



**Arts & Cultural Advisory Group**

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Notes of Meeting held on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023, 9.30 a.m.  
City Hall**

**Present:** Cllr. Cat. O'Driscoll; Cllr. Patricia Roe; Mary MacSweeney; Ray Yeates; Logan Sisley; Ruth McGowan, Adekunle Gomez, Ciaran Taylor, Willie White.

**Apologies:** Ruairí Ó Cuív, Sunil Sharpe; Ross Keane.

**In Attendance:** Paula Farrell

**Chair:** Cllr. Cat O'Driscoll

**Minutes of previous meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 were approved.**

**Matters Arising:** Cllr O'Driscoll confirmed that she brought the matter of identifying the existence of brown field 500 seat venue spaces within the canal boundaries, which is currently unknown, to the attention of the Chair of the Planning SPC.

Cllr. O'Driscoll linked in with the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), Carolyn Moore, regarding the programming of Africa Day. It was agreed that the LCAD is a good place for the event to 'sit'. Carolyn Moore committed to organising a meeting with stakeholders in September or October 2023 to which ACAG members would be welcome.

**Hugh Lane Report:** Logan Sisley presented the Hugh Lane report. He reported that **Future exhibitions** include **Andy Warhol's Three Times Out** which will exhibit at the Gallery from 5<sup>th</sup> October – 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The installation consists of more than 250 works on loan from museums and private collections in the US, Canada, Europe and the Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh. Tickets for the exhibition went on sale in mid-August with 1,500 sales in the first hour. **Art & the Outdoors**, a two day family art event took place on Parnell Square North on the August Bank Holiday weekend. The programme included artist-led outdoor drawing and printmaking, events, all guided by professional artists from the HL panel. The numbers visits to the gallery over the weekend totalled 1,935, significantly up from the average.

**The Arts Office Report**

Ray Yeates presented the Public Art Report including an update on the commissions across all three strands of the Dublin City Public Art Programme:

**Strand 1** - The Citizen Commissioners process is reaching Stage 4 (of 6) whereby the participants, having engaged with different artforms are now entering the phase where they become involved in mini commissions across different artforms. The second Citizen

Commissioners pilot project is in Dolphin House, Dublin 8. An Arts Coordinator will be appointed in September to further develop Citizen Commissioners in Dolphin House.

**Strand 2 - Liffey Love** by Rhona Byrne is being launched on Culture Night at the Poolbeg Yacht and Boat Club. This commission involves collecting plastic from the River Liffey and transforming it into social sculptures which will be located on the north campshires.

**Strand 3 includes – Pulse by Alva Gallagher:** Installation and testing has been completed. The 'Lighting Up' ceremony will take place on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October; **Temple Bar Square Commission:** The artwork *Cityscape with Sleeping Dog* by Isabel Noland has been fabricated and will be installed as part of the paving in the square at its expected completion before the end of 2023; **Commission for Dartmouth Square:** Andy Fitz was awarded this commission for a sculpture inspired by Lafcadio Hearn. The commission which is funded by ULSARA and DCC is to be located in Dartmouth Square; **Commission for Lemon Street:** Approved by ACAG and the South East Area Committee, this commission is related to the public realm improvements in the Grafton Street area; **C2CC:** Funding is being sought from the National Transport Authority (NTA) for a public art commission relating to the active travel route from Clontarf to City Centre. A proposal for an open competition with the theme of 'Travel and Mobility' has been submitted to the NTA; **Fitzwilliam Cycle Route:** Dublin City Council is assessing tenders for the capital works. The Public Art Officer is engaging with the commissioned artist Lucy Andrews for a sculpture to be located on the traffic island at Leeson Street and Adelaide Road; **Monument to the Women of the Revolution:** The budget required for a monument of a suitable scale on O'Connell Street is currently underway. It is intended to launch this work before the end of 2023; **O'Connell Plinth, City Hall:** A brief has been prepared for an open call for a new temporary commission for the O'Connell plinth; **NTA Per Cent for Art Funding:** The Public Art Officer is liaising with the DCC Environment and Engineering Department to seek to maximise the Per Cent for Art Funding available to DCC relating to active travel capital projects.

### Care and Maintenance

The statue of Molly Malone was defaced with heavy black paint on in August. A foundry was engaged to remove the paint and to repatinate the sculpture. The memorial to the victims of the attack on the Miami Showband was defaced with graffiti. This has been removed. The strings on the guitar on the statue of Philip Lynott were broken from the insertion of plectrums under them. The foundry which cast the statue has been engaged to replace the strings with stronger welds. It has been proposed that these plectrums be removed regularly to avoid such damage again.

