



A report of findings from 'OPEN...for ideas', a period of research, review and consultation at Riverbank Arts Centre

ÚNA COLLINS
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1.

1.1 Acknowledgements

With grateful thanks and acknowledgment:

To the people of Kildare, all individuals, arts groups, community groups, musicians, artists, performers and writers who supported and gave their time to participate in the research, consultation and questionnaires for this report.

Also, grateful appreciation to Susan Boyle and Eoin Gannon for their contribution, hard work and dedication on the 'OPEN...for ideas' project team.

1.2 Executive Summary

This report outlines the findings of the 'OPEN...for ideas' research, review and consultation which took place at the Riverbank Arts Centre from 5th October 2008 to 19th December 2008.

The findings are considered from quantitative and qualitative research in the form of submissions, consultative meetings, questionnaires, public web forum and arts based interventions which draw on individuals direct experiences of Riverbank Arts Centre. For ease of reference throughout this report, all individuals, artists, performers, arts groups, community groups - professional and amateur, general public - audience and users of Riverbank's spaces and resources will be referred to as patrons and participants.

'OPEN...for ideas' was the name given to this period of research, review and consultation to set this phase of work aside from the regular role and function of the Arts Centre and to initiate a time of transition and process of change for the Riverbank Arts Centre.

To facilitate and undertake this research, an independent project team of Úna Collins, Susan Boyle and Eoin Gannon were selected for their backgrounds in arts administration services, consultation, performing arts, visual arts, outreach/education and youth arts.

This phase of work involved the 'OPEN...for ideas' project team being based at the Riverbank Arts Centre to enable greater access and interaction with patrons and participants and potential patrons who were invited to participate. Importantly, it also allowed the team, as independent observers, to get a sense of the space and to assess Riverbank's working potential with regard to the feedback.

The primary focus was deliberately broad to encourage participation. The premise being to connect with patrons and participants in an open way to allow for expansion of ideas from the basic question of 'what would you like to see at Riverbank Arts

Centre?’ During this process of consultation the team sought and gathered the views and advice of key patrons and participants which inform the findings here. From the outset the general feedback indicated very strongly that the patrons and participants wished to see their Arts Centre remain open.

The patrons and participants wish to participate and be involved in the reestablishment of their Arts Centre.

Riverbank Arts Centre is in the process of transition. It is important to reiterate that not all is lost with regard to what Riverbank Arts Centre has experienced and gained heretofore and the contribution it has made in the county.

However, Riverbank has reached a point for reassessment of its principal function and role as an Arts Centre for the people of Kildare. Riverbank Arts Centre’s remit is very broad and as can be seen from the findings to follow in this report, there is some evidence that this multiplicity of purpose has overstretched the building, the resources and service capabilities of the Arts Centre.

Riverbank Arts Centre has an obligation, as a public arts organisation, to foster awareness and understanding of different artforms and to support and facilitate involvement in the arts. What is important to remember however, is that it is one of many organisations and therefore shares a collective responsibility.

From the findings, there is an overall indication that Riverbank Arts Centre lost its direction, sense of purpose and function as an Arts Centre for the people of Kildare.

This report attempts to address and propose immediate recommendations for an urgent regeneration based on good practice considering patrons and participants’ requirements and expectations.

It is important to state that frustration was expressed about the nature of this research, review and consultation process and there was an expectation that the OPEN...for ideas team would be in a position to provide answers or respond to matters raised. As an independent team, our role was to remain objective. It did not

fall within the terms of reference to assume the final outcomes of this research. This may affect how some people participated and the level of engagement, in some cases if any, with this process.

Perhaps, it may be decided, it is necessary to further examine the past occurrences which have led to Riverbank's present situation however this is not evident from the submissions overall. Rather people are more anxious to move on to see Riverbank fully open again as soon as possible.

The key findings indicate:

- The public want the centre to remain open and have very strong ideas about what it should be used for.
- The public and arts community do wish to be consulted.
- There are issues with the building which do need to be considered.
- There is a need to sustain and enhance the current service offering, resources & facilities to meet the needs and interests of the people of Kildare.
- This may require extra space and staff to facilitate.
- Further discussion is required to assess the value of Riverbank as a countywide resource.
- There is demand for a Children's Art programme.
- There is an opportunity to broaden and strengthen the Youth Arts programme.
- Ownership & Participation– the community want to be considered and actively involved.
- There are opportunities to further explore partnerships and residency options.
- It is a place of entertainment as well as learning and co-operation.
- Communications, promotion and publicity need much improvement.

For a more detailed understanding of the outcomes, a breakdown of submissions and consultation findings are categorised under specific functions in chapter 2.

It must be stated that while the terms of reference for this work did not include matters of governance and management structures, such matters, as they arose in the context of this work, were considered generally in the overall findings. However, a separate body of work has been carried out by Arts Consultant, Patricia Quinn, in

February 2008, pertaining to 'Governance' and Riverbank Arts Centre. Her findings have been presented to Kildare County Council and Strategic Arts Management prior to this research, review and consultation having been commissioned. It is envisaged that the findings of both reports will inform the future administration of Riverbank Arts Centre, the new Arts Centre Manager and the new Board of Management.

To continue to contribute, Riverbank Arts Centre must operate in a more efficient and sustainable way. It is an enormous challenge but from the submissions and consultations there is a strong aspiration to see Riverbank Arts Centre open and accessible with a firm presence in the community.

1.3 Background

Riverbank Arts Centre formally opened in September 2001. It has been operating as an Arts Centre with a countywide remit for the people of Kildare since that time until August 2008. During that time Riverbank's aim was to bring the best of the performing, visual and community arts to the audiences of County Kildare. It did this by offering an extensive arts and cultural programme of visual arts, music, drama, dance, film, literature, comedy, festivals, arts activities, workshops, projects and education and outreach initiatives. Riverbank receives principal funding from Kildare County Council, who also owns the building and an annual Programming Grant from the Arts Council. In the past it has generated revenue from sponsorship (corporate and individuals) and a Friends and Members scheme such as 'Cairde'. Generally it relies on ticket sales from events, workshops and other initiatives.

Riverbank has supported the work of Crooked House Theatre Company incorporating Kildare Youth Theatre, Crooked Sixpence and Crooked Mice and the work of Fluxusdance as resident theatre and dance companies. Such partnerships and residencies have brought huge benefits to the people of Kildare and have served to enhance the cultural capital.

While Riverbank has supported artistic development and public engagement with some achievement, it has also encountered significant challenges some of which are

addressed in this report i.e. building space and design, regular audiences etc. There has also been much speculation and discussion in the local media with regard to who is to blame for the impasse that brought Riverbank to temporary closure. It did not fall within the remit of the 'OPEN...for ideas team' to examine accountability in this regard. However, it is acknowledged that this is a time of transition for Riverbank Arts Centre. This report outlines the interests and viewpoints of Riverbank's patrons, audiences and potential patrons and audiences who would like to see a viable Riverbank Arts Centre open in the future.

1.4 Introduction

The 'OPEN...for ideas' research, review and consultation project was commissioned by Kildare County Council on the resignation of some board members from the Board of 'Strategic Arts Management Limited' (SAM). SAM was responsible for the management of Riverbank Arts Centre. SAM has subsequently been dissolved and the Riverbank Arts Centre has established a new Board of Management.

A review of the Arts Centre function together with consultation and research regarding possibilities for the Riverbank was required to inform and shape a future Arts Centre offering in the County.

The research project was to incorporate all aspects of the Arts Centre; the building, the infrastructure, the internal spaces, Riverbank's place in the community, its identity and how it relates to its patrons and audiences.

As this is a time of change for Riverbank Arts Centre, the OPEN... for ideas team were aware they faced a challenge with regard to public engagement given that Riverbank was not operating fully under normal circumstances and there was widespread uncertainty and speculation locally with regard to its future.

Keeping this in mind, the majority of participants who did engage with this process of research, review and consultation are familiar with Riverbank over a number of years. Every effort was made to facilitate as openly as possible all interactions within the timeframe and the author is satisfied that the results are representative of

a cross section of the population in Kildare.

1.5 Purpose

The purpose of this research is to establish the interest in sustaining and developing a vibrant Arts Centre for the people of County Kildare. This report collates the information gathered from the research phase which took place at Riverbank Arts Centre from 5th October to 19th December 2008. Through analysis and discussion, the report draws a series of conclusions and produces a set of recommendations. This report will also inform programming options to be developed by the new Arts Centre Manager with the support of the new Board of Management at Riverbank Arts Centre.

1.6 Objectives

- a) Assess through a public consultation process the value of the Arts Centre's role and function within the community of Newbridge and Kildare.
- b) To publish a report of findings which will inform and assist, Kildare County Council, the new Board of Management and new Arts Centre Manager at Riverbank Arts Centre on the key issues for all patrons and audiences including current best practice which may assist the development of Riverbank Arts Centre.
- c) Provide a set of recommendations that would clearly identify the potential of Riverbank Arts Centre as a valuable resource for artists, patrons and the people of Kildare.
- d) Make recommendations that supports a space for entertainment, arts resources, arts activities, learning and enjoyment which serves the artistic needs of the people of Kildare.

1.6.1 Terms of Reference

- Engage with all interested parties, patrons, audiences and an extended public.
- Facilitate, encourage and enable at all times open dialogue with the public and all other interested parties.

- Use the existing space at the Riverbank Arts Centre for the consultation and an information gathering process.
- Record all feedback which may assist and inform future programming and strategic planning in the arts.
- Consider the current building and infrastructure in delivering an arts programme that effectively reflects culture, identity, place, increases access and participation and challenges attitudes.

