



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

Report to Arts, Culture, Leisure
and Recreation SPC
25th September 2023
Item No. 13

**Arts and Cultural Advisory Group
Notes of Meeting held on Monday 3rd July 2023, 9.30 a.m.
City Hall**

Present: Cllr. Cat. O'Driscoll; Cllr. Patricia Roe; Cllr. Hazel De Nortúin; Mary MacSweeney; Ray Yeates; Ruairí Ó Cuív; Sinead Connolly; Michael Dempsey; Ciara Dardis; Charles Duggan, Ruth McGowan, Adekunle Gomez, Ross Keane, Ciaran Taylor, Willie White; Arthur Lappin; John Davison; Casper Lindskog (Arrow Architects).

Apologies: Sunil Sharpe.

In Attendance: Paula Farrell

Chair: Mary MacSweeney

Minutes of previous meeting held on 24th April 2023 were approved.

Matters Arising: With regard to previous concerns expressed by Ross Keane in relation to the degeneration of Temple Bar and anti-social behaviour and criminality in the city wide, RK clarified that he wished this matter to be addressed in a concerted way and called for a radical rethinking of the issue. He reiterated his call for members of Temple Bar Cultural Trust to attend ACAG to report on the matter and asked for a meeting of all stakeholders in city including the Garda, Fáilte Ireland and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media to be convened in order to facilitate real actionable steps to address the issue. Cllr. O'Driscoll confirmed that she would communicate these concerns to the Dublin City Joint Policing Committee in the first instance, the structures of which are statutory. Cllr. O'Driscoll will also raise this issue at the upcoming Arts, Culture, and Leisure & Recreation SPC on 24th July. Should substantive action not follow from these interventions, Cllr. O'Driscoll recommended that a political approach be taken in the form of lobbying the government direct

Progress report on the 500 Seater Venue conceptual feasibility study:

This report was presented to ACAG by John Davison of Turley Planning. The key considerations of the study were to assess the demand for a 500 seater venue in the city; the likely impact that a venue of this size would have on existing theatre venues in the city; the commercial impact of a theatre of this capacity; what the governance structure(s) / commercial arrangements for letting the theatre would be and what its programming impact would be. The study assessed the existing provision for performing arts in the city and looked at best practice exemplar venues nationally and internationally. Within Dublin city venue capacity ranges from 180 and 1,100 people. There is no venue with a capacity for anything in between these figures. The study took the form of a co-design survey of producers, promoters and practitioners across all art forms. 159 respondents with stakeholder interest in the performing arts were canvassed. 83% of respondents were in favour of a 500 seat venue in the city while 13% were non-committal.

A discussion of the survey results followed.

While acknowledging the quality of the report, Willie White expressed his concern about mission creep setting in to the project. He emphasised the need for a Black Box venue and relayed that the examples of venues in the report did not reflect his original motion. Citing the high cultural deficit in the city, WW was concerned that the development was too expansive than he originally envisioned and that endeavouring to accommodate multiple needs in one venue may result to delays in realising the project due to it being too big a plan. He expressed concern about the examples of international venue cited in the report and noted the wealth available in these locations compared to that of Dublin city and asked if temporary spaces in existing structures could be repurposed in the interim. With regard to WW's original motion, John Davison (Turley), confirmed that they (Turley) were not privy to this motion and that the remit of the study pertained to a permanent capital build.

Cllr. O'Driscoll noted that there is a trend of underutilization in some of the venues cited in the Turley feasibility study. Cllr. Roe reiterated that the site of the new venue is of huge importance and enquired as to whether such a venue would be a new build or an already existing space. The Councillor queried the cost of the new space and expressed concern about how slowly the 'wheels turned' in the City Council in terms of how long it would take for the new venue to come to fruition. JD indicated that the costings for a singular theatre space in the city could be between 30 and 40 million and suggested that brown field site developments within the city boundaries could be considered. The survey endeavoured to address the idea of dual use within the one concept. Arthur Lappin noted the lack of any 500 seater venues / theatres spaces in the city currently delivering for ALL art forms.

