

Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Ordinary Meeting

7th October 2024 @ 1.30p.m.

Buvinda House, Navan (and online via zoom)

Presiding: An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Sharon Tolan

Councillors Present:

Councillors, Yemi Adenuga, Fionnan Blake, Peter Caffrey, Eugene Cassidy, Francis Deane, Aisling Dempsey, Brian Fitzgerald, Padraig Fitzsimons, Joe Fox, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy, Suzanne Jamal, Geraldine Keogan, Nick Killian, Alan Lawes, Carol Lennon, Helen Meyer, Ronan Moore, Linda Nelson Murray, Gerry O'Connor, Caroline O'Reilly, Sarah Reilly, Amanda Smith, Gillian Toole, Maria White.

Councillors Present via Zoom:

Councillors, Joe Bonner, Dave Boyne, Mike Bray, Sean Drew, Edward Fennessy, Noel French, Stephen McKee, Paddy Meade, Maria Murphy, Alan Tobin, Emer Tóibín, Conor Tormey.

Apologies:

Councillors Padraig Coffey, Wayne Harding,

Officials in attendance:

Chief Executive: Kieran Kehoe

Directors of Service: Des Foley, Fiona Lawless, Barry Lynch, Dara McGowan, Martin Murray, Fiona Fallon, Pádraig Maguire.

Meetings Administrator: Elaine Daly

1.0 Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 2nd September 2024

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 2nd September 2024 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Sarah Reilly**.

2.0 Matters arising from the Minutes

There were queries from **Councillors Gillian Toole, Gerry O'Connor** and **Helen Meyer**. Matters raised included details relating to the new management structure, meeting with DAA and the review of the CRM Portal. Responses were provided by the Meetings Administrator.

3.0 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

3.1 Expressions of Sympathy were extended to:

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Darren Rogers, Water Services on the death of his brother, Robert (Robbie) Rogers.

Paul Cahill (Ashbourne MD), Stephen Cahill (Water Services) and Desmond Cahill (Ratoath MD) on the death of their brother, Mark Cahill.

David Barrett, Transportation on the death of his brother, Thomas (Tom) Barrett.

Ursula Whyatt, Kells Library and Nicholas Whyatt, Transportation on the death of their mother/mother-in-law, Mary McShane.

Breda Suokas, Finance on the death of her mother, Alice Tobin.

The family and friends of Councillor John Naughten, Roscommon County Council.

3.2 Expressions of congratulations were extended to:

All involved in the preparation of Dunshaughlin Harvest Festival including the Committee, volunteers, members of the community and Navan Silver Band.

4.0 Disposal of Land in accordance with Statutory Notices circulated pursuant to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001

- 4.1 Disposal of 0.200Ha of land at Roestown, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath, in accordance with Section 211 of Planning & Development Act 2000 and subject to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001. The lands are not affected by the provisions of the Land Development Agency Act 2021.

The disposal, in accordance with the statutory notice issued on August 19, 2024 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Gillian Toole** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**.

- 4.2 Disposal of 0.4786Ha of land for land rectification to boundary at Cooksland, Dunshaughlin, Co Meath in accordance with Section 211 of Planning & Development Act 2000 and subject to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001. The lands are not affected by the provisions of the Land Development Agency Act 2021.

The disposal, in accordance with the statutory notice issued on August 26, 2024 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Gillian Toole**.

- 4.3 Disposal of 0.022Ha of land at Drumbaragh, Kells, Co. Meath, in accordance with Section 211 of Planning & Development Act 2000 and subject to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001. The lands are not affected by the

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provisions of the Land Development Agency Act 2021.

The disposal, in accordance with the statutory notice issued on August 27, 2024 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Sarah Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Michael Gallagher**.