1.7 Methodology

The methodologies adapted were selected to facilitate access to and consultation with a broad cross-section of the people of Kildare (see [Figure 1](#)). This involved consultation with interested parties and patrons - those involved in the management of the arts, artists, performers, musicians, amateur and professional, local arts groups and organisations, former board members, schools, youth theatre groups and the general public.



Figure 1

Submissions were invited via:

- Web Forum – www.kildare.ie/openforideas/forum
- E-mail – openforideas@kildarecoco.ie
- Post – ‘OPEN...for ideas’, Riverbank Arts Centre, Main Street, Newbridge, Co. Kildare.
- Telephone – direct line to the ‘OPEN...for ideas’ team with answering service.

- One to one and consultation meetings, formal and informal.
- Questionnaires were used to collate information directly from audiences who were attending events at Riverbank. 23 were completed by the audience attending 'Conversation Cafe' on 2nd October 2008 and 145 were completed by audiences attending Newbridge Drama's performance of 'The Mai' from 19th to 22nd November 2008.
- Workshops and arts based interventions.

A call for submissions was made by:

- Press releases issued to all local media.
- A county-wide postcard mail drop supported by graphic signage directly outside Riverbank.
- Via website – www.kildare.ie/openforideas
- Via e-mail to all on the Riverbank Arts Centre database.
- Invitations to participate in arts based interventions.
- Notices of arts based interventions were sent to all local media.
- Posters/flyers/postcards in local shops and businesses in Newbridge.
- Information desk in the box office at Riverbank Arts Centre.

2.

2.1 Findings

The findings that follow in this chapter are from work carried out at Riverbank Arts Centre from the period 5th October to 19th December, 2008 and therefore reflect the attitudes at that time.

2.1.1 Web Forum

The context of the public web forum was to provide an open platform for individuals to express their opinions, comments and share ideas pertaining to what they would like to see from Riverbank Arts Centre. As is the case in most web fora the 'poster' does not have to provide their identity and this also applied here. Only one input was removed and that was at the request of the individual who wrote it. The inputs were given in 92 posts, 21 topics in 7 forum categories; Audience, Film, Literary Arts, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Youth Arts and General. It is important to note that some posters also provided direct submissions through other communications, telephone, e-mail, post and consultation meetings. See **Appendix 2** for a list of individuals who posted on the web forum.

The following are the key findings:-

- Anger and disappointment by the manner in which Riverbank Arts Centre closed. In particular with regard to the staff redundancies.
- A call for Kildare County Council to continue support for KYT and for greater support in general of youth arts programming and facilities for all youth groups in the county.
- Frustration and questioning of the purpose and benefits of the research and consultation phase and methodologies.
- Significant issues were raised and discussed with regard to the role and function of Riverbank Arts Centre in the past and for its future potential concerning:
 - Community involvement.
 - Independence from Kildare County Council and concerns for management/governance structures.

- The role of Kildare County Council’s Arts Service versus that of Riverbank Arts Centre.
- Supporting artists.
- The facilities and space limitations/restrictions of the building.
- Programming content and suggested programming streams and greater publicity/promotion of events.

2.1.2 Arts based Interventions

A series of arts based interventions were programmed as part of the research to target, formally and informally, arts practitioners and audiences with regard to their experience, interaction and participation with Riverbank Arts Centre.

Please see below **Table 1** for details of the interventions and the key findings:

Intervention	Objective	Findings
Conversation Cafe 2 Oct 08 Auditorium, Riverbank Arts Centre Audience - 48 Poets - 6 (23 respondents to Questionnaire)	Targeted literary arts - writers, poets, playwrights and audience. An evening of poetry readings by local professional and amateur writers/poets in association with Poetry Ireland to celebrate National Poetry Day. A Questionnaire was used - See Appendix 1 .	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audience (of respondents) 13% weekly, 35% monthly - regularly attend arts events. 2. Format – readings in the auditorium/ mix of professional/amateur readings – 96% of respondents enjoyed the format. More intimate use of the auditorium – cafe style with food. 3. Programming – a wish to see more literary events in the arts programme i.e., book clubs, literary festivals, short-story readings, poetry readings. 4. 46% of respondents were involved and participating actively in the arts-members of writers groups from around the county. 5. Feedback on the ground from the writers was that they would like more opportunities for readings/platform for their work.

<p>‘Sticky Tape’ by Sinead McGeeney 4 Nov – 19 Dec 08 Exhibition - Foyer Gallery, Riverbank Arts Centre</p> <p>23 schools 6 community groups 7 individuals 1 artist</p>	<p>Targeted community - was specifically taken up by schools. - countywide collaborative community art project – off site and on site participation using an artistic activity to connect people to Riverbank. The finished piece comprised over 4,000 individual pieces – See Appendix 2 for a list of participants.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Involvement - very successful & enjoyable for the participants – room to develop stronger links with community groups and schools via arts activities/projects. 2. Access –outreach - a structured approach for working with community groups and schools will be necessary to develop further collaborative opportunities. 3. Access - transport to Riverbank Arts Centre proved difficult for schools in rural areas.
<p>Open Mic Night Workshop for Bands 7 Nov 08 Performance - Auditorium, Feedback workshop - Cupcake Cafe, Riverbank Arts Centre</p> <p>Audience – 36 Musicians – 6 Mentors – 4</p>	<p>Targeted young musicians and bands/emerging artists – posters in schools/music schools and music shops in the town - provided an opportunity to perform in front of an audience of their peers and receive feedback from four mentors who work professionally in the music industry.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professional practice workshops - participating musicians affirmed this format (workshop with mentors) was beneficial - would like to see more of it in the future. 2. Publicity/Advertising - New approaches are required to target and engage young people i.e. Bebo, YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, Text Messages and E-mail. 3. Programming – both young people and adults who attended enjoyed the event and would like to see more evening events/activities for young people happening on a regular basis.
<p>‘HOME’ by Alan Cooke 13 Nov 08 Screening - Auditorium, Feedback – Cupcake Cafe, Riverbank Arts Centre</p> <p>Audience – 30 Filmmakers – 2</p>	<p>Targeted film-makers, professional & amateur, film clubs, and film audience. A film screening followed by Q & A session with Alan Cooke, Irish film-maker.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audience /publicity - poorly attended despite initial feedback from research indicated strong interest in film. 2. Format – audience enjoyed relaxed Q&A and being able to meet the film-maker afterwards in the cafe. 3. Space - The auditorium accommodates film screening very well but seating is uncomfortable. 4. Naas Film Club confirmed that a high proportion of members are from Newbridge.

<p>The Mai by Marina Carr presented by Newbridge Drama Group 19 – 22 Nov 08 Performance – Auditorium, Feedback – Cupcake Cafe, Riverbank Arts Centre</p> <p>Audience – 630/40 over 4 nights. Performers - 8 (145 respondents to Questionnaire)</p>	<p>Targeted local audience and local community arts groups.</p> <p>Newbridge Drama Group productions are very popular – a full house every night. The group provide, promote and encourage drama in the community. This was an opportunity to capture local interests in programming and real time response to the building etc. A Questionnaire was used - See Appendix 1.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From feedback on the ground and in the Questionnaires, there is definite interest and demand to keep the building open and available to the people of Newbridge. 2. Audience – (of respondents) – 44% monthly, 23% every 2-6 months attending arts events. 47% attend arts events in Kildare with 49% attending the Riverbank and 51% The Moat. 3. Reasons given for not attending Riverbank regularly –30% find the seating in auditorium very uncomfortable, 18% relates to programming, 13% to the building/facilities/ access and 13% to advertising. 4. Programming – a preference of 50% for performing arts being theatre, music, dance, comedy and performances (one man shows etc). Followed by interest in Film, children’s activities and workshops/classes across all artforms.
<p>Practice.ie – A Kids Own Publishing Partnership Initiative 24 Nov 08 Auditorium, Riverbank Arts Centre</p> <p>Participants - 24</p>	<p>Targeted artists working with children and young people.</p> <p>Professional practice training workshop (across all art forms). This day was supported by Kildare Arts Services and Open for Ideas research and consultation program and was offered to the artists at a reduced rate.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training - interested in professional practice training that is well facilitated and enjoyable. 2. Relationships - A good link into what is currently happening in other art forms and good to network with others working with children and young people to share experiences. 3. Collaborations - Practice.ie facilitated all publicity, registration and training. Very professional and good approach which may explain the good attendance. Feedback very positive. See www.practice.ie

<p>Lunchtime Concerts 1-6 & 13 Dec 08 Cupcake Cafe, Foyer, Riverbank Arts Centre</p> <p>Audience – varied over the week between 15-30 plus 40 school children one lunch time. Musicians – 13</p>	<p>Targeted local musicians, local businesses, schools and general public by offering ‘free tasters’ – free music at lunch time - opportunity for people to connect with Riverbank at different times and experience different types of music.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programming - Any opportunity for musicians to play is welcomed. 2. Publicity/promotion/relationships – Efforts to attract local businesses at this time of day had very little impact. The schools however were interested but space in the Foyer becomes an issue for groups larger than 30 children. 3. Audience - Well received – liked the informal approach of live music in the Cafe/Foyer. 4. Access - Few commented on the fact that it was ‘Free’.
<p>An Exploration of Youth Theatre with NAYD 13 Dec 08 Conference Room, Riverbank Arts Centre</p> <p>Participants: Workshop 1 – 9 Workshop 2– 12 Workshop 3 – 4</p>	<p>Targeted all Youth Theatre Groups and Youth Arts Groups in Kildare. Facilitated by Alan King from NAYD (National Association of Youth Drama). A day long workshop to gather opinions and feedback from this sector of arts community in Kildare.</p>	<p>Workshop 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enjoy being involved and meeting other groups. 2. Access - space to rehearse, perform, do workshops and go to see things. 3. Advertising/Promotion - Bebo/mainly rely on parents to tell them what is happening – would like to hear directly. 4. Programming- would like to see more for their age group particularly outside school time and holidays. <p>Workshop 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional training/workshops – would like to see Riverbank continue to provide support – resources can be shared amongst all groups. • Access – greater/coordinated and equal opportunities to access the space of Riverbank for performance/workshop/rehearsal/residencies – use Riverbank to full potential. • Maintain support for Wyeth Youth Theatre Festival. • Outreach - important to continue and develop, draw on current experience and expertise and the role of partnerships and

collaborations.