Ross Keane enquired as to how long this project would take from concept to realisation. RY estimated that following site assessment, making the economic / business case and securing capital and design funding it would take 5 years at a minimum. He confirmed that the existence of brown field 500 capacity venue spaces within the canal boundaries that could be developed is unknown. No one is currently tasked with identifying this potential and it is not a deliverable prospect within 12 months. Cllr. O'Driscoll confirmed that she would bring this matter for discussion to the Planning SPC. Ciaran Taylor affirmed the urgent need for a temporary space and queried the capacity of the sector to feed in to a 500 seater venue. He asked how it would be funded in the long-term. He suggested that Arts Grants should be looked at within this context as well as repurposing Found spaces and investing in artists to fill the spaces is required. WW suggested that the new space should have some anchor tenants. Noting that a new 500 seater venue would be disruptive to some existing venues, a concern also observed by Arthur Lappin with particular reference to The Project Arts Centre, the winners should be the audience.

RY reported that there is a huge demand for buildings to support Arts events. He receives approximately three to five requests for spaces each week. Dublin City Council does not have this capacity. Resources do not match the aspiration. The resources of the arts community itself need to be harnessed. A register of buildings could be built up in due course. Ruth McGowan drew attention to information gap on the part of Developers regarding their Percent for Art obligations and identified that an education piece was required to address this. The ideal scenario would be to work with a Developer from the beginning of the process. RY confirmed that the Arts Office is beginning the process of organising the Developers Conference which will help to address this matter and broaden the understanding of the Scheme encompassing ALL art forms and not only outdoor pieces. Cllr. O'Driscoll expressed the importance of sectoral expertise from the beginning reiterating that co-design is only meaningful if it occurs from the beginning. The Councillor confirmed that she will update the July or September SPC on the Developers Conference as this it progresses.

Hugh Lane Report

Michael Dempsey reported that 60 people came to see the artist Richard Gorman for the ***In Conversation*** talk with Historian Roy Foster on 8th June. The Gallery is currently presenting ***Reconstructing Mondrian***, an exhibition based on John Beattie's filming of Mondrian's reconstructed Paris Studio and ***Living through Paint(ing)*** until 6th August and a survey exhibition by Richard Gorman in collaboration with the Contemporary Art Museum of Villa Croce and the Oriental Art Museum E. Chiossone, Genoa until 20th August.

Future exhibitions include ***Andy Warhol's Three Times Out*** which will exhibit at the Gallery from 5th October 2023 – 28th January 2024. The ***Bown / Bacon, collections display***, will run from 18th July to 19 November. The display features a selection of the renowned English photographer Jane Bown's photographs of Bacon at 7 Reece Mews, recently donated by Jane Bown Estate.

The Gallery Education Programme includes the Hugh Lane and Create commission for socially engaged artists with filmmaker Jijo Sebastian, a 1-year project which regularly meets with 50 multi-national group participants is successfully underway.

Art and the Outdoors, a two day family art event will take place on Parnell Square North on the August Bank Holiday weekend. This free family-friendly programme includes artist-led outdoor drawing, street spectacle, live music performances and more. This July the Summer Programmes for Children and Young People will see the Gallery run a series of Summer Camps for ages 7-10 and 11-13year olds.

Libraries Report:

Ciara Dardis presented the Report for Libraries and reported that a new **national public library strategy** will shortly be launched. The **Summer Programme for Children**, will run during July & August will see over 40 family friendly events to choose from including, storytelling, music and drama performance, puppet shows, creative writing, climate change, STEM workshops. **Summer Stars**, the free national reading programme for children will take place in Dublin City Libraries from June 12th to August 31st. Other Library events scheduled include the **Our Library in the Community Team** will bring a variety of events and a pop-up library to community events and festivals in the city.

The Arts Office Report

Public Art

The Public Art Officer provided an update on the commissions across all three strands of the Dublin City Public Art Programme

Proposal from Brendan Kilty – James Joyce

Brendan Kilty, noted for restoring the *James Joyce House of The Dead* at 15 Usher's Island and for the preservation of *Sweny's Pharmacy*, has proposed to Dublin City Council that he will 'deliver a fun talk on *James Joyce, the Liffey and Dublin Bay* taking an accessible romp through *Ulysses, Finnegans Wake* and *The Dead*'. He also proposes to gift a brick from the rubble from restoration of 15 Usher's Island for one of the '*63 Seats of Learning*' he is developing around the world.

