

Report on	Culture & arts Update Report
Date of Meeting	Thursday 11 th June 2020
Reporting Officer	T McCance
Contact Officer	T McCance

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update Members on activity delivered across Culture and Arts Services during the Covid-19 lock down period and to highlight key issues during this period. The report also highlights specific events and activities within Culture & Arts Services that is currently being explored by the officer team in maintaining the contact between our staff and officer team and our customers, visitors, audiences and service users.
2.0	Background
2.1	Mid Ulster District Council recognises the important role that Culture and Arts plays in today's society and recognises that access to high quality culture and arts performances, events and activities and services can enhance the quality of life and wellbeing of the local community of Mid Ulster while also showcasing the quality of the Culture & Arts offering to visitors to our District.
2.2	The Culture and Arts activity which continues to be delivered across the region during these unprecedented times, is designed to maintain engagement and encourage participation from all sections of the community in the Culture & Arts Service provided by Mid Ulster District Council during the Covid-19 pandemic lock down period.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Regional and Minority Language Activity update</p> <p><u>Seachtain na Gaeilge 2020</u></p> <p>Due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic this proved to be a difficult year in the lead up to and in the delivery of Seachtain na Gaeilge activity, both for promoters and participants alike with a number of planned activities having to be cancelled at the last minute. There were 15 successful applications to the scheme in total, 10 of which went ahead before the Covid-19 lock-down was introduced.</p>

Group	Project
Granaghan Womens Group	Céad Míle Fáilte
Glór na Spéiríní	Reading workshop with author Máire Zepf
Desertmartin GFC	Irish Language Day
Pobal an Ghleanna	Dianchúrsa SnaG
St Mary's PS Baile na Croise	Lá Spraoi
CLG Naomh Colmcille	Dianchúrsa Leathlae
Coláiste Chiaráin Ballygawley	SnaG i Naomh Chiaráin
An Carn	Clár imeachtaí SnaG
Naíscoil na Spéiríní	Léitheoireacht sa Leabharlann
Gaelscoil na Spéiríní	Lá Gaelach agus Cumann Iarscoile

3.2

Applications for Irish language Activity Grants 2020 – 2021

The Language Activity Grant Scheme has also been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic with a number of the project promoters having to re-assess their projects following their initial application in March. Indeed support work is ongoing with the groups to ensure a successful outcome can be achieved for their projects given the new conditions we now face and the possibility of deferring their activity to later in the year.

3.3

The following 15 projects have been deemed successful under the 2020-21 Irish Language Activity Grant Scheme.

Group	Project
Killeeshil Community Centre	Irish Language Adult Education Programme
CLG Naomh Colm Baile na Scríne	Plean Bliana
Foireann Champa Chill Dreas	An Scéim Samhraidh
An Chraobh Rua de Chonradh na Gaeilge	An Gasra Léitheoireachta – clár imeachtaí
Grúpa Ban Ghreanacháin	Labhair í agus Mairfidh Sí
Coiste Forbartha Charn Tóchair	Clár-imeachtaí 2020/21
Sixtowns Community Group	Irish For All
An Eochair Naomh Mhic Artain	Campa Mhic Artain
Glór Mhachaire Fíolta	Plean Bliana GMF
Pobal an Ghleanna	Clár-imeachtaí 2020/21
Conradh na Gaeilge Charn Tóchair	Tógra na dTeaghlach
Glór na Spéiríní	Plean Bliana 2020-21
IIL Cabhán an Chaorthainn	GTE agus Ciorcal Comhrá
Glór na nGael	Laethanta Traenála agus Dea-chleachtais do Ghrúpaí Tuistí agus Tachráin
Tobin Centre Ltd	Activities in Irish for 4-11 yr olds and adults

3.4 Regional Minority Languages Bursary Scheme 2020

The 2020 Regional and Minority Language Bursary scheme has not been exempt from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The MUDC scheme was advertised with 71 applications received before the announcement that all the Gaeltacht residential language courses would be cancelled for 2020. Officers are in the process of writing to all applicants to ascertain the number who wish to take up a course in Summer 2021. This information on the possible level of demand will inform our approach to assisting those eligible applicants disadvantaged by the Covid-19 pandemic this year.