- General uncertainty and doubt about the future of Riverbank, its role and function for the county of Kildare.
- Methods of communication in the research and consultation process caused frustration.

Workshop 3

- Programming/Training – would like greater opportunities to see other youth groups work – more arts activities & practical workshops across all art forms.
 - Building – more workshop, rehearsal and performance space – more dressing rooms – acknowledge problems with the space.
 - Management systems - update booking process and guidelines for use of building.
 - Access - accommodation of all groups in an equal way. Time events appropriately.
 - Advertising/PR – target young people using mix of new technologies i.e. Text messaging and conventional methods – banners/posters outside building.
-

Table 1 – Arts based interventions.

2.1.3 Submissions & Consultations

This section specifically considers submissions received by e-mail, post, telephone, one to one and consultation meetings. Again, some individuals chose to participate through a number of methods or all methods available i.e., web forum, e-mail, one to one, post, interventions etc and every effort has been made to reduce duplication. Some quotes from submissions are used throughout the report to give an indication of the types of feedback received.

For ease of reference, the points raised are categorised in key areas as follows:

General - What would you like to see at Riverbank Arts Centre?

From the summary of submissions, there is a varying response to what people would like to see generally at Riverbank.

- People wish to see Riverbank open fully as soon as possible and being actively used. However there is some minor confusion as to what Riverbank's principal function is to a local and extended community in that some of the suggestions and ideas put forward do not principally involve the arts.
- Feedback from arts practitioners' similarly suggests that in the past Riverbank's role and function was not clearly understood. Not only in interactions with artists/performers etc but also in the provision and access to services/facilities. There is a common suggestion that Riverbank was trying to be all things to all men.

"I believe Riverbank Arts Centre should be: A Centre of excellence we should enjoy and be proud of from its outer appearance, to the services it offers, training/entertainment given and in the Way it embraces and celebrates the whole area of the arts. The people of Newbridge fought hard to get this wonderful centre. Please give it back to us as a viable centre."

From a submission received on 17 October, 2008.

Access:

- There is frustration that access is denied (to community arts groups) during this period of transition.
- There is a question of Riverbank's suitability as an Arts Centre for the county or for Newbridge and what that means in terms of resourcing and funding.
- There is a suggestion that Riverbank is disconnected from the local community.
- A need to be more welcoming and willing to engage generally.
- A need for greater access opportunities for arts groups and organisations – access to space and resources, to perform, exhibit and develop skills.
- A need for greater accessibility for schools, children and young people.
- Consider opening times - opportunities at weekends and during the week.
- Consider transport options– if considering the county - public transport is

limited.

Artistic programming:

Suggestions in this area stretched across a wide variety of artforms, contemporary and traditional, reflecting positive attitudes to the arts in general.

- There is interest in attending all kinds of events however theatre, music and film feature strongly. Given there is no cinema, film in this context covers mainstream and art-house.
- There is strong support for delivery of an arts programme for children and young people across all artforms.
- The other areas of interest include dance and stand-up comedy.
- People expressed lesser interest generally in visual and literary arts.
- There is strong support for local amateur and community based arts groups, organisations and societies.
- There is an expression of interest in the areas of multicultural events and festivals in general.

Riverbank as a Resource: Education/Outreach/workshops/professional practice development/skills training/arts related activities/classes:

- People feel that access to arts amenities is very important.
- Continue and develop a programme of regular workshops both practical – skills training and professional practice development for artists/performers across all artforms.
- A lot of interest expressed regarding arts related activities and classes being provided by Riverbank for all ages i.e. drama workshops, music lessons, painting/ drawing, creative writing, dance – all types, filmmaking/photography etc.
- There is a skill pool of arts expertise in Kildare. This is a valuable resource. Use it.
- A constant need for studio /workroom/rehearsal and practice space by artists/performers/art groups living in the county.
- A place for talks/lecture series relating to the arts.

Opportunities: Partnerships/Residencies for the community/art groups

and artists.

- There are mutual benefits for all parties associated in developing sustainable professional relationships.
- A need for residencies to fit with the changing needs of artists/performers/arts groups – professional and amateur.
- Residencies provide financial support, admin support and regular access to a space – valuable contribution and support - allowing artists/performers/arts groups freedom and time to develop artistically.
- Partnerships – support artistic creation, broaden access, appreciation of the arts and promote quality practice.
- Build relationships/work together - share resources to bring arts to a broader audience.

The building: Spaces and facilities.

- There are clear limitations with the building and spaces available as it stands.
- The facilities and services offered have to be realistically assessed i.e., back stage facilities/dressing rooms/technical equipment etc
- Lack of space is an obstacle to the future potential of Riverbank Arts Centre.
- There are evident difficulties with the current shared use of the building.
- There are structural considerations to be considered – no back stage, limited wing space, small stage area – limit and restrict the performances.
- The fixed seating in the auditorium receives a lot of criticism.
- The Cafe is a vital component.

Staff and management:

- Riverbank needs a management /staff team of professional, friendly, qualified, approachable individuals.
- Some anger was expressed relating to the recent staff redundancies.
- The new manager must be allowed time to settle into the role.
- The management/staff team must be independent and understand fully their roles and objectives with realistic targets.
- The new management/staff team must be very clear about their

responsibilities and roles.

Advertising/Marketing & Promotion:

- Riverbank has suffered from poor communications with its public – a need to foster good public relations.
- There is considerable room for improvement in the areas of advertising and promotion of events/arts programming and how it is targeting audiences.
- Databases and other methods of gathering information on audiences need to be reviewed and updated.
- The methods of communication currently applied are not always appropriate to the targeted audience age group.
- Riverbank Arts Centre website is not very well known.
- More frequent distribution of the calendar of events.

Procedures and guidelines for use of space and resources:

- People would like information and access to guidelines/criteria of use/ booking procedures/contracts and artists agreements that are easy to follow.
- Friendly and prompt customer service.
- Greater information about what services/facilities are available when hiring/booking space – what is provided/what is not provided.

2.1.4 Summary of Findings

Access:

- As it stands, Riverbank is a countywide resource however there is some concern about Riverbank's role and function in this regard.
- There is demand from arts groups, community groups, performers, artists, musicians etc for greater access to arts spaces to perform, practice, rehearse, experiment.
- The arts programme and arts activities should where possible accommodate all ages and levels of engagement.

- There is demand for a continuation and support of services – resources and facilities on a broader scale including on site and off site options e.g., importance of having access to equipment.
- The community is feeling left out.

The building, spaces and facilities:

- The building is not being used to its full potential which is impeding on Riverbank achieving full capabilities as an Arts Centre.
- The spaces available for patrons and audiences (auditorium, galleries and workshops areas) are restrictive and have physical limitations.
- The building's infrastructure - furniture and equipment requires regular maintenance and upkeep to provide facilities at an appropriate standard.

Resources:

- The limitations of space constrain the provision of resources in the area of workshops, classes and other arts activities.
- There is strong demand for a greater provision of workshops for performers/artists/arts groups etc (all artforms) in the areas of professional practice and skills training.
- There is also a demand from the general public for a greater provision of classes/arts activities/community arts for all age groups at all levels of engagement, for leisure and learning i.e., all types of dance and music, multi-disciplinary, painting, craft, design etc.
- Arts groups/artists/performers/musicians want to maintain partnership and arts residency opportunities and support.

Programming of arts events:

- In the main there was a preference for theatre, music and film followed by dance and stand-up comedy – this reflects programming at Riverbank in recent years.
- Cinema, mainstream.
- Demand across the board for arts programming specifically for children and young people in all artforms.
- There are opportunities to extend programming in the visual arts, literary

arts, and multi-cultural events/festivals in general and family events.

- There is strong support for local amateur and community based arts groups, panto and musical societies, performances and exhibitions.

Communications, advertising and promotion:

- Communications and public relations on all levels need to be improved.
- Direct advertising methods regarding the programme of events and activities require major improvement and broader circulation across all age groups – consider appropriate options.
- Promotion and publicity of events generally needs to be improved with more local advertising targeted through free newspapers, local media/local radio.
- Patrons, artists, performers and other users of the space would like clear lines of communication with clear and concise information in a set of guidelines/procedures relating to the booking and use of space - what is provided/what is not provided.

General:

- Riverbank Arts Centre needs to know what it can do and do it. Clearly define its role and function.
- The management/staff team must be independent and understand and set out clear objectives with realistic targets.
- Riverbank to be a friendly community space.

3.

3.1 Analysis & Discussion

This section will look at how the findings link-in to the role of Riverbank Arts Centre and the collective benefits to the community in the provision of arts amenities, services, resources and facilities.

“The Riverbank Arts Centre must be seen as a focal point not only for the “arts community”, but for the wider community of Newbridge & Kildare generally. Therefore the Arts Centre needs to be re-developed in a manner that will appeal to the whole community and not just to sectors of that community.”

From a submission received on 29 November 2008

“Having spoken to local people, listened to and read debates on the use of the centre and the number of groups which were not given access I now feel it is time that the centre be opened up to the community and that it become inclusive by allowing access to all members of the community.”

From a submission received on 18 October, 2008.