The Group considered the proposal and the City Arts Officer offered to liaise with Brendan Kilty regarding the talk. The Group also considered the offer of a brick to commission a *Seat of Learning*. It was noted that there was a lot of high quality commemorative art in Dublin relating to both Ulysses and James Joyce, for example the Joyce Museum, the walking trail *In the Footsteps of Leopold Bloom* by Robin Buick and the James Joyce statue by Marjorie Fitzgibbon and on that basis the Group agreed to decline the offer.

The LAB Gallery –

'an atom-bomb in each morsel of life', the new exhibition at the Lab Gallery by artist Katherine Sankey and curated by Margarita Cappock will run until September 5th.

North West Area Research - Turley and Thrive will undertake research into the arts in the North West Area of the city as part of Dublin City Council's partnership framework with the Arts Council. Turley will also launch their survey for quantitative research and Thrive will

gather stakeholders interested in taking part in focus groups which will take place into early autumn with the pre development report due at the end of the year.

Artane Place Artist Workspaces - Construction is now complete on the two singular units at Artane Place. The final paperwork is being drawn up with artists expected to move in in the coming weeks. The ten workspace units, known as 35a, formerly the old Stardust building, will begin construction work in the coming weeks. These spaces were launched on 22nd June as part of *Space to Create*.

MusicTown 2023 - will take place at The Complex on the last weekend of July, This year's event will see a spectrum of music-makers resident in Ireland gather for a celebration of the Irish music in 2023 and a reflection of the diversity of Irish life. Each of the 30+ artists performing will present their own personal and unique genre. Curated by Foggynotions. MusicTown 2023 will be curated by three guest curators, the Improvised Music Company (IMC), Dublin Digital Radio & Crash Ensemble.

Childrens Art in Libraries: Creative Hubs Summer Programme 2023 July 10 – August 15 will take place in the three Creative Hub libraries of Coolock, Cabra and Ballyfermot. Delivered by The Ark, **72 events** for children aged 3 to 12 will be presented over the holidays. ASD friendly and curated events for neuro-divergent children are also included.

Cruinniu na nÓg - an evaluation of Creative Ireland's flagship annual event Cruinniú na nÓg took place in January 2023. This evaluation was undertaken with 9 Dublin City Council staff across a variety of work areas, 11 Arts and Community Programmers across the City with a funding history with Cruinniu na nÓg via Dublin City Council and Young People with experience of Cruinniu na nÓg. As a result this year's event saw an improved offering of free creative events for children and young people across the city.

AOB:

Adekunle Gomez addressed Africa Day. AK was seeking clarity as to the programming of this event and in particular the role the he and Dublin City Council would play in this regard. He further enquired as to procedure involved in relation to the Local Committee Development Committee (LCDC) communicating with the City Council on the event. Cllr. O'Driscoll stated that the desire would be that Africa Day would be programmed by stakeholders of Africa Day and that the objectives of this event need to be clarified. Cllr. O'Driscoll will request a joint approach for Programming this event to the SPC. RY spoke to the fractured nature of the stakeholders on this issue and the need for a stakeholders meeting to be convened. Cllr. O'Driscoll confirmed that she will link in with the Chair of Dublin City LCDC, Carolyn Moore, to discuss this matter and will peruse a more formal route to progress it if required.

RY confirmed the intention of the CEO and Asst. CEO of Dublin City Council to establish a **Harry Clarke museum** at 43 Parnell Square. This museum will reflect the importance of the work of Harry Clarke to the city, will allow many of his unseen works to be exhibited and will also be a welcome addition to the development of a Cultural Quarter in Parnell Square. The building at 43 Parnell Square is currently owned by Failte Ireland and will pass to DCC for a nominal fee. Dublin City Council Culture Company will take over the building and the project will led by Assistant Arts Officer Margarita Cappock. The time frame for completion of the museum is approximately 3 years. A presentation of this project will be made at the upcoming SPC. Feedback from ACAG on this news was positive. Ciaran Taylor enquired as to whether other uses of the building have been considered by DCC.

Following a request for an update on the Pilot Project for the Time Economy. Mary MacSweeney confirmed that the competition for a Night Time Economy Advisor is now closed. Shortlisting is ongoing. A report by the National Implementation Group will be submitted to the SPC.

The next ACAG meeting will take place on 4th September at 9.30am in the Richard O'Carroll Room, City Hall.