



## ***Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes***

### ***Ordinary Meeting***

***2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024 @ 1.30p.m.***

***Buvinda House, Navan (and online via zoom)***

**Presiding:** An Leas-Chathaoirleach, Councillor Suzanne Jamal

**Councillors Present:**

Councillors, Yemi Adenuga, Fionnán Blake, Joe Bonner, Mike Bray, Peter Caffrey, Eugene Cassidy, Padraig Coffey, Francis Deane, Eddie Fennessy, Brian Fitzgerald, Padraig Fitzsimons, Joe Fox, Noel French, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy, Wayne Harding, Nick Killian, Alan Lawes, Carol Lennon, Paddy Meade, Maria Murphy, Gerry O'Connor, Emer Tóibín, and Maria White.

**Councillors Present via Zoom:**

Councillors, Dave Boyne, Sean Drew, Geraldine Keogan, Stephen McKee, Helen Meyer, Ronan Moore, Linda Nelson-Murray, Caroline O'Reilly, Amanda Smith, Alan Tobin and Conor Tormey.

**Apologies:**

Councillors, Sarah Reilly and Sharon Tolan.

**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

The meeting commenced with contributions from **Councillors Brian Fitzgerald; Wayne Harding; Noel French; Gerry O'Connor; Paddy Meade; Maria Murphy; Mike Bray; Joe Bonner; Yemi Adenuga; Nick Killian; Joe Fox; Maria White; Padraig Fitzsimons, Padraig Coffey and Dave Boyne.** They expressed congratulations to all election candidates in the recent General Elections. Special congratulations were extended to former Councillors Aisling Dempsey and Gillian Toole on their election to Dáil Éireann.

It was noted that a Special Meeting would take place on December 18, 2024 to facilitate the filling of the casual vacancies to the Council.

#### **1.0 Confirmation of Minutes**

**1.1** Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** and seconded by **Councillor Padraig Fitzsimons.**

**1.2** Confirmation of minutes of Preliminary Budget meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November

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The minutes of the Preliminary Budget meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** and seconded by **Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons**.

### **1.3 Confirmation of minutes of Statutory Budget meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

The minutes of the Statutory Budget meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** and seconded by **Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons**.

### **2.0 Matters arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising.

### **3.0 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations**

#### **3.1 Expressions of Sympathy were extended to:**

Dervilla McKeever, Corporate Affairs and Governance on the death of her mother, Ramona Mulligan.

Carol Reilly, Finance on the death of her father, Aidan Reilly.

Eamon Cooke, former employee on the death of his wife, Mary Cooke, former employee, Kells Swimming Pool.

Nicola Dowling, Connaught Street, Athboy, Co. Meath.

Bunty Connor, Claremont, Navan, Co. Meath.

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

None

### **5.0 Statutory Business**

#### **5.1 Planning**

- 5.1.1 In accordance with Section 10.3.1 of the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022), to receive the Annual Development Plan Monitoring Report for Year 3 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 (as varied).

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Ms Linda O'Grady, Senior Executive Planner, presented the Annual Development Plan Monitoring Report for year 3 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027. She outlined details of the core strategy and residential permissions granted and units completed including further details in relation to one off rural housing. In addition, details of the commercial monitoring and community monitoring were noted. Finally, the key findings arising from year 3 monitoring were noted.

There were interventions and queries from **Councillors Maria Murphy; Gerry O'Connor; Brian Fitzgerald; Nick Killian; Mike Bray; Peter Caffrey; Eugene Cassidy; Ronan Moore; Joe Fox; Emer Toibin; Michael Gallagher; Alan Tobin; David Gilroy; Paddy Meade and Sean Drew**. Queries raised included environmental and flood factors, rural needs, joint area plans, road traffic studies, increased supply of housing, serviced sites initiatives, permissions granted for solar panels, water and waste-water infrastructure, zoned lands for residential development and the residential zoned land tax. Responses to queries raised were provided by Pdraig Maguire, Linda O'Grady and the Chief Executive.

### **5.2 Corporate Affairs and Governance**

#### **5.2.1 To approve the Annual Elected Members' Training Programme**

The Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Affairs and Governance provided an overview of the details of the Annual Elected Member's Training Programme. It was noted that the Programme had been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended), as well as corresponding circulars. She further noted that an in-house training programme had been developed to complement training provided by the AILG and other external training providers.