Referring to the care and maintenance of public art, Cllr. O'Driscoll noted that it is invisible work and enquired as to what the cost is of damage repair work to public art (as opposed to upkeep) on an annual basis. RY confirmed that there is no formal budget for this specific purpose. Repair work is carried out on a discretionary case by case basis under the remit of Local Area Offices. The response to repair work is quick and the artist is usually involved. Cllr. O'Driscoll confirmed that she will link in with the Joint Policing Committee regarding the matter of targeted damage to public art in the city. Willie White enquired if the data base of public art could be made public. Referring to funding being sought from the National Transport Authority (NTA) for a public art commission relating to the active travel route from Clontarf to City Centre, as noted in Strand 3 of the Public Art Programme, Ciaran Taylor queried the lateness of liaising with the NTA on cycle routes and asked if the drawdown of funding was still waiting for approval. RY confirmed that the process of drawing down funding can be lengthy and difficult despite the efforts of the Arts Office.

RY reported that he received confirmation from Housing that 10 sites have been designated for 5% Culture Community Art funding. The questions will now be, how to support these sites, who will run and fund them and how to design and co-design them. This will require a

lot of strategic discussion. The deficit of artist workspaces will be addressed in time. In the meantime a lot of competition will ensue. Diago have reached out to the Arts Office in relation the Rupert Guinness Theatre. Found spaces have their limitations and discussions are currently underway with Diago about a feasibility studio for the theatre. Matters relating to ownership, capital cost, who would run it and the level of community involvement would all form part of the feasibility study. RY recently toured the Ambassador Theatre on O'Connell Street. This is a potential 750 seater venue. There are two potential venues within the building. Currently use is made of the lower bank of seating while the top area is an exhibition space. The configuration however is odd and it is currently unclear if capital would be available to update the premises. A joint feasibility study could be undertaken. Referring generally to the empty buildings in O'Connell Street, RY noted that the powers of the City Council are limited and cited the Kylemore building as an example of the bureaucratic difficulties that can be encountered in relation to empty buildings on the street. The gap between inspiration and implementation can be wide. Cllr. O'Driscoll affirmed that rules are in place in relation to buildings on O'Connell Street and while the empty spaces are not part of the remit of ACAG, a 'Vision' piece highlighting public art and gender balance on the on the street will to be brought to Council by Cllrs. O'Driscoll and Roe.

The City Arts Officer presented a Report on increasing Arts Grants to ACAG. The lack of increase in Arts Grants for more than 15 years as well as lack of applications for Arts projects in certain Administrative Areas of the City, notably the North West Area and North Central, has been noted by the Elected Members. In addressing how to apply new resources to Arts Grants, Dublin City Council wants to address the reasons why certain communities are not connecting with professional Arts funding either from DCC or the Arts Council. Some of these deficits include: a lack of a tradition of professional arts and infrastructure both in qualified people and appropriate buildings in certain parts of the city; arts funding being seen as bureaucratic and difficult to apply for by community groups and a lack the administrative support / structure locally.

In order to increase Arts Grants funding in a targeted way, the Arts Office is now proposing that the Arts Grant fund increase by €250K (from €550K to €800K) in 2024 through the creation of a €50K Arts Fund in each of the five Administrative Area. This increase in funding will be a partnership between Area Offices and the Arts Office throughout the calendar year that allocates funding to Arts Projects, Arts Programmes, local Arts organisations and individual artists living in the designated Administrative Area. This will be a developmental process that recognises talent and builds capacity to attract further resources. Grants from €2-€5K will be made by local Councillors on the agreed recommendations of the Area Manager, Community Development Officer and the City Arts Officer. To balance these proposals the main fund normally allocated to the categories of Projects, Revenue, Neighbourhood and Bursaries should also be increased by €250K in 2025 leading to a doubling of Arts Grants over the next two years. This two pronged approach strengthening the Centre City and the suburbs is vital as a new foundational Arts initiative post Covid and acknowledges the increased visibility and importance of the Arts in Dublin.

RY noted the importance of smaller scale projects which feed in to larger scale ones and suggested that given the lack of professional arts funding assistance in some areas of the city, a Developmental Fund would be advantageous. Increased funding will be good for applied projects. Cllr. O'D confirmed her support for this approach noting that a developmental and community approach sits well with the City Council. WW agreed that the city wants a stake in the arts and artists and reiterated that it is about the value not the money. Adekunle Gomez agreed that it is important that local groups feel they can tell *their story*. Emphasising service *impact* as well as service provision, RY spoke of the value of engaging artists who have not been traditionally engaged in funding processes and convening artists with new approaches who can put out good projects.

