



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council



Tuarascáil Bhliantúil *Annual Report*

2004



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INTRODUCTION

Message from An Cathaoirleach

It was my privilege to be elected Cathaoirleach of Meath County Council in June 2004, for the first year of the newly elected council.

The Local Elections were a highlight in the council's 2004 calendar and proved to be both a joyous and sad occasion for some. Inevitably there were changes and some long-serving members, who had served Meath County Council for a number of years, were disappointed at the polls. Eleven new and vibrant members emerged who have already shown their enthusiasm and commitment to their new roles as public representatives.

I look forward to working with the new council over the coming five years on the advancement of many projects, including the feasibility study into the reinstatement of a railway line between Clonsilla and Dunboyne/M3. This project, along with the construction of the M3 Motorway, is a vital component for the economic development of our county and the improvement in the quality of life for many young Meath families currently commuting to work on a daily basis.

I thank my predecessor, Councillor Oliver Brooks, who was completely dedicated to the office of Cathaoirleach and who did a wonderful job over the previous twelve months. I also extend my sincerest thanks to the County Manager Tom Dowling and his staff who continue to support and assist me in my role as Cathaoirleach.

Cllr Tommy Reilly
Cathaoirleach

Message from County Manager

This is the first Annual Report of the newly elected council and I welcome this opportunity to set out details of the council's performance and significant achievements during 2004.

Like all local authorities, Meath County Council's performance is now measurable in the context of national service indicators. These indicators cover a range of areas including housing, planning, environmental services, roads, motor tax, libraries, arts and culture, recreational services, revenue collection and corporate issues. I am confident that the information provided through these indicators will prove invaluable to us in making further improvements to the quality of our services.

Meath County Council members, management and staff are focused and committed to making a real and positive difference to County Meath. We are conscious of the many challenges that we face particularly the need to grow our economic development



capacity and to ensure that we have the infrastructural services in place to facilitate the balanced growth of the county.

We are also conscious of our existing communities and we will continue to support their needs into the future.

Tom Dowling
County Manager



ABOUT US

Introduction

County Meath is located in the East Midlands of Ireland and occupies an area of 234,490 hectares. Its present population is estimated at 133,936. The physical landscape of the County ranges from a short coastline of 12km in the East to tracts of peatland and raised bog in the South West, rolling Drumlin Hills in the North and the rich pastures of the Boyne and Blackwater Valleys. County Meath is perhaps best known for its large number of intact passage tombs, in particular those at Newgrange, Knowth, Dowth and Lough Crew.

Local Authorities were established in 1899 following the passing of the 1898 Local Government (Ireland) Act. Local Government was given constitutional recognition in 1999.

Meath County Council is the primary unit of Local Government in County Meath

There are 29 members on the Council. Members are directly elected by the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.

There are three Town Councils within the functional area of Meath County Council: Kells, Navan and Trim. There are nine members on each Town Council and these are also directly elected.

The functions of Meath Local Authorities are divided into reserved and executive functions.

- ◆ **Reserved functions** are discharged by the elected members and involve important matters of policy including the adoption of the Annual Budget, the borrowing of money, the making of Development Plans and By-laws, adopting building programmes etc.
- ◆ **Executive functions** are performed by the County Manager and include the employment of staff, property management, planning decisions and the day to day administration of the Council affairs

Meath Local Authorities employ over 800 staff.

Members of Meath County Council

Electoral Area	Name
Kells	Eugene Cassidy
	Liz McCormack
	John V. Farrelly
	Michael Gallagher
	Michael Lynch
	Bryan Reilly



Electoral Area	Name
Navan	Alison Boyle
	Shane Cassells
	Jenny D'Arcy
	Patrick Fitzsimons
	Jim Holloway
	Patsy O'Neill
	Joe Reilly
	Tommy Reilly

Electoral Area	Name
Slane	Patrick Boshell
	Jimmy Cudden
	Ann Dillion-Gallagher
	Dominic Hannigan
	Tom Kelly

Electoral Area	Name
Trim	Philip Cantwell
	William Carey
	Jimmy Fegan
	Peter Higgins
	Seamus Murray

Electoral Area	Name
Dunshaughlin	Charles Bobbett
	Joseph Bonner
	Oliver Brooks
	Brian Fitzgerald
	Nick Killian
	John Fanning

**Committees of the Council**

The Charlton Endowment Committee	Mid-East Regional Authority	The Dublin Transport Office Advisory
Cllr Michael Lynch	Cllr Alison Boyle	Cllr Oliver Brooks
Cllr Bryan Reilly	Cllr Brian Fitzgerald	Cllr Charles Bobbett
	Cllr Patsy O'Neill	
	Cllr Jim Holloway	
	Cllr Jimmy Fegan	
	Cllr Michael Lynch	
	Cllr Tommy Reilly	

General Council of County Councils	Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurance Company Ltd	The Local Authority Members Association
Cllr William Carey	Cllr. Shane Cassells	Cllr Jimmy Cudden
Cllr Jimmy Fegan		

The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative	Meath County Enterprise Board	Meath Leader II
Cllr Jenny D'Arcy	Cllr Patrick Boshell	Cllr Patsy O'Neill
Cllr Alison Boyle	Cllr Eugene Cassidy	Cllr Dominic Hannigan
Cllr Anne Dillon-Gallagher	Cllr Noel Leonard	
Cllr Tommy Reilly	Cllr Seamus Murray	
Cllr Noel Leonard		