The Annual Elected Members' Training Programme was unanimously approved on the proposal of **Councillor Noel French** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**.

#### **5.2.2 To approve Standing Orders for SPCs**

The Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Affairs and Governance provided an overview of the details of the Draft Standing Orders. She noted that they had been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act, 2001 (as amended), as well as corresponding departmental guidelines. It was noted that each SPC is obliged to consider climate action and climate impacts as part of its remit and that work programmes, once prepared, will be referred to the CPG for approval.

The Standing Orders for SPCs were unanimously approved on the proposal of **Councillor Maria Murphy** and seconded by **Councillor Francis Deane**.

#### **5.2.3 To approve the Municipal District Allocation Scheme 2025**

The Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Affairs and Governance provided an overview of the details of the revised Municipal District Allocation Scheme 2025. It was noted that following the adoption of the Meath County Council Budget 2025, the overall budget had increased to €640,000.

The Municipal District Allocation Scheme 2025 was unanimously approved on the proposal of **Councillor Peter Caffrey** and seconded by **Councillor Eddie Fennesy**.

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### 5.2.4 To Appoint Sectoral Nominee to Strategic Policy Committee

On the proposal of **Councillor Francis Deane** and seconded by **Councillor David Gilroy**, the Elected Members unanimously approved the appointment of the following sectoral nominee to the Strategic Policy Committee.

#### **Community & Cultural Development and Gaeltacht Affairs**

Ursula Ní Shionnain  
(PPN Social Inclusion Pillar)

### **5.3 Housing**

#### 5.3.1 To adopt the Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025-2029

Ms. Joan Carroll, Senior Executive Officer, Housing, presented the Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029. She outlined the statutory provisions of the Programme as well as the projected traveller housing supports over the period of the programme.

There were interventions from **Councillors Yemi Adenuga, Nick Killian, Paddy Meade** and **Maria Murphy**. Some concerns were raised in relation to public consultation and the level of engagement with local traveller groups. Clarification was provided by Ms. Fiona Fallon, Director of Services, who noted that the Programme would be subject to an annual review.

On the proposal of **Councillor Paddy Meade** and seconded by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029 was adopted.

### **6.0 Reports**

#### 6.1 Management Report

There were interventions from **Councillors Nick Killian, Mike Bray, Ronan Moore, Paddy Meade, Maria Murphy, Alan Tobin** and **Alan Lawes**. Matters raised included:

**Housing:** Aylesbury development, age-friendly housing, Mill Race development.

**Planning:** Enforcement.

**Climate:** Engagement with OPW, Leaf Mould Project.

**Libraries:** Graveyard records.

Responses were provided by Fiona Fallon, Pdraig Maguire and Barry Lynch.

#### 6.2 Report from Corporate Policy Group

The Meetings Administrator noted that the CPG met on Monday, November 26, to review the draft agenda and arrangements for the December Council Meeting. She noted that the members had reviewed the Annual Elected Members Training Programme, the Draft SPC Standing Orders, and the Draft Municipal District Allocation Scheme. Finally, the Conference and Training Schedules were approved and circulated.



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### **7.0 Correspondence**

None.

### **8.0 Notice of Question**

#### **8.1 Submitted by Councillor Ronan Moore**

*"To ask the council to list what measures are being taken to strengthen our emergency mitigation and preparedness to respond to sudden emergencies such as the risk of flood?"*

#### **Response**

MD Engineers, GSSs and outdoor crews have a high level of emergency preparedness, this is achieved through regular training and specific risk assessments, every response is assessed using available data and information and is treated as a dynamic event. Information is communicated regularly from staff on the ground to MD Engineers, Senior Executive Engineers and Senior Engineer, this in turn is communicated to relevant Senior Management and Communications Team. Specific weather and safety advice relevant to Meath is communicated through social media.

If a severe weather event is developing the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management schedule a meeting with local authorities and other stakeholders. These meetings outline the developing weather event and the impacts it may bring, these meeting can occur on a daily basis (including weekends) in advance and during the severe weather events. The Operations team also use other data available through Met Eireann, OPW, etc. to assess water levels, tides, storm surges, etc. to allow a fully informed response on the ground.