3.5 Proposed new online Irish Language activity

The New Irish Language Officer Seán Mac Ní (temporary post up to Dec 2020) has developed a comprehensive plan for the development of MUDC Irish Language services online in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The proposed activity is outlined below:

Activity	Target audience	Key Dates
Gaeilge Lár Uladh Relaunch of Facebook page as Lár Uladh ar Líne or Gaeilgeoiri Lár Uladh?? Develop MUDC Irish language site – populate with new material/info/links	All	Roll out from 1 June
Blaiseadh den Ghaeilge (Beginner's taster course in Irish) – 5 lessons (written) Could be developed further depending on interest	Adult beginners	Roll out from 5 June
Blaiseadh agus Saibhriú (Tasters & Enrichment) 1 per week uploaded (4 set written to date)	All adults	Roll out from 12 June

	Feis Lár Uladh (Mid Ulster Feis) Or in collaboration with FeisCharnTóchair	IM schools	Launch 25 May Entries 19 June Results 26 June
	Gaelscoileanna summer activities	IM schools	Ongoing June/July/August
	Blaiseadh agus Saibhriú (Tasters & Enrichment) 1 per week uploaded – set 5-8 uploaded	Beginner/intermediate & advanced adults	Roll out from 3 July – 24 July
	Ulster University Diploma graduation	Diploma students graduation ceremony	Planned for end of August
	Agallamh faoi Dhianghlás (Lockdown Interview) up to 8 interviews – one per week conducted and uploaded.	Advanced adults	July - August
	Blaiseadh agus Saibhriú (Tasters & Enrichment) 1 per week uploaded – set 9-12 uploaded	Beginner/intermediate & advanced adults	Roll out 31 July 21 August
	Mo cheantar féin (My Own Area) 5 minute videos recorded by individual describing own area (number to be decided)	Intermediate – advanced adults	September - November
	Radharcanna Stairiúla Lár Uladh (Historical Sites Mid Ulster)	Intermediate – advanced adults	September - November

	Spéartha Dorcha Preparation of Dark Skies tour script and delivery to Irish Medium schools when facility opens	Irish Medium schools	Notify schools 1 September School visit (planned for October)
	Irish in primary schools – collaboration with CCEA Primary Irish & Shared Cultural Heritage Programme and Tyrone GAA County Board	All primary schools in area	Notification etc September with view to roll out October
	Cultural Heritage resource - online	Adults	Develop – November-January
3.6	Culture and Arts Venues While Council's Culture & Arts venues and facilities remain closed to the public, Culture & Arts Services has had to adapt and to think of fresh new ways to deliver our services to our audience base during these difficult times and to continue to bring Culture and arts activity as well as performances to the residents of our district and beyond.		
3.7	Facebook channels of the three main venues (Seamus Heaney HomePlace, The Burnavon and Ranfurly and Hill of the O'Neill) have been the primary vehicle for this engagement with the audience base through this unprecedented period.		
3.8	YouTube pages have also been established as a way of creating a hosting site and providing an easily accessible archive for activities created during this time.		
3.9	As one of the first regional arts venues to move their delivery online, the Burnavon's daily activities have become a staple for many families and individuals all keen to receive their regular art, music and entertainment experience online throughout the lockdown period.		
3.10	Arts and crafts activities take place each Monday and Thursday with "how to" videos delivered by venue regular performers and artists, while the Traditional Music in Schools programme continues to be delivered to hundreds of young musicians online through the weekly Wednesday tutorial programme.		
3.11	Musical diversity comes courtesy of Cookstown Folk Club's Saturday night sessions and Friday night's Pipes and Drums demonstrations with tutors and pupils from the Musical Services Pipes and Drums project, with midweek musical entertainment courtesy of the talented young members of Cookstown Youth Choir on Tuesday evenings.		
3.12	To commemorate the 75 th Anniversary of VE Day, Local historian John McCann delivered a very comprehensive historical video presentation on the American divisions who were based in Northern Ireland during WWII, including the lasting		