Meath Local Sports Partnership	Mid East Regional Tourism Organisation	Navan Enterprise Centre Company Ltd
Cllr Tommy Reilly	Cllr John V. Farrelly	Cllr Jim Holloway
Cllr John V. Farrelly		Cllr Shane Cassells
		Cllr Tommy Reilly



Regional Advisory Council Teagasc	Rural Water Monitoring Committee	Tara Mines Environmental Monitoring
Cllr Seamus Murray	Cllr Eugene Cassidy	Cllr Alison Boyle
	Cllr Michael Lynch	Cllr Jim Holloway
	Cllr Noel Leonard	Cllr Joe Reilly
	Cllr Anne Dillon-Gallagher	Cllr Patsy O'Neill
	Cllr Seamus Murray	Cllr Phillip Cantwell
		Cllr Shane Cassells
		Cllr. Tommy Reilly

Meath VEC	Meath Energy Management Agency	Library Advisory
Cllr Bryan Reilly	Cllr Patsy O'Neill	Cllr Patrick Boshell
Cllr Patrick Boshell	Cllr Tom Kelly	Cllr Tom Kelly
Cllr Tommy Reilly	Cllr Michael Gallagher	Cllr Michael Gallagher
Cllr Seamus Murray		
Cllr Nick Killian		
Cllr Jenny D'Arcy		
Cllr Charles Bobbett		
Cllr Dominic Hannigan		
Cllr Joe Reilly		

Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly	Protocol Committee	CPG
Cllr Michael Lynch	Cllr Alison Boyle	Cllr Tommy Reilly
Cllr Jim Holloway	Cllr Bryan Reilly	Cllr Oliver Brooks
	Cllr Tommy Reilly	Cllr Nick Killian
	Cllr Seamus Murray	Cllr Patsy O'Neill
	Cllr Patsy O'Neill	Cllr Dominic Hannigan
	Cllr Willie Carey	
	Cllr Tom Kelly	
	Cllr Jimmy Cudden	



Strategic Policy Committees

Social Community & Cultural Development				
Representing	Title	Firstname	Surname	Position
Meath Co.Co	Cllr	Nick	Killian	Chairperson
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Seamus	Murray	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Jenny	D'Arcy	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Eugene	Cassidy	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Philip	Cantwell	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Jimmy	Cudden	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Trevor	Golden	
Community/Voluntary	Cllr	Maureen	Kerrigan	
Trade Union	Mr	Brendan	Conway	
Community/Voluntary	Mr	James	Doorey	
Community/Voluntary	Ms	Patricia	O'Hehir	

Infrastructural Development				
Representing	Title	Firstname	Surname	Position
Meath Co.Co	Cllr	Oliver	Brooks	Chairperson
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Noel	Leonard	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Shane	Cassells	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Jimmy	Fegan	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Charles	Bobbett	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	William	Carey	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Michael	Gallagher	
Navan Town Council	Cllr	Andy	Brennan	
Business/Commercial	Mr	John	Maguire	
Agriculture/Farming	Mr	Seamus	Magee	
Business/Commercial	Mr	Eamon	Gavigan	
Community/Voluntary	Mr	Miriam	McKenna	



Environmental				
Representing	Title	Firstname	Surname	Position
Meath Co.Co	Cllr	Patsy	O'Neill	Chairperson
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Michael	Lynch	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Liz	McCormack	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Peter	Higgins	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Joseph	Bonner	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Ann	Dillon-Gallagher	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Tom	Kelly	
Kells Town Council	Cllr	Brian	Collins	
Community/ Voluntary	Dr	Don	MacAuley	
Farming	Mr	Eddie	Downey	
Community/ Voluntary	Mr	Pat	O' Brien	

Planning & Economic Development				
Representing	Title	Firstname	Surname	Position
Meath Co.Co	Cllr	Dominic	Hannigan	Chairperson
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Bryan	Reilly	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Tommy	Reilly	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	John V	Farrelly	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Jim	Holloway	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Brian	Fitzgerald	
Meath Co.Co.	Cllr	Joe	Reilly	
Business/ Commercial	Mr	Sean	Boyle	
Agriculture/ Farming	Ms	Emer	Dunne	
Community/Voluntary	Mr	Shaun	Lunch	
Trade Union	Ms	Oliver	Reilly	



Conferences

Meath County Council was represented at the following Conferences during the year:

Septic Tanks – The Rural Reality: 29th & 30th January 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Conor Tormey

EU & National Funding – Current Situation & Future Context Implications for Ireland's Region: 30th January 2004

- ◆ Cllr. John Fanning
- ◆ Cllr. Jim Holloway

Renewable Energy, Wexford Tourism: 4th - 6th February 2004

- ◆ Seamus Murray

Spring Seminar 2004 – AMAI: 13th & 14th February 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Jimmy Cudden
- ◆ Cllr. Conor Tormey
- ◆ Cllr. Bryan Reilly
- ◆ Cllr. John Fanning
- ◆ Cllr. Jim Mangan
- ◆ Cllr. Sean Lynch
- ◆ Cllr. Gabriel Cribben
- ◆ Cllr. Patsy O'Neill
- ◆ Cllr. Seamus Murray
- ◆ Cllr. Jimmy Fegan