5.0 Statutory Business

5.1 Corporate Affairs and Governance

- 5.1.1 To resolve to hold a Council Meeting on Monday 21st October at 1.30pm (hybrid) to consider the Draft Maynooth & Environs Joint Local Area Plan 2025 – 2031

On the proposal of **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Gillian Toole** the Elected Members resolved to hold a Council Meeting on Monday 21st October 2024 at 1.30pm.

- 5.1.2 To Appoint Sectoral Nominees to Strategic Policy Committees

Forward Planning & Development Management	Climate Action, Environment & Emergency Services	Transportation and Urban Regeneration	Community & Cultural Development and Gaeltacht Affairs	Economic Development, Enterprise, Tourism, EU Affairs and Rural Regeneration
Fergal Hennessy (IFA)	Martin Heaney (IFA)	Paula McCaul (Chamber of Commerce)	Paula McCaul (Chamber of Commerce)	Dermot Ward (IFA)
				Paula McCaul (Chamber of Commerce)
				Carol McSherry (ICTU)

Councillor Gillian Toole had a query regarding the nominee from the Chamber of Commerce, with response provided by the Chief Executive.

On the proposal of **Councillor Aisling Dempsey** and seconded by **Councillor Padraig Fitzsimons** the Elected Members appointed the sectoral nominees to the respective SPCs as outlined above.

5.2 Tourism

- 5.2.1 To receive a presentation on the Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy 2024 – 2030

Ms. Michele Whelan, Tourism Officer gave an overview of the Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy 2024 – 2030. She outlined the ambition to make the Boyne Valley as one of the leading experiential

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destinations in the world. She also provided details of the public consultation that took place as well as the Action Plan and commitments set out in the strategy.

There were interventions from Councillors Aisling Dempsey, David Gilroy, Linda Nelson-Murray, Eugene Cassidy, Yemi Adenuga, Ronan Moore, Gerry O'Connor, Maria White, Gillian Toole, Helen Meyer, Alan Tobin and An Cathaoirleach. The Elected Members warmly welcomed the plan and noted the challenges in accommodation growth for tourism in the County. The Elected Members also acknowledged the many heritage sites throughout the County, as well as the capacity for additional festivals. The Chief Executive thanked the Elected Members for their support and he further reiterated the Council's ambitions for the County.

6.0 Reports

6.1 Management Report

There were interventions from **Councillors Nick Killian, Mike Bray, Gillian Toole, Brian Fitzgerald, Helen Meyer, Linda Nelson-Murray, Alan Lawes and Edward Fennessy**. Matters raised included:

Transportation: Funding Ratoath Cycle-way, Lands for sale at Abbeylands, Pathfinder projects, CIS Scheme.

Housing: Aylesbury Development, Provision of a hostel, Affordable Housing, Standards in Rental Accommodation Inspections, Homeless Figures, Part V Schemes, Cost Rental Schemes.

Community: Pride of Place Awards.

Environment: Inspections under Water Framework Directive, Water Action Plan 2024, Leaf Mould Pilot Project, Composting and Recycling for Schools.

Corporate Affairs: LPT Infographic, Register to Vote Campaign, Notices of Motion report.

Economic Development: Centre of Business Excellence.

Rural Regeneration: ORIS funding.

Planning: NPF Submission, Variation No. 3 County Development Plan, Settlement Capacity Audit.

Responses to queries raised were provided by The Chief Executive, Fiona Fallon, Barry Lynch, Pádraig Maguire, Dara McGowan, Martin Murray and Fiona Lawless.

6.2 Report from Corporate Policy Group

The Meetings Administrator reported that the CPG met on Monday September 30, 2024 to review the draft agenda and the arrangements for the October Council Meeting.

She noted that the Members had received an update on the preparations for the Corporate Plan



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and it was envisaged that the final document would be brought before the Elected Members at the November Council Meeting. She further noted that the Members had received an update on the preparations of Budget 2025 and no submissions had been received in respect of the public consultation on the rates waiver scheme. In addition, the CPG had approved the Elected Members Membership of the SPC.