	<p>impact they made on the Mid-Ulster area and charting their return to the US following the end of the conflict.</p>
3.13	<p>The Sunday Family Fun Days have proven to be the most popular online, with thousands tuning in to view a diverse range of performances each week. So far there has been magic from Parky the Magician, balloon fun with multiple World Record holder and Britain's Got Talent star Ryan Tracey, a family disco, an illustration tutorial with world-famous children's book illustrator Paul Howard, as well as Punch and Judy and other fun, family-oriented arts and craft activity, shows and performances.</p> <p><u>Levels of customer engagement</u></p> <p>New Page Likes – 488</p> <p>Peak daily page engaged users – 1655</p> <p>Peak weekly page engaged users – 4891</p> <p>Peak Weekly Total Reach* – 42,472</p>
3.14	<p>At Ranfurly and Hill of the O'Neill social content commenced with a series of education clips based around the "Dungannon: Where I Live" schools' programme, where young and old alike were able to learn more about the heritage and historical context of the Hill in Dungannon.</p>
3.15	<p>The 75th anniversary of VE Day was suitably marked by a comprehensive video historical talk by Dr Eamonn Phoenix, recounting VE Day in Northern Ireland, with a particular focus on Dungannon and the surrounding areas.</p>
3.16	<p>The "Ranfurly House Sessions" on Sunday evenings, with local artists and performers broadcasting from their living room to viewers, have covered a range of genres and styles, from 60's classics to Irish Traditional. These have proven to be the highest grossing content of the week in terms of views and interaction.</p>
3.17	<p>In addition to the above there has also been opportunities for self-improvement, with beginners' guitar tuition and mobile photography courses having been successfully delivered, with a creative writing course about to get underway.</p>
3.18	<p>As Ranfurly House and Hill of The O'Neill is also a high-profile visitor attraction, we have also been rolling out twice-weekly "experience" social media posts, focusing on highlights of the tour and exhibition at the venue, all aimed at encouraging the public and potential visitors to come and experience the site for themselves when the facility re-opens to the public.</p> <p><u>Levels of customer engagement</u></p> <p>New page likes – 256</p> <p>Peak daily page engaged users – 3566</p> <p>Peak weekly page engaged users – 6334</p> <p>Peak weekly Total Reach* – 45176</p> <p><i>*Reach is defined as the number of people who had any content from your Page or about your Page enter their screen. This includes posts, check-ins, ads, social information from people who interact with your Page and more. (Unique Users)</i></p>

3.19	At Seamus Heaney HomePlace, staff have been developing a line-up of acclaimed writers and musicians to perform as part of a new 'virtual' programme of performances at the venue.
3.20	Among the cream of home-grown talent to feature are renowned author, Glenn Patterson, singer-songwriter Anthony Toner, award-winning poets Maureen Boyle and Stephen Sexton and the short story writer and playwright, Rosemary Jenkinson.
3.21	A series of readings and performances entitled 'Keeping Going', so named to recall Seamus Heaney's poem dedicated to the perseverance and stamina of his brother Hugh- (a regular attendee in The Helicon), will be aired via the HomePlace YouTube channel, beginning with Glenn Patterson on 29 April 2020.
3.22	Educational activities at Seamus Heaney HomePlace are shared each week on social media, and these can be accessed by clicking on the "education" tab on the venues website. A highlight post is shared each week of the responses received from those that follow and complete the activity at home.
3.23	The Seamus Heaney HomePlace Twitter Book club launched on Friday 3rd April with local author Bernie McGill and a review with tips, themes and engagement shared in a blog on the HomePlace website the following week, after the discussion.
3.24	Seamus Heaney HomePlace social media highlighted the already active MUDC #RecyclingHero campaign. From week commencing 6th April, posts by the venue have actively encouraged audiences to actively contribute social media content promoting and highlighting the campaign.
3.25	The venue has recently launched its second activity in its NEW Creative Zone Blog! With the facility now closed to the public the staff thought that the next best thing would be to bring the venues creative zone online. The objective is to encourage people to explore the life and work of Seamus Heaney through the enjoyment of engaging in arts and craft based activities, using Seamus Heaney's works as a source of inspiration to fuel an imaginative response from the online audience base.
3.26	Online engagement across all three venues is providing access to new audiences, audiences which can be directly engaged in the future in the promotion of upcoming events and performances, making it easier for us to get to the people most likely to come to our venues, as we already know the specific genres and performance types and activities that they have engaged in during the lockdown period.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications

	<p>Financial: Financial implications include loss of Income at venues.</p>
	<p>Human: A total of 24 full time staff and 48 casual staff across Culture & Arts Services have currently been Furloughed.</p> <p>3 Key staff who continue to deliver key Culture and Arts functions are also employed within the Councils Community response team</p> <p>1 member of staff is currently redeployed to an administrative role within Property Services</p>
	<p>Risk Management:</p> <p>A Significant number of staff within Culture and Arts Service currently furloughed.</p> <p>Online and social media activity is designed to maintain relationships with customer base throughout the Covid-19 lock down period and to develop new customer base with a view to ensuring that the transition back to a “new” normal for culture and arts services is as effective and efficient as possible.</p>
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: The Culture and Arts activity delivered, including online and social media activity programming, is designed to maximise engagement and participation from all sections of the community in the Culture & Arts Service provided by Mid Ulster District Council during the Covid-19 lock down period.</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications: The Culture and Arts activity delivered, including online and social media activity programming, is designed to maximise engagement and participation from all sections of the community and across the Mid Ulster District in the Culture & Arts Services provided by Mid Ulster District Council during the Covid-19 lock down period</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are asked to note activities undertaken within Culture and Arts Services since the introduction of the Covid-19 lock down period and to note planned online and social media activities currently being developed for delivery by the officer team
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	N/A