Growing Tourism Together: 26th & 27th February 2004

- ◆ Conor Tormey

15th Colmcille Winter School: 27th – 29th February 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Tommy Reilly
- ◆ Cllr. Seamus Murray
- ◆ Cllr. Jim Holloway

Kerry Environmental Conference: 3rd - 6th March 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Tommy Reilly
- ◆ Cllr. Conor Tormey
- ◆ Cllr. Patsy O'Neill
- ◆ Cllr. Jimmy Fegan
- ◆ Cllr. Seamus Murray
- ◆ Cllr. Nick Killian
- ◆ Cllr. James Mangan



General Council of County Councils: 11th - 13th March 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Willie Carey
- ◆ Cllr. Ann Dillon-Gallagher
- ◆ Cllr. Paddy Fizzsimons
- ◆ Cllr. Jim Holloway
- ◆ Cllr. Conor Tormey

Rural Communities & their Needs: 18th - 19th March 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Jimmy Cudden

Role of Public Representatives Today: 18th - 21st March 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Damien English
- ◆ Cllr. Jim Holloway
- ◆ Cllr. Tommy Reilly
- ◆ Cllr. Jimmy Fegan

Partnership & Participation The Perils & The Possibilities: 25th - 26th March 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Tommy Reilly
- ◆ Cllr. James Mangan
- ◆ Cllr. Oliver Brooks

Annual Conference NEHB: 26th - 27th March 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Nick Killian
- ◆ Cllr. Liz Mc Cormack

21st Annual Conference - LAMA : 15th - 16th April 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Jimmy Fegan
- ◆ Cllr. Willie Carey
- ◆ Cllr. Ann Dillon Gallagher
- ◆ Cllr. Jimmy Cudden
- ◆ Cllr. Hugh Gough
- ◆ Cllr. Tommy Reilly
- ◆ Cllr. Gabriel Cribben
- ◆ Cllr. James Mangan

Protecting our Natural Heritage: What Will Be Our Legacy: 22nd - 23rd April 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Jim Holloway
- ◆ Cllr. Hugh Gough

**PRELUDE Challenge Conference – Clustering Digital Innovation in EU Regions:
13th - 14th April 2004**

- ◆ Cllr. Patrick Fitzsimons



Showcase in Public Service Excellence: 14th July 2004

- ◆ Anne Dillon-Gallagher

The Writer & The State: 16th -18th July 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Nick Killian
- ◆ Cllr. Oliver Brooks
- ◆ Cllr. Dominic Hannigan

The Powers & Functions of Local Government, North & South: 1st September 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Dominic Hannigan

Drogheda Cross Border Focus Conference, "The Good Friday Agreement – Where to now? 23rd - 25th September 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Tommy Reilly

Managing the Water Environment: 24th - 25th September 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Oliver Brooks

Local Government Workshop: 24th September 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Willie Carey

Getting A Grip 2004: 30th September - 1st October 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Ann Dillon Gallagher

Joining Across the Water: 7th - 8th October 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Willie Carey

Local Political Leadership...the magic ingredient for "real" Community Development: 14th - 16th October 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Jimmy Cudden
- ◆ Cllr. Charles Bobbett

Sixth National Environment Conference: 20th - 21st October 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Nick Killian

Managing Local Economic Development: 20th - 21st October 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Willie Carey

Understanding Local Government Budget: 22nd - 23rd October 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Michael Gallagher
- ◆ Cllr. Seamus Murray



Objective1 Has Balanced Regional Development been Achieved: 28th October 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Jimmy Cudden

The Future of Regional Policy Post 2006: 28th - 29th October 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Michael Lynch

Role of the Elected Member: 29th - 30th October 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Nick Killian

Implementing the Spatial Strategy in the North East Region Dundalk: 5th November 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Tom Kelly

Annual Winter Conference – LAMA: 12th - 13th November 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Willie Carey

AOIFE Annual Conference 2004: 12th - 14th November 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Charles Bobbett
- ◆ Cllr. Patsy O’Neill

Conservation through Collaboration: 17th October 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Patsy O’Neill

Schools Based Interventions in Crisis Management & Suicide Prevention: 25th - 26th November 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Ann Dillon-Gallagher
- ◆ Cllr. Patsy O’Neill

Tourism: A Relationship Business: 25th - 27th November 2004

- ◆ Cllr. Willie Carey
- ◆ Cllr. Jimmy Cudden



INFRASTRUCTURE

Roads

Major Roads Completed / In Progress 2004

N2 Ashbourne Bypass / M50 Junction

Works commenced in May 2004 to realign the N2 from the M50 at Finglas to North of Ashbourne to dual carriageway standard

R154 Kiltale to Scurlockstown

Works substantially completed to realign 4.5km of the Trim to Dublin Road

R158 Trim / Summerhill / Kilcock

Phase 1 From Trim to Summerhill is under construction and due for completion in 2006.