There is one central question with regard to Riverbank Arts Centre’s role and function which must be considered in order to fully understand realistically what Riverbank is capable of achieving. Since Riverbank was founded it has had a countywide remit. Situated in Newbridge, Riverbank is relatively centrally located in the county but is it realistically meeting its remit to the entire county given spatial/geographical area, proximity to other urban areas i.e., Maynooth, Leixlip and Celbridge /proximity to Dublin and population size?

Let us consider the following factors:

- From the latest CSO figures (2006), Kildare’s population is 186,335. It is the fourth largest population in the country after Dublin, Cork and Galway.
- In 2002 just over 39% of the population in Kildare was aged less than 25 years and 2006 shows little change at 38%. Kildare can be seen as generally

having a quite young population.

- Transport and Public Transport options - according to statistics from Kildare County Development Board's report on 'Rural-Urban Dynamics in Kildare: Socio-economic patterns and trends' of April 2006, there is a significant number of households, 6,696, without a car, based on figures from 2002. This is most strongly represented around the areas of Athy, Newbridge, Kildare and Monasterevin. Apart from the main routes/road ways of the N4, N7 and N9, rail networks and rural bus services, public transport options and infrastructure is poorly served particularly in rural areas. While it is noted that transport development is a key objective of the County Development Plan (2005-2011), the private car remains the dominant form of transport.
- To the north of the county, the densely populated areas of Celbridge, Leixlip and Maynooth have proximity to national routes, train and bus services with greater access to Dublin and are high commuter areas. This lessens the likelihood of travelling to Newbridge for cultural events outside of the weekend. There are plans underway for a cultural space in Maynooth.
- In the south of the county, Arts groups and organisations have expressed an interest (and in some cases have progressed plans) in developing arts venues/amenities in immediate local areas i.e., Athy, Kildare town. There is also some evidence from submissions and consultations of people travelling to Portlaoise and surrounding counties for arts events and participation.
- In addition, there is the major factor of the current economic situation and commitment to long term investment in the arts regarding provision of principal funding. The Arts Council has had its budget reduced from €82m in 2008 to €75.5m in 2009. The local authority is also likely to have reductions in spending. Combine this with a rise in unemployment figures nationally (leading to, what one commentator describes as 'stay at home audiences and

cash-strapped sponsors'¹) creates difficulties in planning for the medium/long term.

- An overall demand on the necessity and provision of services and facilities to local communities increases in times of economic downturn and high unemployment. The figures from Live Register as % increase from January 08 to January 09 show that the Mid-East region (Kildare, Meath and Wicklow) has experienced the highest increase of 99.02% in the State. Kildare alone has seen an increase of 101% from 6,606 persons to 13,279. Newbridge has seen an increase of 102% from 3,528 to 7,123 persons on the Live Register².
- Cost of cultural activities and entertainment will also therefore be more pertinent in the future months.

Bearing all of the above in mind, let us now consider how Riverbank compares with regard to principal funding and population size. In a recent survey carried out by Theatre Forum relating to local authority funding, it showed that 51 venues in Ireland receive some level of local authority funding ranging from €4850 to €686,700 in 2008 and Arts Council funding ranging from 0 to €883,220. Of the 51 venues surveyed 28 venues (building) were owned by the local authority. Of the 28 venues, Riverbank is one of 8 with a seating capacity between 150 and 200.

Please refer to **Table 2** overleaf for a snap shot comparison of principal funding and how this relates to the population figures of each county (as per CSO 2006) of each of the 8 Arts Centres.

¹ In a downturn, opportunity knocks at an open door, article by Mick Heaney, pg 4-5, Arts section of 'Culture magazine', **The Sunday Times** on 25th January, 2009.

² Live Register: 12 month increase – January 2008 to January 2009, Social Welfare offices take steps to reduce queues, article by Carl O'Brien and Elaine Edwards, pg 7 from Home News section of **The Irish Times** newspaper on Saturday, 7th February, 2009.

Venue	Seating Capacity	Arts Council Funding 2008	Local Authority Funding 2008	Total Principal Funding	Population of County
Dunamais Arts Centre	200	140,000	180,000	320,000	67,059
Droichead Arts Centre	160	250,000	20,000	270,000	111,267
Garter Lane Arts Centre	164	280,000	40,000	320,000	107,961
Letterkenny Regional Cultural Centre	150	240,000	280,000	520,000	147,264
Model Arts Niland Gallery	170	400,000	190,000	590,000*	60,894
Ramor Theatre	200	55,000	284,748	339,748	64,003
Riverbank Arts Centre	169	80,000	255,000	335,000	186,335
Roscommon Arts Centre	194	75,000	185,000	260,000	58,768

Table 2 – Arts Centres, Funding and Population with a seating capacity of 200

The table shows:-

- a) There may (or may not given the economic climate) be potential opportunity to acquire greater Programming funding/grants from the Arts Council. This years' programming funding (2009) to all of the above venues was reduced.
- b) Riverbank compares well with its counterparts in funding from the local authority. However can this level of investment be sustained and is it adequate to serve a population the size of Kildare? Kildare County Council has increased funding support for 2009 to €300,000.

Other areas for comparison and consideration regarding service levels and population size include:-

- Staffing levels in proportion to the provision of facilities and resources.

Roscommon Arts Centre has a minimum of 4 staff while Garter Lane has 20 on staff.

- Buildings and space availability – all of the venues vary from refurbished church spaces to purpose built multidisciplinary arts facility such as Regional Culture Centre in Letterkenny. The majority also accommodate studio space, meeting room space, office space and galleries as well as a theatre. With the Regional Cultural Centre offering digital media suites, multi-purpose workshop space and music rehearsal rooms.
- The table does not show any amounts in relation to additional revenue i.e., sponsorships, funding from other support agencies locally, ticket sales etc. Also in some cases the local authorities further contribute and directly support arts groups using the venue etc.

There are a number of factors to be considered in assessing the service delivery capabilities of Riverbank Arts Centre to Kildare. When assessing the following, consider the overall feasibility given population and access to funding, both capital and day to day revenue expenditure. To start, we will look at the existing infrastructure as it stands and assess the strengths and weaknesses as indicated in the findings.

What space is available?

From the submissions and consultations, theatre groups, arts groups, community groups, performers, artists, musicians etc expressed an interest in greater access to arts spaces. There is a demand in spaces for performance but also for workshop opportunities, skills training and studio space. There is interest in different levels of access corresponding with the groups needs/plans for projects, residencies opportunities etc.

As it stands Riverbank Arts Centre comprises of:

Entrance level

- Foyer – includes box office and cafe/catering kitchen area
- Foyer gallery

- Manager's office
- Open plan office space
- Board Room

Lower level

- McKenna gallery
 - Auditorium – capacity 250 standing, 200 seated (currently only seats 169)
 - Wet workshop space (left of stage - with sink - used as wing space)
 - Wing space, sink area and washing facilities (right of stage)
 - 2 dressing rooms (shower facilities in both, sink in one)
 - Green room
 - Technical storage room
 - Public Toilet facilities and locker area for cafe staff
- Kildare County Council Library and Arts Service occupy the remainder of the space which is office space, two staff kitchen areas, storage area, caretakers' room and toilet facilities spread out over both levels. The Board Room is shared with the Arts Centre.
 - There is a car park at the rear which facilitates 17 spaces.

The question of the buildings shared occupancy was raised in a number of submissions. The reason for this is that the Riverbank Arts Centre project formed part of a joint capital project co-funded by the Department of the Environment and Local Government and the Department of the Arts, Sports and Tourism ACCESS cultural capital funding scheme. This pooling of financial resources meant that the Department of the Environment and Local Government funded a Library Headquarters, which encompasses the administrative and processing base for the all libraries countywide and the mobile library service. The Department of the Arts, Sports and Tourism funding was for the development of Riverbank Arts Centre.

The co-funding allowed both the Library Headquarters and the Arts Centre to avail of shared resources and spaces, including office space, conference room, cafe, toilet facilities and parking space. The concept and purpose was to create a

‘Cultural Campus’ of local authority supported services.

Is the space available fully utilised to the best potential?

From the submissions and consultations, people believe that the building’s spaces are not being utilised to full potential. People would like to see the building being used more regularly. From the feedback, the experiences of users voiced general unhappiness with:

- Lack of resources/facilities – equipment, set storage space, dressing rooms and workshop/training opportunities etc.
- Lack of good communications – inconsistencies in available information/advice/liaison.
- Lack of a clear set of procedures/processes/guidelines as to availability and use.
- When given access, times of access are still restricted i.e., practice times/technical rehearsal times/set installation etc.

What is the current level of service with regard to space provision?

Although there is some frustration and disillusionment with Riverbank’s spaces as an option, there is also a great willingness to work around the difficulties. If we combine the above experiences with the physical restrictions outlined below we will get a better picture of what Riverbank’s level of service is today:

“I have had to stop attending concerts/plays in the theatre due to the actual seating which are extremely uncomfortable, unless the seating is changed unfortunately I won’t be able to attend the theatre”. From a submission received on 28 November 2008

Performance space/auditorium:

The most contentious space possibly is the performance space, the auditorium.

- The size of the stage is limited to smaller productions and it does not accommodate larger groups such as local panto and musical societies.
- There is no back stage and limited wing space on both sides.
- The facilities of dressing rooms and green room are poorly accommodated, small in size and not very clean.

- The technical support - lighting and sound is limited by the equipment that is available. The lighting box is not used because of its physical location within the auditorium space.
- The seating is uncomfortable with very little leg room and the seating capacity is reduced to accommodate the lighting and sound desk on the balcony.
- Overall all the space appears to be poorly maintained.

Workshop/Studio spaces:

- There is one dedicated workshop space that is used in the main however as a wing space/storage space.
- The McKenna gallery has been used as a workshop/studio space. This availability is restricted to times when there are no exhibitions.
- The auditorium is used and works very well for talks, lectures and workshop/studio space as the seating is retractable however this is limited to when there are no performances/productions etc.
- The foyer has been used for performances and workshops when there was no Café there.
- The board room is also used for workshops, lectures, talks and meetings.