Finally, it was noted that the training and conference schedules had been approved and circulated to all Elected Members.

7.0 Correspondence

Noted by the Elected Members.

8.0 Notice of Question

8.1 Submitted by Councillor Helen Meyer

“The total number of public liability claims against Meath County Council seems high in comparison to other councils. There are 290 claims, and the payout is €533,545. Could you please provide a breakdown of those claims with a description of the types and costs of claims for each MD?”

Response:

The number of Public Liability Claims finalised in 2023 was 290 and the cost was €533,545.

In order avoid the risk of a breach of GDPR or the breach of a non-disclosure agreement and/or confidentiality, Meath County Council cannot provide a detailed breakdown of the individual claims or settlement amounts.

However, we can confirm that of the 290 cases settled 270 of these related to Potholes, Footpaths (Slips & Trips) and the overall settlement value of these claims was €228,470.

There were 20 other cases settled at a cost of €305,075.

In comparison to other councils Meath’s settlement cost is the seventh lowest in the country.

Noted by the Elected Members.

8.2 Submitted by Councillor Maria White

“I am seeking clarification from Meath County Council as to its role in flood prevention and planning for the management and maintenance of streams which

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flow through housing estates in the county?"

Response:

The Office of Public Works (OPW) is the national authority for the implementation of the EU Floods Directive and are the lead agency for flood risk management in Ireland. In 2018 the OPW completed the largest study of flood risk ever undertaken by the State to establish those communities that are at risk from significant flood events - this provided the roadmap for the delivery of Government investment in flood relief schemes and €1.3 billion has been committed over the lifetime of the National Development Plan to 2030 to protect approximately 23,000 properties in threatened communities from river and coastal flood risk. This study known as the Catchment Flood Risk Management Programme (CFRAM) resulted in the production of indicative flood maps and catchment-based Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) and involved extensive public consultation and engagement with local authorities, the Environmental Protection Agency and other relevant departments and bodies in accordance with national flood policy and the EU Floods Directive.

Meath County Council work closely with the OPW when they are designing and delivering major flood relief schemes and examples being such schemes in Ashbourne and Northlands, Bettystown. In addition, the OPW also provide funding to Local Authorities under Minor Flood Mitigation Works and Coastal Protection Schemes and Meath County Council has identified a number of such projects and are have ongoing discussions with the OPW about future projects that can be delivered from this funding stream.

In respect of Management and Maintenance of streams through housing estates, any watercourses that flow through Housing Estates and are designated as part of an Arterial drainage Scheme are the responsibility of the OPW for management and maintenance. Meath County Council are responsible for the management and maintenance for designated Drainage District watercourses that flow through Housing Estates. If the OPW or Meath County Council carry out a Flood Scheme on a non-designated watercourses in a housing estate, the responsibility for management and maintenance of that watercourse within the scheme will be with the respective body carrying out the scheme.

Meath County Council have granted Planning Permissions for Housing Estates through which watercourses flow and have conditioned that the applicant is to maintain the watercourse and otherwise the responsibility for the management and maintenance of a watercourse lies with the landowner. Designated watercourses whether they be part of Arterial Drainage Schemes or Drainage Districts are available for viewing on the OPW website.

Noted by the Elected Members.

9.0 Notice of Motion

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9.1 Submitted by Councillor Ronan Moore

“To call on Meath County Council to consider the deployment of traffic sensors (LIDAR, RADAR, inductive loops) or other available technologies to monitor and track traffic patterns on roads subject to potential toll avoidance.”

Supporting Information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered

Whilst matters relating to the day to day operations regarding national roads, including toll roads are within the remit of TII, the Council has undertaken some work in connection with Slane Bypass and Public Realm Improvement and the Dunboyne and Environs Transport Study that considered toll avoidance on the M1 and M3.