In preparation for a rainfall severe weather event, 4 large sized pumps are on long term lease to Meath County Council and stored in Laytown Bettystown MD, these can be quickly deployed and come with both rigid and lay-flat hoses, pumps are regularly tested to ensure they are in good working order. Additionally, a minimum of 3,500 sandbags are kept in stock across the county with 1,000 of these stored in the Laytown Bettystown District. These are checked on a regular basis to ensure they are in good condition and replaced as necessary. As was the case in a 2023 flooding event, crews from other MDs can be deployed to the flooding/emergency area to assist on-site crews and allow rest periods. In October, a specific flooding workshop was undertaken with all the outdoor staff in Laytown Bettystown MD, this reviewed the previous flooding mechanisms, the location of pumps and gave staff an opportunity to relay local knowledge that may be beneficial for future flooding events.

As part of the Major Emergency Management Plan, currently being updated, a Severe Weather Emergency Sub-Plan outlines standard operational procedures to deal with emergencies arising from Flooding, Severe Frost/Heavy Snow, Storm

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Winds, Heatwave and Forest Fires. Key operational staff are involved in the preparation of same.

Noted by the Elected Members.

### **9.0 Notice of Motion**

#### **9.1 Submitted by Councillor Ronan Moore**

*"To call on the council to consider ways to increase the level of support given to Community First Responder Groups in the county, in recognition of the role they play in providing life-saving interventions to residents of County Meath."*

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

First Responder teams are run by volunteers with support from the **National Ambulance Service (NAS)**. The NAS provides the following supports to integrated First Responder Schemes:

- Effective Liaison
- Recognition
- Provision of expert advice and support
- Clinical Guidance
- Clinical Indemnity
- Replacement of Consumables
- Access to Critical Incident Stress Management Support
- Management of Clinical Waste

Full details of the support provided by the NAS and how to establish a First Responder teams are available on [Becomeacfr.ie](http://Becomeacfr.ie) | [National Ambulance Service – Community First Responders](http://National Ambulance Service – Community First Responders)

Community First Responder Schemes are completely voluntary groups. All the commitment, training, fund raising is carried out by the volunteers, living in communities, in their own time and at their own expense.

First Responder teams set up in the County or new teams planning on setting up are welcome to apply for grants from the Council such as community grants and the LCDC local enhancement programme for example for the purchase of AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators) and training equipment. Grant schemes will open for applications in early 2025. There is no central funding available.

**Councillor Ronan Moore** introduced the Motion and commended the work of the voluntary Community First Responders. There were interventions from **Councillors Gerry O'Connor, Fionnan Blake, Alan Tobin, Maria Murphy, Pdraig Coffey** and **Brian Fitzgerald**. The members commended



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the work of Community First Responders and acknowledged that funding applications under the Community Grant Scheme would be considered.

The motion, together with supporting information, proposed by **Councillor Ronan Moore** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Bonner** was agreed.

### **9.2 Submitted by Councillor Helen Meyer and Councillor Alan Tobin**

*“To introduce an immediate ban on the use of weed killer containing glyphosate for the year 2025 by Meath County council and all local authority contractors with a review in Nov/Dec 2025 to assess if it is feasible for the council to introduce a permanent ban.”*

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

Meath County Council is continually working towards more eco-friendly methods of weed control, including the mechanical removal of weeds, pesticide products that contain chemicals that are kinder to the environment, and methods such as the use of a hot foam spray. These methods are more labour intensive and weed re-growth occurs sooner than with the use of more effective weed killers, such as those containing glyphosate. The use of pesticides containing glyphosate is the most suitable in some situations, such as the elimination of invasive species like Japanese Knotweed. Meath County Council is in compliance with EU regulations in relation to pesticide use.

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Helen Meyer**. There were interventions from **Councillors Alan Tobin, Helen Meyer, Paddy Meade, Alan Lawes and Francis Deane**. There was a mixed response to the motion and it was noted that the Council is in compliance with EU regulations in relation to pesticide use.

The Elected Members agreed to defer the matter to the Transportation SPC. **Councillors Joe Bonner** and **Paddy Meade** dissented.

### **10.0 General Interest Motions**

None.

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

- 11.1 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Transportation
- 11.2 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Environment
- 11.3 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Housing

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11.4 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Community & Enterprise

Noted by the Elected Members

### **12.0 Any Other Business**

**Councillor Peter Caffrey** reminded the Elected Members of their requirement to switch off mobile phones during the Council meeting.

The meeting concluded at 4.50pm.