R150 Duleek / Julianstown

Phase 1 From Duleek to Kilsharvan is under construction and due for completion in 2005

R161 Athlumney Phase 2 Bridge over River Boyne at the N3

Phase 1 Works in progress on section of road at Balreask Cross, Navan

R154 Trim to Dublin Improvement Scheme (Effernock)

Work in Progress

R153 Navan to Balrath

At Design Stage

Rathcairn Village Improvements

Works completed

Watergate Bridge, Trim

Works on replacement of the old bridge with new steel arched bridge completed and officially opened on 17th Sept '04 by Minister Noel Dempsey.

Sheephouse to Duleek via Donore

Road Improvements in progress

N51 Athboy

Remedial Works completed



Pavement and Improvement works were also carried out at the following locations:

- ◆ N2 Glassallen
- ◆ N2 Baltrasna to Wotton
- ◆ N51 County Boundary to Higginstown
- ◆ N51 Athboy to Castletown
- ◆ N52 Carlanstown
- ◆ N52 Carlanstown to Stephenstown
- ◆ N51 Carrickdexter to Castleparks

Major Schemes at Planning / Design Stage

M3 Clonee / South of Virginia Bypass

Motorway approved by An Bord Pleanála in August 2003. Land Acquisitions and archaeological surveys have commenced

Slane Bypass

Preferred route on display

R158 Trim / Summerhill / Kilcock

Phase 2 From Summerhill to Kilcock is at design stage. Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to be prepared.

R150 Duleek / Julianstown

Phase 2 From Kilsharvan to Julianstown is at design stage. CPO to be prepared.

R161 Phase 2 Rathnally to Balreask Old, Navan

At Design Stage

Quality Bus Network at Dunshaughlin

At Tender Stage. Works expected to commence in 2005

County and Regional Roads

In 2004 substantial funds were spent strengthening, surfacing and maintaining the County and Regional Road Network in accordance with the Annual Roadworks Programme as adopted by the Council. Under this programme grants totalling €9.9m were received from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for specific non-national roads to support housing and other related development. These schemes which are referred to above were progressed in 2004. The Council also operates a Community Involvement Scheme whereby residents make a contribution of 40% to 50% of the total costs of having low priority Class 3 Roads reconstructed.



County Meath Roads	Km	Miles
National Primary Roads	122	79
National Secondary Roads	77	48
Regional Roads	475	297
County Roads	2,445	1,528

Sanitary Services

Meath County Council's Sanitary Services Programme consists of:

- ◆ Major Capital Investment Programme
- ◆ Rural Water Programme
- ◆ Serviced Land Initiative Programme

Schemes Completed / Under Construction in 2004

Ballivor Sewerage Scheme.

This scheme commenced in April 2003. Works are due to be completed by mid 2005, at an estimated cost of €5m.

Dunshaughlin Sewerage Major Scheme

This is part funded by the National Development Plan (NDP) and the European Regional Development Fund. The scheme comprises of four different contracts as follows:

- ◆ **Contract 1** - Works commenced in January 2003 and the contract was completed in March 2004 at an estimated cost of €6.6m.
- ◆ **Contract 1A** - (Trunk Sewer from Dunshaughlin to Treatment Plant at Castletown, Tara). Works ongoing and due for completion in October 2005.
- ◆ **Contract 2-** (Wastewater Treatment Works)-Works commenced in February 2003. Estimated Completion date is mid 2005.
- ◆ **Contract 3** - Works commenced in February 2003. Estimated completion date is mid 2005. The estimated cost of the four contracts is €27 million.

◆

Longwood Sewerage Scheme

This scheme commenced in January 2004. Works are due for completion in June 2005, at an estimated cost of €3.2m.

Navan Asbestos Cement Mains Replacement Phase 1

This scheme commenced in May 2004. Works are due for completion at the end of April 2005, at an estimated cost of €1.6m.

Enfield Sewerage Scheme Stage 2- Network Upgrade

This scheme commenced in October 2004 and it involves the upgrade of the sewer network and the provision of 1 No wastewater pumping station. Works are due for completion in July 2005, at an estimated cost of €1.7m



Schemes at Planning/Design Stage

Dunshaughlin Major Water Supply Scheme

Preliminary report prepared and forwarded to the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government for approval in December 2004.

Summerhill Water Supply

Tender reports being prepared and scheme to commence in 2005.

East Meath, Drogheda and South Louth Water Supply Scheme

Preliminary report completed and forwarded to the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government for approval in October 2004.

Major Grouped Wastewater Scheme

Treatment Systems for Duleek, Summerhill, Kilmainhamwood, Moynalty, Donore, Athboy, Rathcairn and Rathmolyon under the Design Build Operate procedure proposed. Contract documents for treatment plants forwarded to the DoEHLG in June 2004 for approval

Johnstown/Kilcarn Sewerage Scheme

Scheme at design stage. Part VIII advertised in November 2004. Scheme to commence in 2005.

Navan & Mid Meath Water Supply

Provisional Order for Abstraction at Ballinter (near Navan) came into effect on the 8th September 2003. Preliminary report being prepared by the consulting engineers.

Navan Asbestos Cement Mains Replacement Phase 2

Scheme at design stage. Scheme to commence in 2005.