Formal Exhibition spaces:

- Foyer gallery is a corridor space, with large windows on one side and is therefore very constrained to the type and size of work that can be shown. However, this space can work well for some site specific installations and is very accessible off the foyer beside the Café.
- The McKenna gallery downstairs conforms to the 'white cube' concept but it has no natural light. Again this can affect how work is seen and experienced. Being on the lower level, it is a little out of the way and requires better signage from the upper level. The McKenna gallery space has been used as a workshop/workroom space and occasionally as an overflow dressing room.

“I hope the Riverbank develops its full potential. It would be marvellous to have access to two wonderful facilities like the Riverbank and the Moat even if they are in competition for almost the same audience”. From a submission received on 9 December 2008.

How does this affect the overall provision of services and resources?

What is important to note at this point is that the fundamental issues of space have a knock on affect on all matters pertaining to the role and function of the Riverbank Arts Centre:-

- In providing innovative inclusive programming.
- In providing participation and engagement opportunities - actively through involvement in classes and workshops and through education and outreach projects.
- In providing entertainment – professional and amateur.

The core objective of engagement and participation grow out of opportunities to experience quality work be it in performance, music, literature or the visual arts. Access to such experiences and levels of access should be provided by maximizing the possibilities and potential for diversity and variety in the arts programme but by also supporting opportunities to develop appreciation, education and outreach.

What can be done to improve delivery of services and resources?

The question of freeing up more of the internal space of Riverbank for active arts activities, projects, engagement and participation opportunities is one that must be addressed. There is an expressed interest in seeing greater access opportunities developed by both artists, performers etc for practical workshops and skills training and there is also the interest from the general public in having more facilities and classes across all artforms from dance and drama classes to craft/design classes, music lessons etc. The latter significantly offer potential of revenue generation.

“I am 11 years old and I live in Newbridge. I find there’s nothing to do on the weekends. I would like to make some new friends you see, because I go to school in Maynooth. I have a couple of ideas I’d like to run by you for the Riverbank Arts Centre: A cinema, dance and drama classes, a pre-teen cafe, art classes, martial art classes”. From a submission received on 18 October 2008

More space.

Given that the building was co-funded, the option of freeing up more internal space currently occupied by administration may be unlikely. However all space options will

have to be considered to develop opportunities for workshops/work rooms/studio space and rehearsal space.

Maintaining clear independence of roles and identities within a shared space environment.

There are practical considerations regarding the sharing of space such as day to day administration, sharing of entrances, logos and branding, signage, car park etc and separate management structures. From some of the submissions received it was clear that there was some confusion and misunderstanding with regard to the use of space within the building. The concept of the 'Cultural Campus' is not well known and the Riverbank Arts Centre's new Board of Management, Manager and staff team will be required to fully evolve a clear identity for the Arts Centre at this dual purpose location. There are also opportunities to share and co-ordinate resources specifically in the areas of social inclusion, education and outreach. The aim is to continue to build a sound working relationship while maintaining clear operational lines of separation.

If we have the space, will people come?

From the audience questionnaire, (see **Appendix 1**, Q2 from Newbridge Drama Group Audience), the data shows 47% of people participate and attend arts events in Kildare, 37% in Dublin and 16% other places – i.e., neighbouring counties of Laois, Carlow and Kilkenny.

Of the 47%, 49% expressed a preference for Riverbank Arts Centre and 51% for The Moat in Naas. It should be noted that the majority of participants in this survey reside in Newbridge and the surrounding areas. From submissions however there are indications that areas north of the county, Maynooth, Celbridge and Leixlip travel to Dublin for cultural events and likewise in areas south of the county as affirmed by Louise Donlon, Arts Centre Manager of Dunamaise Arts Centre in Portlaoise, people from Athy and border areas regularly attend Dunamaise.

"I would prefer to stay in Newbridge but now I go to The Moat". From a submission received on 26 November, 2008

Competing for audiences.

The Moat Theatre in Naas emerges throughout the submissions, questionnaires and workshops as a space that is accessible and user friendly. With regard to developing audiences for Riverbank Arts Centre, The Moat appears to be the main competitor. The Moat Theatre has a long standing association with Naas since The Moat Club was founded in the 1950s. It underwent extensive development works and since 2003 offers a capacity of 200 seats in the auditorium and stage with retractable seating and a fly tower, two rehearsal rooms, dressing rooms and a foyer/coffee shop and bar area. With regard to programming, The Moat Club Theatre group are based there and the programme of events highlights the work of professional and amateur, drama/theatre musical societies mixing local community arts groups with commercial acts in music generally. Naas Film Club also meets there. There is a bar which is open with a full bar service before the show, at the interval and post-show. It is an important factor to note however that The Moat evolved over a number of decades. It is safe to assume that it has extended the building with an accumulated experience and knowledge of audiences over that time.

What can Riverbank Arts Centre do to get people interested again?

- From the feedback, the provision of a Café is fundamental to Riverbank Arts Centre attracting a broader audience and creating a warmer and more welcoming atmosphere. The Café will need to be open for evening performances as well as during the day.
- The issue of an unfriendly and unwelcoming atmosphere was raised with regard to people feeling isolated and that it was a 'not a place for them', and in some cases, people felt to be 'cliquey'. There was some commendation for certain members of staff who had always made huge efforts however.
- Riverbank has also been without a spokesperson for some time now and has suffered with regard to very negative publicity. This issue of Riverbank's very poor image locally has been raised in a number of submissions and consultations and is an area of great concern for the Riverbank Arts Centre's profile.
- The main area for development however and one that was raised time and time again is that of promotion, advertising/marketing and good public communications. People a) did not know what was on in general and b) the

format of the calendar of events and methods of distribution appear to have a limited circulation.

- The databases used to collect and collate audience information /contact details require reviewing, possible upgrading and also the information stored needs updating.
- The Riverbank Arts Centre website could be more user friendly with methods and options for booking tickets online for example.
- In general an overview is required of all methods of communication and distribution of information to the public.
- Further cost effective options and methods of communication using new technologies such as text messaging, Face Book, You Tube, Bebo etc could be used to target specific audiences, age groups, specifically young people.
- The information needs to be accurate and current. 39,134 households have personal computer ownership, 14,385 households have broadband access and 18,265 have other internet connections/access. Attention must be paid to accessibility to older people, people with disabilities and also people living in areas without broadband etc. From the 2006 Census, 24,871 households have no access to the internet in Kildare.

Children & Young people.

The findings in this area are not surprising. From the submissions, consultations, interventions and workshops, there was a strong interest and demand for an increase overall in arts programming and arts educational opportunities for children and young people at Riverbank Arts Centre. This corresponds with findings nationally from the survey, 'The Public and the Arts 2006' commissioned by the Arts Council and also the establishment of the Special Committee on the Arts and Education in 2006 by the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism involving a collaboration between the Arts Council and the Department of Education which culminated in the report, Points of Alignment - The Report of the Special Committee on the Arts and Education, The Arts Council, June 2008.

There is an opportunity for Riverbank Arts Centre to work with and build better relationships and links with the schools both locally and in the county. It became apparent through the 'Sticky Tape' intervention that some schools were more amenable to engagement than others particularly the schools close to Riverbank³. This is not unusual but can have an effect on the level of engagement experienced by children in the arts generally, as noted in the NESF Report No. 35 - 'if a school does not have an 'arts-rich' ethos then it will be very difficult for some younger people to become involved in the arts, initially at school level and probably also in later life'.

It must also be recognised that Kildare County Council Library and Arts Service have a well established schools programme. There is room for Riverbank Arts Centre to develop creative partnerships to enhance experience and provide other options of creatively working with children. An example of shared resources is the joint subsidising for the facilitation by Practice.ie/Kids Own Initiative professional practice workshop for artists working with children which was held as an arts based intervention at Riverbank Arts Centre on 24 November last. By pooling the resources, this workshop was offered to artists at a reduced cost. From participants feedback it was seen as a very beneficial day of learning but also an opportunity to see what everyone else was doing in this area. For Riverbank the benefits to supporting local creative and trained arts practitioners generates further opportunities for artists in the provision of high quality arts engagement opportunities enabling the Arts Centre to deliver better resources across all artforms.

"...in Spring 2007, my daughter was involved in a dance program for schools where a dancer/team of, came to her school and taught them creative type dance and they put on a performance in the Riverbank for parents. I thought this was a wonderful idea and chance for children to be taught dance by specially trained professional dancers. The children really enjoyed it". From a submission received on 24 November 2008.

³ Barriers to Participation in the Arts, pg. 20 – 'Participation in the Arts, and Cultural Inclusion: Definitions, Benefits, Evidence and Barriers' in **The Arts, Cultural Inclusion and Social Cohesion**, NESF Report 35. January 2007

With regard to the overall programme of events and planning of age appropriate activities, cognisance needs to be taken with regard to the school term/school calendar and the opportunities for collaborations, projects and greater access to the arts programme, can be provided both during term time and holiday time. It emerged from the submissions that parents would like to have more opportunities to engage with their children artistically and culturally. Opening times to facilitate family visits is something to also be considered for Sundays and Bank Holidays etc.

From the Open Mic night and the feedback from the NAYD Exploration workshop, together with the strong demand generally seen in the submissions, consultations, questionnaires and workshops, there is a real need for more access and opportunities for children and young people to all artforms. Young people want to be involved in the day to day activities at Riverbank Arts Centre either formally, on work experience, with their arts groups in rehearsals, workshops and performances or informally with their friends and peers, having a coffee or attending other events. This is an area to be strongly considered, planned and integrated into the overall arts programme, resources provision and budget allocation. Consider all the resources and how they can be applied such as the cafe and how it can be made more accessible through discounted specials at certain times and the possibility of youth cafes.

