters across the city from 30th October - November 2021.

- **Artists Residencies:** The recipients of the Artists Residencies at St. Patrick's Lodge, Albert Cottages and Temple Bar have now taken up their residences.

The LAB Gallery:

The Lab Gallery is currently showing a major solo exhibition by artist Marie Hanlon entitled 'Water – More or Less'. This exhibition comprises six installation works each addressing an aspect of water stress: flooding, drought, desalination, industrial contamination, seasonal shortages and the realities of water treatment. The exhibition and forthcoming publication are supported by LAWPRO and Creative Ireland and will run until 21st December.

Public Art:

- **Dublin City Public Art Programme:** Work continues on developing the approach to the pilot projects under Strand 1- Public. The City Arts Office will have a report on a proposed approach to *Citizen Commissioners* for the next ACAG Meeting. There were 36 proposals from all art forms and different practices for Strand 2 – Art which were assessed by two external public art experts. Short-listed artists will be paid a fee for further development of the proposals. There were 16 proposals for Dublin Docklands Light Commission to install a permanent light installation on City Quay. Short-listing of proposals is taking place on the first week of November.

Proposals for Permanent / temporary Art:

- The ACAG members were given details of a proposal by Niall Bracken for a 'landmark' piece in Dublin Bay which would represent Ireland throughout the world. The Group considered the proposal but believe that it was underdeveloped in its detail and that such a proposal would best be commissioned on an open completion basis. In addition to the considerable costs of many millions, the proposal would have to be subject to an environmental impact study (EIS) and design and engineering detailing. Therefore it was unanimously agreed not to support this proposal.
- The Samaritans applied for a temporary display of a sculpture based on the Samaritans Badge. Entitled, 'Always There', this sculpture was created by prisoners in Dublin's Wheatfield Prison to mark the 20th anniversary of Dublin Samaritans' listener service in conjunction with the Irish Prison Service. The Group had concerns about the security of the external display of this sculpture and thought that it might be subject to vandalism or theft. The Public Art Officer was invited to liaise with the Samaritans to see if a safe space such as a shopping centre could be found for the display of the sculpture.
- A proposal from Orla Donohoe for a music-meets-water installation in the Blessington Basin consisting of water fountains 'dancing' to choreographed orchestral music was also considered. This proposal was deemed to lack suitability for the Blessington Basin and could negatively impact on local flora and fauna and that the scale of the proposed installations as cited in Dubai or the Canary Islands require a far great space.

Cllr Roe stated that more attention and financial input should be directed for the maintenance and care of established monuments and statues in the city centre. The Public Art Officer reported that he was meeting with the Heritage Officer and Central Area Public Domain Officer to discuss the maintenance of the statues on O'Connell Street.

AOB:

Cllr. Roe enquired about 'Meanwhile' use for some vacant buildings in the city and noted that while focusing on suburban areas in terms of its cultural infrastructure it is also important to concentrate on the cultural life of Dublin city centre. Cllr. Roe will put the issue of vacant buildings on the agenda of the next SPC. Ray Yeates added that the good will of developers is important in terms of addressing the need for cultural spaces in the city and a balance needs to be sought between the vocational needs of the City Council and the commercial needs of developers. The City Council has no tradition of building artists workspaces, its

power lies within the Planning and planning implementation realm. Sunil Sharpe suggested that there should also be a focus on *protecting* cultural spaces and enquired as to whether there would be strict implementation of the developers 'Tool Kit' going forward and if there would be an inclusion on the protection of cultural spaces in the Infrastructure report.

Concerns were expressed about the cultural life of the city being hollowed out. A request was made to put this concern on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting of the City Council. Cllr Roe agreed to this request which was also supported by Cllrs. Dearbhail Butler and Claire Byrne. The rise of anti-social behaviour in Dublin city centre and its impact on cultural events in the city was also addressed. Recent anti-social behaviour at Meeting House Square and The Ark in Temple Bar were discussed and the need for audiences to feel safe when they are engaging in cultural events in the city was emphasised. Ciaran Taylor and Willie White emphasised the need to raise this as a matter of urgency at Council level and for the problem of anti-social behaviour to be addressed at a strategic and city wide level. The City Arts Officer confirmed that he would raise this matter directly with the Chief Executive of Dublin City Council. The dereliction of the Eden premises in Meeting House Square and the increase in anti-social behaviour at this particular setting was also raised as an on-going concern in this context.

On foot of a discussion regarding the lower number of visitors to cultural venues in the city centre due to the Covid crisis, enquiries were made regarding the current status of the City Recovery Plan and Task Force, getting an update the Nigh Time Economy and feeding concerns to the next Temple Bar Cultural Trust meeting. The importance of Working Groups beginning their work as soon as possible and the need for the City Council to permit changes was reiterated. The City Arts Officer confirmed that these concerns will be raised at the next SPC meeting on November 22nd by elected representatives. Deadlines for motions for the upcoming SPC is 9th November. Cllrs. Byrne and Roe confirmed that they would raise concerns about the city recovery at this upcoming meeting.

The lack of quality and durability of the street furniture in the Temple Bar area was raised as a matter of concern. A call was made for the City Council to require private business to standardise street furniture to ensure it is of a good quality going forward. Cllr Byrne requested that a letter outlining these matters be forwarded from the ACAG for the Agenda of the next meeting of Temple Bar Cultural Trust and the City Recovery Task Force.

Having drawn attention to the lack of gender diversity of the arts representatives on the Art Culture Advisory Group, Willie White proposed that Ruth McGowan of Dublin Fringe be invited to participate in the ACAG going forward. This proposal was approved by the Arts and Cultural Advisory Group.

The dates of the ACAG meetings in 2020 were confirmed as follows:

Monday 31st January

Monday 25th April

Monday 29th August

Monday 24th October