Rural Water Programme

Works were carried out on the following schemes in 2004:

- ◆ Kells Water Supply Improvements: New Water Treatment Plant at Clavin's Bridge.
- ◆ Navan Water Supply: Improvement Works at Liscarton & Proudstown in progress.
- ◆ Dunshaughlin Water Supply Interim Scheme: Works in progress.
- ◆ Slane Water Supply Improvement: Works in progress.
- ◆ Hill of Tara, Navan: Installation of new Wastewater Treatment Facilities in progress.

Schemes at Planning Stage

- ◆ Drumconrath Water Supply
- ◆ Enfield Water Supply Improvements



Group Water Schemes

Meath Hill GWS: Works continued in 2004 on the provision of a new reservoir, improvements to bore hole site and network improvements.

Kiltale GWS: Provision of a new treatment plant at tender stage.

In addition 9 new group schemes were established in 2004 as extensions to public mains supplies.

Special Projects

Major Schemes in Progress 2004

- ◆ Meath Arts Centre, Navan

The development of the 320 seat theatre commenced in August 2004. The estimated cost of the project is €11m. Expected completion date is November/December 2005

Major Schemes Completed in 2004

- ◆ Trim Civic Amenity Site
- ◆ Construction work completed on Trim Recycling Centre mid 2004 at a cost of €0.5m approximately.

Major Schemes at Planning Stage 2004

- ◆ Kennedy Road Civic Space, Navan
Part VIII Planning Approval obtained in December 2003. Oral Hearing for CPO held in November 2004.
- ◆ Public Park, Navan
This proposed scheme will cater for passive recreation (pedestrian footpaths through tree lined avenues, wildflower meadowed land, formal gardens, woodland area, tea rooms, viewing and seating area) and active recreation (football pitches, playground and informal concert area). Landscape consultants appointed in early 2004 to design the park. Environmental Impact Statement submitted to An Bord Pleanála in November 2004.
- ◆ Development of Fairgreen, Navan
Feasibility report for development of the Fairgreen area under consideration by Navan Town Council.



COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE

Meath County Development Board

Meath County Development Board

In 2004 Meath County Development Board commenced the review of its ten year strategy, *Le Chéile – An Integrated Strategy for Meath to 2012*. This review was considered an important part of the implementation phase of the strategy in terms of its evaluation and monitoring. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government also announced plans that it would request all County and City Development Boards (CDBs) in the country to review their strategies in 2005.

The purposes of the review include the consideration of any changes in the environment in which the CDB operates that might impact on the work of the Board, the identification of a limited number of priority integrative actions on which the Board would concentrate over a three-year period and a work programme to implement these actions.

The CDB also commissioned an update of its Socio-Economic Profile of County Meath in 2004. The National Institute of Regional and Spatial Analysis in NUI Maynooth began collating the relevant data from a number of sources including the 2002 Census. This information, when complete, will serve as an important information resource that will assist in the future planning for the economic, social and cultural development of our County.

The launch of both documents will take place in June 2005. Meath will be one of the first counties to complete their strategy review.

In 2004, Meath County Development Board met 6 times, including a two-day workshop on the strategy review and a joint mid-east regional meeting in February concerning a joint submission on the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. In November 2004, a complete update on the activities of Meath CDB since its establishment was presented to the Board. This report also informed the review of the strategy.

During 2004, the Community and Enterprise Section of Meath County Council prepared a number of submissions on behalf of Meath CDB. These included submissions regarding the following:

- ◆ The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area
- ◆ The Meath Tourism Strategy
- ◆ M3 – Joint Committee on Transport
- ◆ Improved Cohesion
- ◆ Garda Síochána Policing Plan 2004



Meath Education Forum

In 2004, the Community & Enterprise Section facilitated the establishment of Meath Education Forum, in response to an identified need for progress on a number of education and training related initiatives.

The Forum is made up of representatives from a number of organisations including Meath County Council, County Meath VEC, the Chambers of Commerce, the Higher Education Institutes, Department of Education and Science, ADM funded companies, Meath County Enterprise Board, FÁS, Department of Social and Family Affairs and Meath County Childcare Committee.

The Forum identified a number of initiatives, the first of which was the commissioning of an Education and Training Audit for County Meath. It is intended that this audit will identify the education and training facilities and services available to the people of County Meath. It will identify gaps and duplication and recommend initiatives for the short, medium and long term. This audit is considered vital in ensuring the provision of quality childcare, primary and post-primary education; in the development of higher level education in County Meath; in the development of linkages between education and industry; and in the successful promotion of Meath as a superior location of investment. The work commenced in 2004 and will be completed in 2005.

In 2004, a Business Plan for the implementation of the Higher Level Education Strategy for County Meath was prepared and a research student was taken on to prepare a study on how the strategy could be progressed in the short-term. These pieces of work are vital in the progression of the strategy and the next phase is the securing of funding. In May 2004, Meath County Council adopted the Business Plan and the strategy was discussed in terms of its importance to the future development of the County.

Community Development

Community & Voluntary Sector Database

In 2004, the Community & Enterprise Section of Meath County Council continued to encourage community & voluntary groups to register on its database. Nearly 650 groups are registered and these groups are regularly contacted with details of projects and initiatives being run by Meath County Council, Meath Community Forum, other state agencies. Registered groups are also eligible to nominate and vote in the election of Community & Voluntary Sector Representatives. Following the Local Elections in June 2004, the process for this election commenced. There are thirteen positions available to the C&V Sector on Meath CDB (2), the four Strategic Policy Committees of Meath County Council (7), Meath County Childcare Committee (1), Meath Local Sports Partnership (1) and the North East Regional Drugs Task Force (2).