“There are so many talented people in this town we **NEED** a way for them to express themselves before it’s too late”. From a submission received on 8 November 2008

Options for residencies.

From the consultations and submissions, there was much support for local theatre groups, youth drama groups and youth arts groups and especially for KYT which has strong associations with Riverbank Arts Centre as Crooked House Theatre Company was based there since Riverbank opened. The area of residencies is another good platform to forge relationships and support the working practice of working artists thereby developing strong cultural capital locally. Riverbank Arts Centre has supported and benefited from long term residencies with KYT, Crooked House, Crooked Mice and Crooked Sixpence, Fluxusdance and also with some short term residency options with visual artists. An example in theatre of the benefit of such

residencies is how Crooked House and KYT in conjunction with sponsorship and support from other local organisations principally Wyeth, established the Annual Wyeth Youth Theatre Festival which is held at Riverbank Arts Centre. As with theatre, it was interesting in the findings to see that dance featured prominently in programming and resource requests which is a strong acknowledgement to the standard and amount of work that has been done and supported on the ground in recent years by Fluxusdance and also by Kildare County Council Arts Service provision of the Laban Dance Leaders course.

From the NAYD Exploration workshop, the leaders group did express an interest in residency opportunities being offered, on a project, short term and long term basis. Again for this to be fully and appropriately supported, space, the ability to deliver support and access to facilities is a consideration. It was also suggested that it would be a mistake to reduce access to other groups, artists, project opportunities because of a resident group. There was some discussion about how access and opportunities could still be shared which culminated in the request for better liaison with the management of Riverbank when booking space to ensure that all groups can be facilitated where possible with the support of proper guidelines on the use of space. Suggestions were made with regards to Riverbank extending and renting a space externally to facilitate extra requirements if necessary. This may be a consideration eventually but the Board of Management together with the new Manager will seriously need to consider what can currently be provided and achieved with regard to programming and resources.

There are a number of considerations with regard to Riverbank Arts Centre and how it can best use and apply resources and space to all art groups, youth arts groups, artists, musicians and performers in the county. We have looked at areas of budget, funding, transport, location in the county, population and also the change in the current economic climate. It is a time of uncertainty and vulnerability surrounding long term investment. This will affect all arts practitioners and groups and it is therefore all the more necessary to support artists, performers, musicians and arts groups where at all necessary across all artforms.

Residencies are an excellent platform for experimentation and development of an

artistic practice and must be supported. Given the current situation, until the new staff team are in place, during this process of change, it may be overly ambitious to enter into residency agreements to begin with. It is however a decision with regard to funding for the Board of Management and artistic direction for the Manager and it is important to reinforce that both parties must be given time to familiarise to the environment of Riverbank Arts Centre and the local arts community to develop relationships before any firm commitments can be entered into. If the Board and Manager decide that this is an area they wish to invest in, then we would strongly recommend that very clear lines of communication be established and supported by relevant professional agreements with review options etc. That is not to say that all support of arts groups, youth arts groups and artistic practitioners by the Riverbank Arts Centre should be postponed. Support can be provided in other ways and every opportunity should be made to strongly encourage collaborations and projects where any support can be given if at all possible i.e. access of space to perform, rehearse at reduced rates and technical support provision/workshops etc. Options that reach a broader range of arts groups such as collaborations and greater access opportunities should be fostered in the immediate term.

We would hope that the option of residencies can be provided again in the future as the benefits and value to the arts and the local community are immense. The question and decision of residency provision should be formally reviewed annually.

“Riverbank must continue to be a centre to promote theatre, arts and culture in the locality especially for the youth of the town.”

From a submission on 5 November 2008

Programming

While a certain amount can be done to reduce access barriers overall arguably the key ingredient is what you offer to the public as a theatre and place of artistic activity. We have seen so far the key aims for Riverbank Arts Centre is to generate conditions, in which people are encouraged to experience art work and artforms at different levels of interpretation and discovery, be it passive or active consumption. The work also that Riverbank Arts Centre shows and exhibits must be of the highest standard. This brings us to the central function of arts programming which is the

coordination, planning and staging of events and activities that people want to see, participate in and attend.

Every venue and arts institution/organisation at some stage addresses the issue and question of accessibility with regard to the programme of events that are offered. There must be balance between events that stimulate, stretch our interpretation and understanding of the world with works that may be considered more mainstream and populist. Whether people are there to be entertained, escape or to be challenged or a combination of many factors, the arts have the power to move people, alter moods and introduce people to different ways of seeing and experiencing the world.

Riverbank Arts Centre as a public resource has an obligation to provide high quality arts and cultural engagement. What is important is that in so doing you are reflecting the local interests of the community and what people want.

When asked in the Newbridge Drama Group Audience Questionnaire, see **Appendix 1**, to specify why people were not regular attendees of the Riverbank, 18% of respondents gave programming as the reply in that they were not interested in what was on. 30% raised the seating as an issue, 13% raised lack of advertising and promotion and 13% raised the issue of the space, facilities and access. What is important is the effect of the combined impact of these main factors on attendance. This re-iterates the importance of improving on promotion and advertising of the arts programme while at the same time critically addressing the issues in the internal infrastructure- seating, lighting, sound, auditorium temperature moderation and the layout of loose seating together with providing appropriate access for older people and people with disabilities and the general maintenance and upkeep of the building.

From the submissions, consultations, interventions, workshops and questionnaires, it can be stated that the local community are very aware however about what they would like to see at Riverbank Arts Centre. The suggestions cover preferences across all artforms but specifically in the area of theatre, music, dance and film. From the questionnaire, 50% of respondents expressed a preference for the performing arts being theatre, music, and dance. It must be borne in mind that the respondents were in the main a theatre audience but nonetheless the programming

preferences correspond generally with the national proportion preferences of artforms and events as outlined in the 'Attendance at Art Events' from The Public and The Arts 2006 survey.⁴

The interest expressed in the areas of theatre and music are not surprising given the local community interest in local theatre groups whose productions have a record of strong audiences. From consultations, there is further evidence of a long standing interest and participation across all age groups in music generally in Newbridge which is in the main performed in pubs. The need of having a place appropriate for young musicians and bands to perform to their peers and others was highlighted in the feedback received from the Open Mic workshop night intervention.

As previously mentioned, popularity and interest in dance performance and in dance classes and workshops in all forms, traditional to contemporary, salsa, hip hop etc was also strongly expressed particularly from young people.

From the submissions, consultations and again indicated in the questionnaire results, there was an expressed interest in film. It must be noted film here in the main refers to mainstream film. This reflects the fact that there is no cinema in Newbridge. There are also a number of film clubs in the county with strong membership.

From the questionnaire results, 8% of respondents stated a preference in developing arts programming including arts activities for children and 5% for youth arts. The children and young adults were asked to consider what activities and resources that an Arts Centre should or could provide. They worked in groups and selected suggestions from 30 cards. As expected from young people involved in youth theatre and stage school, there is a preference towards theatre, dance, music and also film with workshops and classes in these areas. It also shows an interest in other artforms, literary and visual.

⁴ **The Public and the Arts 2006** by Hibernian Consulting with Insight Statistical Consulting and Martin Drury, Arts Consultant for The Arts Council, Dec 2006

Also to be noted from the questionnaire results is the interest in workshops and classes which we have seen re-iterated in NAYD Exploration workshop, Open Mic workshop and Practice.ie workshop. There was lesser interest in visual arts and literary arts programming. The latter two areas need to be looked at given the feedback from the Conversation Café Questionnaire, see **Appendix 1** where 83% of respondents specified that they would you like to see other literary events at Riverbank. From the consultations with visual artists, the visual art spaces at Riverbank are not ideal and this may have an impact on the visual art experiences heretofore but there are opportunities to experiment with the space and to offer more access via classes and skills training workshops and visual arts lectures/talks.

From the submissions also there are opportunities to develop the option of festivals and multi-cultural events. Festivals are popular and provide excellent opportunity for family engagement. Multi-cultural events provide opportunities for greater cultural exchange and inclusivity. We did receive some feedback expressing an interest in foreign language film, specifically Polish cinema.

Other factors to consider:-

- While cost did not feature significantly, it is probably safe to assume that this may present difficulties in the future.
- In addition, there should be an awareness of competitive advantages and identify unique selling points. What has the Riverbank Arts Centre got that other local places do not have? E.g., Cupcake Café is fundamental to enhancing a personal and collective experience of Riverbank Arts Centre. The café management has stated that they would very much welcome opportunities to be more involved for example Cupcake Café would like to match food - themed nights that work with the programme of events.
- Opening times and days, start times of performances and events, lunch time options, after school and teatime, on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- Access times to the box office and ticket booking options i.e. on-line or by telephone are important
- Having enough trained and friendly staff (full time and part time such as Ushers) who can offer information and customer service.

- Having current best practice procedures and guidelines in place and available.

While some Art Centres have a separate dedicated resource of an Artistic Director to work solely on developing and delivering the arts programme, it is not common. This function is generally a central role of the Arts Centre Manager. From discussions with other Arts Centre Managers, there is acknowledgement that you have to invest and it does take time to find the balance of popular and art-house works that are interesting to your audiences. The advice given is to select serious and good work. Do not be afraid to take risks while offering people what they want. This will help to regain and instill confidence and gain some recognition. Select a wide variety of events to start off but remember to allow room for the programme to evolve. It is always a challenge for every Arts Centre Manager to find a right balance for audiences. Lastly, be realistic about the potential of the space and the building as it exists and what Riverbank can do well.

4.

