

**PRESS RELEASE 26 April 2024**

**Wexford County Council Library Service benefits from €2million under new Department of Rural and Community Development Libraries Capital Programme Investment**

*More than €4 million in total will be invested in the extension and refurbishment of New Ross Library together with the provision of a new mobile library vehicle.*

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, announced a major investment of over €25 million in our Public Library Service as part of the Libraries Capital Programme 2023 – 2027. The investment includes the delivery of 11 new library buildings across the country, along with 12 new Next Generation mobile library vehicles.

County Wexford will also stand to benefit from the Libraries Capital Programme with funding of €1.7 million towards an extension and refurbishment of New Ross Library and a contribution of €262,500 toward a new mobile library vehicle. The match funding to complete these projects will be provided by Wexford County Council through the Councils Economic & Community Capital Investment Programme and will bring the total investment to over four million euros. Thanking Minister Humphries and the Department for the funding, the Interim Chief Executive Eddie Taffe said *“This funding is recognition of the important contribution that libraries make to local communities here in County Wexford. Our libraries are a valued and trusted civic space, providing free and universal access to information and literacy. They provide opportunities for life-long learning through their wide-ranging programme of events, services, up-to-date book stock and e-Resources. The continued investment under the National Public Library Strategy 2023 - 27, is key to ensuring that our library services continue to develop and reflect the current needs communities”.*

Eddie went on to say that *“the new mobile library will replace the existing 24-year-old vehicle that services North County Wexford. In a rural county such as Wexford, mobile library services are an essential way of expanding the reach of the library service into our rural communities. They help combat loneliness and social isolation faced by our older citizens as well as providing an essential literacy service to our rural schools. The new vehicle will house up to 3,000 new books and will offer multimedia and modern IT facilities that are accessible to all. The new mobile library will allow for many of the new literacy promotion initiatives that are being provided by the library service to be made available to pre-schools and primary schools around the county”.*

The existing New Ross Library was opened in 1982 as a purpose-built library. The refurbishment and extension of the existing Library will almost double the existing space. The accommodation will be mainly at ground floor level with some additional floor space at a mezzanine level that, serviced by a lift. This increased footprint will allow for a wider range of book stock for all ages, increased information technology capability, a dedicated makerspace, sensory equipment and space, exhibitions, a children’s library which allows for leisure reading, activities and school visits, and a quiet area for study and research especially during My Open Library hours. Through a larger library space, social participation for older users can happen through enhanced cultural programmes. The library will be an inclusive accessible recreational space for all the local community. The existing library opens for 43 staffed hours per week but there is an ambition to increase this significantly when the new library opens. The total project cost will be in the region of €3.4 million.



**Image: Existing New Ross Library**

Cathaoirleach of Wexford County Council, Cllr. John Fleming welcomed the news, stating that *“This funding will make a big difference to the lives of existing library users throughout the county. A larger refurbished library in New Ross will enable an already well-used community facility to offer an increased range of modern library services and attract an increased number of visitors to the library to avail of these services. An improved library is an essential amenity that will enhance quality of life and add to the attractiveness of New Ross as a place to live, work and visit. The new mobile library will replace the old vehicle with a state-of-the-art next generation vehicle. Its arrival will be welcome news to the 4,000 users of the mobile library service in rural villages and communities throughout the County”*.

Cathaoirleach of New Ross Municipal District, Cllr. Anthony Connick was equally positive about the news, stating *“The team in New Ross Library deliver a fantastic service to the people of New Ross. The library is already at the heart of the local community with almost 64,000 visitors and over 50,000 items borrowed in 2023. The larger Library space will allow for an expanded range of book stock and the addition of new services. The community and visitors to the town of New Ross will enjoy a warm, welcoming and bright space that will increase the quality of life for all who visit”.*

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Further information: [gov - Minister Humphreys officially opens Ireland’s Newest Library and announces €25 million investment in our Public Library Service (www.gov.ie)](https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/c5e9c-minister-humphreys-officially-opens-irelands-newest-library-and-announces-25-million-investment-in-our-public-library-service/)

The Library is the Place: Information, Recreation, Inspiration National Public Library Strategy 2023-2027 [[National Public Library Strategy 2023-2027 (librariesireland.ie)](https://www.librariesireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/2023-07/LGMA-National-Public-Library-Strategy-2023-2027%5B5%5D.pdf)]