These representatives, along with committee members from the active Area Fora, form a Steering Group that oversees the activities of the County Community Forum. A set of guidelines was prepared in 2004 for the C&V Sector representatives to assist them in their task of representing a wide sector with varied interests. The Community & Enterprise Section continues to support these representatives and the County and Area Community Fora.



Community Fora

Meath County Community Forum & Electoral Area Community Fora

In April 2004, Meath Community Forum, in conjunction with the North Eastern Health Board, hosted a public information meeting on the Regional Drugs Task Force.

In 2004, Navan and South Meath (Trim) Forum made considerable progress whilst efforts were made to re-establish community fora in the Slane, Dunshaughlin and Kells electoral areas. A survey of registered groups in these areas was undertaken in early 2004 and following on from this, a series of meetings was held in these areas.

Despite the support of County Meath VEC and representatives from South Meath and Navan Fora however, local support was not evident in either Dunshaughlin or Kells. However, a committee was formed in the Slane Electoral Area and plans are in place to progress the forum there in 2005.

Each of the active fora receives a small annual grant from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, channeled by the Community & Enterprise Section, Meath County Council and for which they must submit a Work Programme and Activity Report.

Navan Area Community Forum

In 2004, Navan Forum held its AGM, a new committee was elected and the Forum was involved in a number of projects, including:

- ◆ Meet & Greet Day in conjunction with Navan Chamber of Commerce
- ◆ Launch of Mental Health Card, in conjunction with Meath Suicide Awareness Group
- ◆ NAF Summer Camp, in association with a number of agencies
- ◆ Multi-Cultural Fun Day, in association with a number of agencies
- ◆ The Navan Branch of Dyslexia Association of Ireland, established with the support of Navan Forum, continued to develop during 2004.

South Meath (Trim Area) Community Forum

- ◆ South Meath Community Forum, having renamed the Forum, has concentrated on capacity building of the forum representatives and has spent a lot of time working with a facilitator on strengthening the Forum and agreeing a progressive way forward. The forum has developed aims and objectives and a defined work plan is now in place.
- ◆ The Forum also held a series of meetings on matters of public interest, e.g. Ms. Bernadine Carry Meath County Council spoke about Environmental Issues and the Pride of Place Initiative and there were several meetings with insurance companies to negotiate a discounted premium for affiliated members.
- ◆ The Forum also gave financial support to the Training for Transformation Programme.
- ◆ The Forum meets approximately 6 times per year and meetings are scheduled 12 months in advance. Meeting venues are rotated around the electoral area and the Forum feels that this system works best for them.



Community Promotion

The Community & Enterprise Section of Meath County Council has endeavoured to facilitate information exchange to and between communities through a variety of media. The initiatives undertaken have proven successful and it is intended to continue, and where possible extend, efforts in this regard. Many of the initiatives below have been supported by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government through its grant aid for the support of community fora and development.

Community Newsletter

In 2004, two issues of the community newsletter, Community Matters, was produced and circulated. Each of the CDB member organisations is invited to submit relevant articles for inclusion where these articles are of general community interest. Each issue is circulated to every household and business address in County Meath, with a total circulation of 50,000. This initiative is a very positive initiative with a wide range of information for different sectors of the community.

Radio Promotion

In 2004, the Community & Enterprise and Corporate Services Section of the council joined together in hosting a series of 12 programmes on LMFm that highlighted areas of Council activity of interest to the community. These areas included the Pride of Place Initiatives, environmental awareness, motor taxation, the Higher Education Grants, housing schemes, libraries, arts and the Meath Local Sports Partnership. In each programme, a community group was given the opportunity to promote their activities. It is hoped to run a similar initiative in 2005.

Community IT Development

◆ 'Communities Online Together'

In 2004, the Communities Online Together (COT) Initiative – a partnership initiative between the Community & Enterprise and IT Sections of Meath County Council – continued to grow in popularity. Over 180 community and voluntary groups had registered to participate with over 120 having received their training and/or operating their own sites. Plans were put in place to extend this initiative to all schools in the county, to link in with the Governments' plans for broadband connectivity for schools.

◆ Community Section of www.meath.ie

The Meath County Council website – meath.ie – includes a Community Section that contains information of general community interest including Council community initiatives, initiatives being run by other organisations, local information and events, community representation, etc. This links closely with the sites established under COT as events and other information are featured on both sites.

◆ Group Broadband Scheme

In October 2004, the Community & Enterprise and IT Sections hosted a Public Information Meeting on the Group Broadband Scheme, which was being administered by the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources. The purpose of the meeting was to inform community groups of the scheme which is intended to promote the roll-out of broadband to smaller towns, villages and rural hinterlands which have previously been under-served. The new



Minister of Communications, Mr. Noel Dempsey, T.D., attended the meeting as his first public appearance in his new portfolio. Over 120 people attended where a number of Broadband Internet Service Providers (BISPs) were also available to give advice and assistance.