4.1 Conclusions

From the previous chapter it is evident that there are certain areas that require immediate improvement to meet the basic facility and resource expectations as outlined in the findings. There are some serious considerations with regard to the building's functional spaces, infrastructure, equipment and resources to facilitate full utilisation and meet a countywide remit while increasing potential for access and involvement in the arts across all artforms.

- The building limitations and restrictions are an issue and affect
 - a) Overall access and opportunities of engagement and
 - b) The level of service that can be offered and delivered.
 - The building's infrastructure - furniture and equipment requires regular maintenance and upkeep to provide facilities at an appropriate standard.
 - The limitations of space constrain the provision of resources in the area of workshops, classes and other arts activities.

- There is strong demand for a greater provision of workshops for performers/artists/arts groups etc (all artforms) in the areas of professional practice and skills training.

- The local community would like to greater access to classes/arts activities/community arts for all age groups at all levels of engagement i.e., all types of dance and music, multi-disciplinary, painting, craft, design etc.

- Arts groups/artists/performers/musicians want to maintain and sustain partnership, arts residency opportunities and support.

- Communications and public relations specifically have been very poor. The promotion and advertising of events, workshops and activities will need a cohesive overhaul to bring it up to a standard that can compete with other cultural venues. Modes of circulation and distribution of information generally will also

have to be dealt with promptly and in time to launch a new programme, calendar of events.

- There is much work to be done in developing a public profile again but rebranding at this time may be too hasty. Riverbank Arts Centre has the urgent task of reestablishing a local and national profile.
- It is a very important time to work with the local media to ensure that the public is informed of this time of transition and change for Riverbank Arts Centre with regular press releases and open communications, interviews etc.
- The new Board of Management and Manager and staff team at Riverbank Arts Centre must fully define the function of Riverbank Arts Centre and fully understand what it can deliver while remaining independent with a defined identity and purpose from the outset.
- It is important to understand however that it is possible to have a coherent approach from many organisations contributing to the development of the arts in the county in a partnership capacity while remaining independent.
- There is also room and potential for partnerships with other local agencies and community/arts groups also. Partnerships with other organisations i.e., FÁS or the VEC/VTOS when you share common objectives to provide training and access opportunities.
- Funding is vulnerable. Consider the key areas that need work and implement a plan of action to generate and maintain funding and revenue.
- Use your resources, develop relationships and be realistic.
- Following on from this process of consultation and discussion with the community and arts groups working locally, the Board of Management must be aware that the local community feels very strongly about being included and involved in Riverbank Arts Centre. Greater efforts must be made to develop links with key

community arts groups. There is a collective knowledge and intelligence, a living archive of people who have skills and confidence from their work and involvement with arts groups and community and participatory arts. This should not be lost.

- All staff must be aware of their shared responsibility to restore a positive perception through positive interaction with all members of the local community. Riverbank must be a welcoming and friendly place.
- The staffing level is something that needs serious consideration if Riverbank Arts Centre is to continue with its county wide remit.

4.2 Recommendations

The following are set of recommendations based on the findings and discussions of previous chapters:-

Riverbank Arts Centre, the building, spaces & facilities:

- From the findings, submissions, consultations, interventions and workshop participation, there is a stated demand for access to more space. The Board of Management must fully consider what options are available to enhance the current space offering both internally and externally. There is an urgent demand for greater workshop rooms, studios rooms, rehearsal space/practice areas and exhibition space. Extra space is a requirement to facilitate a greater offering of classes and arts activities. In doing so, the Riverbank Arts Centre will be more accessible to a wider group of people and arts groups but also importantly, the potential to also generate extra revenue.
- Carry out a technical equipment audit to ascertain what equipment is working and to replace where necessary faulty or broken equipment in order to ascertain the current technical level of service. Plan in order of priority what is in urgent need of replacement/repair and what can be requisitioned over a three year period in accordance with budget availability and annual maintenance.

- Carry out a furniture audit – loose seating for auditorium and workshops and working benches. Ideally consider benches that are fold away and seating that can be stacked.
- Carry out an audit of facilities in general i.e., dressing rooms, stage area, wing space, Green room and gallery spaces to assess what maintenance works need to be carried out, lighting/paint work etc. The size of the dressing rooms may pose a problem but again consider practical improvements in the short term.
- The size of the stage area and the fact of no back stage is an issue. While this is an intimate space which lends itself to a variety of performance and production options, it does pose a problem for bigger groups and touring companies. Consider expansion, it is timely to revisit and optimise the space that is available.
- Sound proofing the auditorium. Seek professional advice on what can be done to reduce the potential of noise pollution.

Programming of arts events:

- Do not programme until the Manager is well in place.
- Invest in good quality work.
- Aim to programme for once a week to start out, at the weekend.
- Include a Children's Art programme across all artforms.
- Include a Youth Art programme across all artforms.
- From the findings there is an immediate need for a cinema in the town. There is the potential to show commercial and art-house/independent films. The Riverbank Arts Centre has the potential to offer an alternative cinema experience. This will also provide an opportunity to connect with a new

audience and potential patrons.

- Take advantage of the opportunities to extend programming in the visual arts, literary arts, multi-cultural events/festivals in general and family events.
- Take advantage of the strong support for local amateur and community based arts groups, panto and musical societies, performances and exhibitions.
- Increase opportunities for access by considering opening hours and programming events for other times, Lunchtime events/Tea time events, Sunday afternoons/bank holiday afternoons .
- Enable arts involvement through bus hire, concession rates etc for older people and people with disabilities whenever possible.
- Consider an on-line booking system for tickets/events.
- For Riverbank Arts Centre to maximise the potential to extend experiences then there must be a planned, coordinated programme of classes, workshops and a development of an education and outreach strategy and policy that complements the arts programming.

Communications, advertising and promotion:

- A dedicated resource with experience in marketing methods and new technologies in arts marketing (preferably) is required to actively develop and drive public relations and audience development policy for Riverbank Arts Centre. This person will also be the central point of contact for all communications pertaining to the arts centre and also provide advice and support where relevant in the promotion and advertising of all events.
- Drive friendly and approachable customer service across all areas of staff and all interaction with the public.
- Review the current functionality and report options available from the Databox

database. Set up a function to access regular reports that show metrics i.e., ticket sales and numbers attending events.

- Devise a concerted and consistent process of gathering customer information every time there is an event and update that Databox database this information regularly.
- Update the website and put in place a process of regular updates with all information on the programme and booking options. Keep it as user friendly and welcoming as possible - consider for the long term the development of an electronic resource/information centre/network that provides information on all arts events in the county accessed via the Riverbank Arts Centre website. The contents could hold a database of artists– accessible to local arts groups and artists, schools etc who wish to engage with artists. It would be a central reference point – an information hub.
- Create an archive of past events and activities on-line on the Riverbank website. This documentation of work is importantly locally and nationally.
- Foster better media relations, have one point of contact/liaison for the press and all media queries.
- Invest in and actively drive process improvement in the area of advertising and promotion. Apply new methods of communicating the information on all events and activities to achieve optimum circulation across all age groups – look at options such as Bebo, My Space, and Face Book etc together with more conventional tools.
- Invest in and actively promote events and activities with more local advertising targeted through free newspapers, local media/local radio etc.
- Formulate and implement clear and concise information sheets and a full set of guidelines/procedures and process management relating to the booking

and criteria for use of space - what can be provided, accessed, supported etc. and what cannot.

Resources:

- Actively support the work of high quality artistic professional practice. This can be done through partnerships, collaborations and residencies. Develop equal opportunities across all artforms. Formulate good practice procedures and guidelines and be aware of legal obligations in relation to contracts and seek advice where necessary.
- Given the challenges presented, the Manager of the arts centre should have experience as an arts centre Manager, possibly on a national level and is a strong driven individual.
- Clearly define a Manager's role with regard to what is required as an artistic direction/programming of all arts events and activities/general day to day running of the business/accounts/budgeting/organisational planning and personnel, people management and excellent communication skills.
- Allow time for the Manager to settle into the role and consider a contract of employment for a minimum of 3 years with 1 year probation.
- Consider investing in personnel and resources for the following areas:-
 - Marketing/PR
 - Financial/Accounting - part time basis.
 - Front of house/Administrative support
 - Box office management/Process management
 - Technical support
 - Cleaning
 - Caretakers
 - Temp staff – Ushers
- There must be an induction process for all personnel and training in

communications and best practice customer service and the use of relevant technologies, services as they apply to the role etc.

- Clearly define in the contract of employment the role and objectives. Review annually.

The Riverbank Arts Centre has already made a contribution to the arts in Kildare. To continue to do so in a more efficient and sustainable way that will benefit and enhance social cohesion based on the resources available is an enormous challenge.

The final recommendation therefore is to continue to gather as much information as possible on audience, levels of participation, what people are interested in, what is working/not working and what areas are priorities for improvement while promoting cultural inclusion.

It is also vital to set up a process of self assessment from the outset. This process will pin point areas of weakness and strengths which will enable better planning, budget allocation and organisation in the structure of programming and staffing. This will help to develop best policy. It is also very important as an archive of the activities, events and achievements year on year of the Riverbank Arts Centre.

This is to be a period of significant change for the Arts Centre to have a viable future. It will be the role of the new Arts Centre Manager with the support of the Board of Management at Riverbank Arts Centre to engage and effectively enable implementation at Riverbank Arts Centre following this report's recommendations.

5.

