

## SPC December 2019

### Library

#### **Wicklow Library & Archives**

Construction of a new library and county Archives commenced in August .It will be in the former Ulster Bank building, on the corner of The Mall and Salt House Lane.The building comprises 1,234 sq metres over 6 floors. The building will be completed in late summer 2020, with a likely opening date of September/October 2020. The building will comprise:

- Lower basement (Salthouse Lane entrance) – Local Studies
- Upper basement – Wicklow County Council Archives
- Ground floor (main street entrance) – Children’s library
- 1<sup>st</sup> floor – Adult library
- 2<sup>nd</sup> floor – IT, study, community room
- 3<sup>rd</sup> floor – events section –this will host art exhibitions, book launches and other civic events

The total cost of the project will be almost €6 million, comprising €2m from Wicklow County Council and combined grant aid of €4m from the Department of Community Culture and Social Development (CCSD) (€1m) and URDF funding of €3m) from the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government.

#### **Rathdrum library**

Negotiations are currently being completed which will see a new library in Rathdrum. The current library, in Gilbert Row, is less than 40 sq mtrs in size. The new building will be in the more central location of Market Square and will be 160 sq mtrs in size. A long term lease is envisaged, with an option to purchase included, should RRDF funding be available, as part of a larger project for Rathdrum. It is anticipated that this will be completed in late 2020, with a possible opening date of early 2021. When completed, it will be NZEB (Near Zero Energy Building).

The new library will see the shelving capacity treble, in a bright and attractive space. There is currently 1 public pc and one small study table. This will increase to 12 dedicated spaces.

### **Baltinglass courthouse and library**

A total of €3.5m has been approved under RRDF for projects in the Baltinglass area. Of this total, €600,000 will go towards restoration and conservation works in the courthouse building.

Baltinglass library is currently in an extension of the courthouse building, which was originally developed as a heritage centre. The vision is to relocate the adult library in the double height court room and develop the complete building as a combination of library, heritage centre and co-working units.

Works will take place during 2020, with a late 2020 date likely for completion.

### **“My First Library Card”**

Wicklow County Council has initiated a project entitled “My First Library Card”, which will be launched in Blessington library in January (date TBC). Kildare County Council has also come on board with this project. It will result in parents being given a dedicated library card for their infant, when they first engage with their public health nurse, immediately after child birth. The project is in association with the HSE

### **Budget 2020**

Extra provision has been made in Wicklow County Council’s 2020 Estimates for the filling of staff vacancies in the recently adopted Library Work Force Plan. Some vacancies have been there since 2009, but these are now being addressed. The restored / increased staffing levels will enable:

- New library in Wicklow to open in 2020
- Ballywaltrim library, Boghall Road, Bray to be restored to full time opening hours
- Wicklow County Council Local Studies service to be restored in a meaningful capacity
- Increased opening hours in Rathdrum and Baltinglass
- A dedicated outreach programme to be developed county wide (SPC will be updated regularly in this regard)

In addition, the library book fund has been increased from €250,000 to €300,000 in 2020. The national target as per “Our Public Libraries 2022” is to reach a target of €4 per head of population.

Many thanks to all!