We note that is not always straightforward to distinguish between trips that may be avoiding tolls and those that are legitimate trips on alternative routes that are open for road users to take. It is also a specialised and expensive task to capture and analyse the traffic data over a wide area to determine this. Notwithstanding this, we understand that the RMO are developing a traffic module for Map Road to collate and track road traffic data that local authorities hold on regional and local roads through the country. This could be used as a baseline to compare and store future traffic count information and spot trends in traffic volumes over time on particular roads, although the reasons for any changes could be multi-faceted.

An update on progress on the development of this traffic module is due to be given to local authorities by the RMO in the coming weeks and a further update can be provided to councillors on its development in due course.

Councillor Ronan Moore introduced the motion. He welcomed the response from the executive and noted the impact of toll avoidance on towns and villages throughout the County. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Gerry O'Connor** and **Brian Fitzgerald** and it was noted that there is a statutory obligation to provide an alternative route to toll roads.

The motion, together with supporting information, proposed by **Councillor Ronan Moore** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** was unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

9.2 Submitted by Councillor Maria White

“I call on the Council to develop and produce a Meath County Council guide for those in communities interested in setting up a residents’ association to provide support to new and existing residents’ associations in organising and managing their activities. The guide should be easily accessible on the Council website, and should also be made available in hard copy on request.”

Supporting Information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered



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Subject to the motion being agreed, it will be referred to the Strategic Policy Committee for Community, Cultural Development and Cultural Affairs

Councillor Maria White introduced the motion. She noted residents associations and community groups throughout the County engaged in efforts benefiting their communities. She further outlined that a comprehensive handbook detailing the procedure to establish a residents association, along with details of the available support mechanisms, would serve as a beneficial resource. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Linda Nelson Murray, Ronan Moore** and **Gillian Toole**.

The motion, together with supporting information, proposed by **Councillor Maria White** and seconded by **Councillor Linda Nelson-Murray** was unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

10.0 General Interest Motions

10.1 Submitted by Councillor Alan Lawes

“That Meath County Council notes the decision by the Government to recognise the State of Palestine and now calls on the Government to pass the Occupied Territories Bill which has been supported at all stages by a majority of members of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann.”

Councillor Alan Lawes introduced the motion. He acknowledged the Government’s recognition of the State of Palestine and detailed the recent meeting between the Elected Members and the Palestinian Ambassador to Ireland, Dr. Jilan Wahba Abdalmajid.

The motion, proposed by **Councillor Alan Lawes** and seconded by **Councillor Carol Lennon** was unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

10.2 Submitted by Councillor Joe Fox

“Meath County Council calls on the Department of Local Government to provide greatly increased funding for a much higher level of Septic Tank inspections to be carried out by Local Councils.”

Councillor Joe Fox introduced the motion. He noted that there were approximately 10,000 septic tanks in the County and that in order to qualify for a septic tank grant, the septic tank must first undergo an inspection by the local authority.

The motion proposed by **Councillor Joe Fox** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O’Connor** was unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

10.3 Submitted by Councillor Ronan Moore

“To write to the Minister for Transport requesting data on the level of toll avoidance

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nationwide, specifically by heavy-articulated vehicles; and calling on the Minister to identify measures to counteract such toll avoidance.”

The motion proposed by **Councillor Ronan Moore** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** was unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

11.0 Schedule of Chief Executive & Approved Orders (For Information Only)

11.1 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Transportation
Noted by the Elected Members.

11.2 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Environment and Water Services
Noted by the Elected Members.

11.3 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Housing
Noted by the Elected Members.

11.4 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Community & Enterprise
Noted by the Elected Members.

12.0 Any Other Business

The following matters were raised by **Councillors Gillian Toole, Alan Tobin** and **Edward Fennessy**:

- Centre of Business Excellence;
- Meeting with DAA;
- Integration at Thornton Hall;
- Assessment of Carer's Allowance in the calculation of differential rent.

Responses to queries raised were provided by the Chief Executive and Fiona Fallon.

The meeting concluded at 3.15pm.