◆ **Community IT Development Officer**

In August 2004, Meath County Council appointed a Community IT Development Officer who is responsible for developing a number of initiatives including COT, the community section of meath.ie, the preparation of a community IT development strategy, the schools online initiative, etc.

Social Inclusion

County Development Board - Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) Group

- ◆ In January 2004, a one-day workshop was held focusing on the elderly and people with disabilities. 90-100 people attended the event, 90% of whom were people with disabilities and/or older people.
- ◆ In June 2004, the SIM Group was involved in the organisation of a 'Young at Heart' inter-generational concert.
- ◆ The SIM group is also involved in a multi-culturalism project with other agencies and voluntary bodies in Meath. The aim of the project is to enhance the social integration of the many newcomers to our country and to provide an opportunity for different nationalities to meet, make new friends, network and learn a little about each others cultural differences and similarities.

The first event to be organised under the project was a "Mini World Cup and Family Fun day" on 17th July 2004. Approximately 250 – 300 people attended the event. An organising committee comprising Meath CDB, Meath County Council, RAPID, Meath Local Sports Partnership, Meath Citizens Information Service, County Meath VEC, Cultúr, and the African Community Committee hosted a hugely successful event in Claremont Stadium which brought together Meath residents from all corners of the globe, from Bosnia to Bohermeen, in a celebration of the international game of soccer, and world culture. The event also included performances of music, song, dance and drama with childrens entertainment.

The event has been hailed as a great success with plans afoot for a bigger event next year and a similar event is planned in 2005.

CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Ard Riachtanais)

CLÁR is the rural version of RAPID, however the approach differs radically from RAPID in the urban areas because the problems are different. The CLÁR areas were selected on the basis of population decline between 1926 and 1996. CLÁR operates through two basic instruments, (i) reprioritising of investments under the NDP to ensure that these areas get priority of investments under the Plan and (ii) a IR£20m dedicated fund over two years (2002-2003) to provide matching funding to Government Departments and other State Agencies for special projects, including some not included in the NDP, which are urgently needed for rural development. Only one DED in Meath came under the CLÁR initiative, Killeagh in North Meath. Several meetings facilitated by North Meath Communities Development Association and Meath County Council were held



with the local communities and Leader. To date Meath has received €130,000 under CLÁR funding.

Youth

Youth Task Group

- ◆ In February 2004, the Youth Task Group hosted a County - Wide Youth Seminar, which was attended by 30 young people from County Meath aged between 14 and 18 years who discussed the merits of setting up a permanent structure, e.g. a Junior Youth Council to address various youth issues in the county.
- ◆ The young people also had the opportunity to conduct a question and answers session with a local TD, the Mayor of Navan and Meath County Manager.
- ◆ This group of young people has met subsequently and plans are afoot to establish a Meath Junior Youth Council.
- ◆ The group is also keen to establish a web presence through Meath County Council's Communities OnLine Together Initiative.

Comhairle na nÓg/Dáil na nÓg

- ◆ Comhairle na nÓg - Further to the recommendations set by the National Children's Office, Meath County Development Board consulted with young people in the county through a local Comhairle na nÓg, facilitated by the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.
- ◆ In February 2004, in association with the Aisling Group, approximately 60 young people participated in the Comhairle na nÓg.
- ◆ Dáil na nÓg - In March 2004, 6 young people from Meath were selected from Comhairle na nÓg process to represent Meath at the 2004 Dáil na nÓg which took place in Croke Park, Dublin.

Disability

Special Olympics

Special Olympic Awards Ceremony 2004 - This ceremony was attended by 150–200 people to celebrate all the special achievements of people with disabilities in the county including the athletes who took part in the Special Olympics World Summer Games 2003.

Special Olympics Commemorative Stones - To mark the occasion of the Special Olympics World Summer Games 2003 and the contribution made by the Host Town Committee, Meath County Council sponsored commemorative stones and the planting of a tree in each of the six towns. These ceremonies took place during August and September 2004.

Other Initiatives

Improved Cohesion – Local Development & Community Proposals

In 2004, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government requested that CDBs facilitate the process of bringing together local community and



development agencies to identify proposals for the Improvement of Local and Community Development Structures and Programmes through Improved Cohesion.

The Community & Enterprise Section, on behalf of MCDB, brought together the relevant agencies for a series of meetings to discuss the proposals. A submission was prepared by the Community & Enterprise Section and sent to the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in June and a second in October 2004.

A grant of €40,000 from the Department was subsequently allocated to implement a number of proposals contained in the submission, including the commissioning of an audit of local community and development structures, training for frontline staff and options around combined purchasing.

The most important outcome of this request and subsequent process has, without doubt, been the level of discussion, information exchange, co-operation and consensus that has occurred between the participating agencies. The process led to the identification of a number of gaps in service provision and practical proposals to tackle these.

The process has also led to a number of other co-operative initiatives including the submission of an application to EQUAL, whereby a number of agencies came together in a bid to increase investment in training and employment within County Meath, thereby improving the long-term employment prospects of those both within and outside the labour force.

Endorsement of Local Development Agency Plans

Arising from a combined initiative in 2004 of three Government Departments - Justice, Equality & Law Reform; Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs and Environment, Heritage & Local Government, Local Development Agencies are required to submit their annual Work Plans to the CDB for endorsement. The CDB is required to proof these plans to ensure that they complied with the CDB 10-year strategy. The SIM Group will also carry out detailed examination of the plans.