5.1 References

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18. www.audiencesni.com – Audiences Northern Ireland – for training and Arts Marketing support.
19. www.theatreforumireland.com – Theatre Forum Ireland - See Links – a very comprehensive listing of arts websites across all artforms – not only theatre. See Marketing links. See also Notice Board for training opportunities.
20. www.nascireland.org – NASC is the Irish Immigrant Support Centre.
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22. www.cso.ie/statistics/ - Central Statistics Office Ireland.
23. www.draiocht.ie – Draiocht, The Blanchardstown Centre, Dublin 15.
24. www.dunamais.ie – Dunamais Arts Centre, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
25. www.garterlane.ie – Garter Lane Arts Centre, Waterford.
26. www.roscommonartscentre.ie – Roscommon Arts Centre, Roscommon.
27. www.donegalculture.com – Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny, Donegal.
28. www.droicheadartscentre.com – Droichead Arts Centre, Drogheda.
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Images - Front cover

Left: Ciaran Dwyer & Friends, Lunchtime Concert, Cup Cake Café, Riverbank Arts Centre, 13 November 2008.

Below left: Participants at the Practice.ie/Kids Own Initiative Professional Development workshop, Auditorium, Riverbank Arts Centre, 24 November, 2008 - image courtesy of Practice.ie and Kids Owns Initiative.

Right: Photo montage of 'Sticky Tape', a collaborative community art project at Riverbank Arts Centre, Foyer Gallery, 4 November - 19 December 2008 – image courtesy of artist, Sinead McGeeney.

6.

6.1 List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Questionnaires

Appendix 2 – List of submissions/participants

Appendix 1 Questionnaires & Questionnaire results

Conversation Café Questionnaire:



Open... for ideas is a research and consultation project for Riverbank Arts Centre

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire
Thursday, 2nd October, 2008

Conversation Cafe

1. How often do you attend arts events? Weekly, Monthly etc
2. Are you a member of a literary group or organisation? If so, please give details?
3. Did you like/dislike the format of this evening's event and why?
4. Would you like to see other literary events at Riverbank? If so, what is particular?
5. Any further Comments/Suggestions/Ideas:

6. Name & Address/e-mail (optional):



Kildare
County Council



Newbridge Drama Group Audience Questionnaire:



Open... *for ideas* is a research and consultation project for
Riverbank Arts Centre

Newbridge Drama Group Present The Mai by Marina Carr

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire
Please be advised that the information provided to us by the questionnaire
will be used as primary research and will inform the overall findings

1. How often do you attend arts events? Weekly, Monthly etc.
2. Where do you go to see/participate in arts events? Kildare, Dublin, Laois, Meath, Carlow etc. (please state venue and county)

3. If you are not a regular attendee at Riverbank Arts Centre, please state the reason why? (programming, seating, opening hours, language, commute, accessibility etc)
4. What arts events would you like to see at Riverbank Arts Centre? i.e. Workshops, theatre, film, children's events, music, literary events, visual art, dance, performances, multicultural events/festivals etc. Please be as specific as possible.
5. Do you have any further comments/suggestions/ideas for the role of the Riverbank Arts Centre in the future?
6. Name & Address/e-mail (optional):



Kildare
County Council



Appendix 2 List of submissions/participants

List of submissions/feedback received via Web Forum:

Name	Nr. of posts	
1. AmyF	2	
2. Aphrodite	3	
3. Bella	1	
4. Betty	1	
5. Beverly	1	
6. Bogoo	5	
7. Deirdre	1	
8. Dgeraghty	1	
9. Damien Dollard	2	(-1 post removed at poster's request)
10. Brenda Donohue	1	
11. Ciara	1	
12. Gearyn	1	
13. Happy Clappy	4	
14. Eoin Hartnett	1	
15. Katied	1	
16. Ka	1	
17. (members of Kildare Artists		
18. www.kildareartists.org)		
19. Louise	1	
20. Peter Hussey	2	
21. Mary	1	
22. MC	1	
23. Catherine McIntyre	1	
24. John MacKenna	15	
25. Noel	1	
26. Noreen O'Gorman	2	
27. Pete p	13	
28. Sandy	1	
29. Sean	1	
30. Stephenkop	1	
31. Tanya	21	
32. Veronica Bagnall	1	
33. WKD	1	
34. Xavier 46	1	
35. ZMG	1	

List of submissions/feedback received via post, telephone, e-mail and one to one:

Name	Organisation
1. Evan Arkwright	Newbridge Chamber of Commerce
2. Linda Baldwin	
3. Patricia Baldwin	
4. Ciara Bennett	
5. Luka Bloom	Musician

6. Mary Brady
7. Kathryn Breen
8. Suzanne Conlon
9. Matthew Cross
10. Laura Cullen
11. Kamila Dabrowska
12. Eve Daly
13. Ann Dempsey St Conleth's Infant School, Newbridge
14. Monica de Bath Contemporary Visual Artist
15. Deaglan de Paor
16. Brona Dowling
17. Aidan Duane
18. Michelle Egan
19. Denise Ellis
20. Sean Freeman
21. Paula Galvin
22. Dillon Gordon
23. Anthony Gorry
24. Pat Halligan
25. Suan Hanafey
26. Eoin Harnett
27. Catherine Jordon Ard Scoil, Rath Iomghain
28. Pamela Keeley Pamela Keeley Stage School
29. Barry Lyons
30. Morgan McCabe
31. Ross McMahon KYT
32. Paul Maher
33. Esther Marin
34. Hilary Mosse
35. John Murray Active Management
36. Patrick O'Connor
37. Julie O'Donoghue
38. Fr Colm Ó Siochru
39. Tom O'Shea
40. Ellen Quaid
41. Carol Quigley
42. Aisling Quinn
43. Elaine Ravelle
44. Orla Rowse
45. Claire Rudd
46. Pauline Silk
47. Margaret Smith
48. Patricia Tinsley
49. Gary Tramba
50. Shane Walsh South Kildare Photography Club
51. Paula Waters Scoil Bhríde Naofa, Cill Dara
52. Lilian Webb
53. JJ & Susan Woods
54. Katherine Young

List of submissions/feedback received via consultation meetings:

Name	Organisation
1. Brother Michael Broderick	Newbridge Drama Group
2. Ciara Connelly	Culture Factory
3. Susan Connolly	Contemporary Visual Artist
4. Damien Dollard	Dollard Audio Visual
5. Louise Donlon	Dunamaise Arts Centre
6. Ciaran Dwyer	Musician
7. Trish Groves	Independent Film Maker/New Media Marketing
8. Barry Healy	Culture Factory
9. Peter Hussey	Crooked House
10. Kevin Lalor Fitzpatrick	Allen Little Theatre
11. Peter Lee	BR Recording
12. Shane McGrath	Limelight Entertainment
13. Breda McHale	Newbridge Chamber
14. John MacKenna	Writer, Lecturer, Mend & Make Do Theatre Company
15. Paddy Melia	Independent Theatre Producer and Storm Cinema
16. Terry Moore	Culture Factory and former Artsquad co-ordinator
17. Ann Murphy	Scribblers Inc
18. Dave Nolan	Musician
19. Gerry O'Donoghue	Principal, Scoil Bhride, Athgarvan
20. Cathy O'Kennedy	Fluxusdance
21. Michael Rowley	Visual Artist
22. Lucina Russell	Arts Officer, Kildare County Council Arts Service
23. Philip Scott	Musician
24. Robert Short	The Music Centre
25. Fifi Smith	Contemporary Visual Artist
26. Mark Stafford	Silken Thomas Players

List of expressions of interest in what was happening at Riverbank Arts Centre:

Name
1. Eilis Aspell
2. Mike Bartlett
3. Fergus Bohan
4. John Bowdron
5. Gay Brabazon
6. Michelle Bradley
7. Amelda Brennan
8. Brid Brophy
9. Joe Byrne
10. Jim Cahill
11. Deirdre Carr
12. Paula Conlon
13. Andrea & Hugh Cosgrove
14. Sinead Courtney
15. Jessica Delk
16. Kate Dempsey
17. Audrey Doyle

18. Thomasina Earley
19. Rico Edmoon
20. Brian Fay
21. Keith Flynn
22. Deirdre Geraghty
23. Lucas Gonzalez
24. Dom Heffer
25. Joe Kearns
26. Cllr. Paddy Kennedy
27. Niamh M Keogh
28. Rachel Lally
29. Mary Malone
30. Geraldine Molloy
31. Niall Moran
32. Triona Muldoon
33. Maeve Mulrennan
34. J F Murphy
35. Michael O'Connell
36. Gary O'Haran
37. Tanya O'Malley
38. Sinead Redmond
39. Sean Reed
40. Enda Rochford
41. Sharon Rolston
42. Eleanor Swan
43. Mary Lee Tully

List of participants in Sticky Tape

Name

1. Danny & Gerry McGrath
2. Eliah Kennedy
3. Aoife Nlan
4. Cathal, Caoimhe and Tory Byrne
5. Kildare Active Citizen Disability Group @ The Bridge CDP
6. Scoil Bhríde Naofa, Baile Chill Dara
7. Ard Scoil, Rath Iomghain
8. Athy Community College
9. Athy Travellers Support Group
10. Ballyshannon National School
11. Down Syndrome Association Kildare
12. Leinster Senior College
13. Gaelcholaise, Herbert Lodge
14. St Farnan's Post Primary, Prosperous
15. St Mark's Special School, Piercetown
16. St. Patrick's National School, Morristown
17. Mercy Convent Primary School,
18. Scoil An Linbh Iosa, Ballycane, Naas
19. Scoil Brid, Celbridge National School
20. Robertstown National School

21. Scoil Bhríde National School, Milltown
22. Scoil Bhríde National School, Nurney,
23. Scoil Mhuire Junior School, Ballymany,
24. Scoil Mhuire Senior School, Ballymany
25. Scoil Na Naomh Uilig, Station Road
26. Patrician Primary School
27. VTOS, George's Street, Newbridge
28. VTOS, Kildare Road, Athy
29. Educate Together, North Kildare
30. 2 Mile House National School
31. Allenwood Girls National School
32. Ballyroe National School, Athy
33. South Kildare Youth Arch Group