CT asked what roll the Area Offices would have in this process. He enquired if they would be suggesting projects for funding and what would the checks and balances be. RY confirmed that the Arts Office would consult with Area Management first and while ascertaining the quality of projects, the Arts Office would err on the side of inclusion over excellence. CT suggested that the arts grants should to be filtered through professional artists perhaps by way of a local community panel. Asking if 2024 and 2025 grants could be linked, Cllr. O'Driscoll confirmed that Council budgets are undertaken on an annual basis only and that if the development ethos is approved this may be easier to achieve going forward. WW reiterated the importance of having targeted funding with a particular emphasis on youth communities. In relation to the proposal that funding will be made by local Councillors on the agreed recommendations of the Area Managers, Community Development Officers and the City Arts Office, Cllr. O'D recommended that an external person should also be involved in this process and that mechanisms be put in place to ensure the purpose of the new grant. Cllr. O'D suggested that this proposal may have to go to SPC and the Area Committees on its way to Council and that the Arts Office could be involved in the Area Office discussions. Cllr. Roe emphasised the importance of grants being about community and not Area Offices.

### **Conclusion:**

ACAG endorsed the proposal from the City Arts Officer to increase Arts Grant.

**Creative Hubs:** Following a hugely successful summer programme, Creative Hubs Autumn programme begins in October with a tour of the 2023 Performance Production commission, **Grey Matter**, in partnership with **Draocht**. The autumn programme will also include a new series of short residencies in invited schools with artists Luke Casslery, Gabi and Orugbo; an Early Years Residency Programme and multidisciplinary workshops programme for schools. It is expected that Creative Hub will be expanded to a 4<sup>th</sup> Creative Hub library from November. In September an open call will be announced for the **2024 Visual Arts exhibition Commission** in partnership with **IMMA**

**North West Area Research:** Turley and Thrive this week launched the first part of the research into the arts in the North West Area. The survey aims to gather quantitative data and perceptions of the arts in the area. Going forward, further focus groups will dig deeper in to the survey responses to form part of Dublin City Council's Partnership Framework with the Arts Council. The final report on the research will be due to be completed by Christmas 2023. **Artane Place Artist Workspaces:** Artists are now preparing to move into the two singular units of Artane Place imminently. The construction on 35a that houses 10 units has entered its second phase and is expected to be completed by end of autumn 2023.

**Creative Places Darndale** has entered the final year of the Arts Council award period. Plans are underway for the 3<sup>rd</sup> years programme. A facilitation session will be hosted by the Arts Office to enable the steering committee to reflect on the learning of the past 2 years and aims to begin planning an application to the Arts Council for funding for a 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year.

Following an enquiry about the dissemination of the North West Area research piece from Cllr. O'Driscoll. RY confirmed that following a meeting with Areas Officers and management, a detailed list was created to in order that this research reach as many people as possible.

### **The LAB Gallery –**

**'HOLDING ON lightly'**: Previews on September 14<sup>th</sup>, and runs until December 4<sup>th</sup> 2023. Taking place in the cube space of the LAB Gallery, artist Elaine Grainger presents a new body of work through installation, sculpture, drawing and performance. **Culture Night:** On Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September, tours of the current exhibitions will take place in The LAB Gallery.

They will be delivered by the artists (Elaine Grainger and Diaa Lagan), who will mediate their work. The gallery will remain open to the public until 8pm

**AOB:**

Referring to arts events for children (Creative Hubs) and building audiences for the future, AG enquired if Children's Arts in Libraries could expand in other parts of the city. Cllr. O'Driscoll suggested that Assistant Arts Officer Liz Coman be invited to make an input on her work with children's projects at an upcoming ACAG. This invitation can also be extended to the Hugh Lane Gallery. WW drew attention to the need to target teenagers as well as children. RY suggested a young person's ACAG could be potential for the future.

RY updated ACAG on the progress of the Harry Clarke museum. This is a capital project. The building on Parnell Square has been identified and a report on the project has been made to the Arts SPC. Disability access will form a large part of updating the building. A project team, including the Hugh Lane, will form part of the development. Cllr. O'Driscoll will visit the site imminently.

An update was also provided on the Chatham Row tender process. RY confirmed that 26 applications were received. The Shortlisting has been completed. An interview panel will be formed within 3 to 4 weeks with interviews planned to take place by the end of October. The gap identified is in terms of managing the building. A proposal for it to form a Co-Op was rejected. A turn-key approach could be taken. Lease negotiations are scheduled to take place in approximately 3 months and it hoped to be up and running by 2024.

In response to a question from AG pertaining to the Ivy Market, Cllr. O'Driscoll confirmed that it does not come under the remit of ACAG but rather a separate Council committee on Markets in the city. ACAG is not the correct forum for it.

The next ACAG meeting will take place on 6<sup>th</sup> November in the Richard O'Carroll Room, City Hall.