Junior Achievement Programme

In 2004, many of the Community & Enterprise Staff also participated in the Junior Achievement Programme organised through the Human Resources Section of Meath County Council.



Library Services

Continued commitment to the Library Development Plan 2001 – 2005 has resulted in further progress in the areas of reader development, events and the official opening of three new Library buildings.

2004 Highlights included:

Official opening of Ashbourne Library in May 2004

This Library has a total area of 9,500 square feet and incorporates 2 levels housing a large children's area, IT areas for adults and Children which includes thirteen PCs, a Playstation area, a musical keyboard area, 2 events rooms for community groups, study areas and houses the Library's Musical Collection. Ashbourne Library is the largest Library in the county and is the flagship project of the Council's Library Development Plan. The Library was officially opened by the Minister for Education & Science Noel Dempsey.

The Library is joined to the Council's one Stop Shop in the newly developed town centre in Ashbourne. In it's first month of opening the Library registered 2,500 borrowers and housed 11 community groups which included the Scouts, Beavers, Ladybirds, Parent & Toddler group, Ratoath Arts group, and the Community Information group. At the end of 2004 the Ashbourne Library had registered over 50% of the local population. It opens for a total of 45 hours a week and this includes late night opening to 8.30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays and opens every Saturday from 10am – 5pm.

Official Opening of Oldcastle Library in May 2004

Oldcastle Library incorporates 1,400 square feet and this project was completed in partnership with Oldcastle Credit Union. The library is located on the ground floor of the building and has a shared meeting room with the Credit Union to facilitate events which the Library Service is running. It also has four Internet PCs and houses over 8,000 titles. It is open for a total of 30 hours a week and includes late night opening Tuesday and Thursday and all day Saturdays.

Official Opening of Dunboyne Library in May 2004

Dunboyne Library has a total of 3,000 square feet and includes a spacious children's area and has a total of eight Internet PCs for public use. The Library was officially opened by An Cathaoirleach , Councillor Oliver Brooks.

The Library is part of a major new complex, which includes facilities for Rehab Care and the North Eastern Health Board. This new library has over 11,000 items and is open 43 hours a week, with two late evening openings and also opens on Saturday mornings.



Extension of Library Opening hours

Month	Location	Extended Hours	Days
January 2004	Navan	29.5 to 49	6 including Saturday
January 2004	Dunboyne	16 to 43	6 including Saturday
February 2004	Oldcastle	7 to 30	5 including Saturday
March/April 2004	Dunshaughlin	25 to 42	5 including Saturday

- ◆ Average number of public opening hours per week for full time Libraries now 40.16 hours.
- ◆ Average number of public opening hours per week for part-time Libraries now 17 hours per week.

Children's Book Festival October 2004

2004 saw huge developments in the number of activities held in Meath Libraries for this annual national event. This was due to the extra professional staff appointed to the library service in 2003 and led to the formation of an events team to co ordinate larger library events.

The celebrations began with an official opening ceremony at Navan Library, performed by An Cathaoirleach Councillor Tommy Reilly. The Library service organised over 47 events throughout the county libraries to celebrate the festival and all schools in the county were invited to attend events and author visits. Authors visiting Meath Libraries included Darren Shan, Aubrey Flegg, Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick and Kate Thompson.

Other events organised included drama writing workshops, Puppet shows 'as Gaeilge', creative writing workshops and also included colouring competitions for the under fives and the six to eight age groups. For the over eight age groups a cryptic quiz was organised where children had to guess popular book titles from picture clues. Over 2000 children attended these events in the County.

Local Studies

The Local Studies Department of the Library Service organised a number of popular events in 2004 that included:

- ◆ In April the official launch of the Library's Audio book 'Would they were with us again' took place in Trim Library. This publication is the first full length audio book published by a library service in Ireland. Paddy Smith, from The Farming Independent was responsible for the voice of the audio book and spoke at the launch. This is now available in all Meath Libraries for Loan.
- ◆ In September in collaboration with the Library Events Team the Local Studies Department organised a wide range of events to celebrate National Heritage Week. These included sessions from members of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, and book and photograph displays around the county Libraries. Part of the Schools Folklore collection was made available in Ashbourne Library to enable the public access folk stories from the Ashbourne area written by primary school children in the 1930s.



- ◆ A 'Publish and be in demand' workshop was held at Ashbourne Library in December giving information and support to local groups on publishing local history information. Speakers included representatives from local publishers, local authors and our Local Studies Librarian, Frances Tallon. This workshop was so popular it was agreed to run this event annually.
- ◆ In December, in co-operation with the Local Studies Department, the Meath Archaeological and Historical Society organised the launch of a new local studies book for Meath 'The land and people of County Meath 1750 –1850' by Peter Connell in Navan Library which is now available in the Library Service for loan.
- ◆ December also saw the official launch of the national web site 'Ask about Ireland' (www.askaboutireland.ie) The Local Studies Department participated in this initiative run by An Comhairle Leabharlanna (The Library Council) focusing on the following themes: Tobacco growing in Meath, Big Houses of Meath, Thatched Houses of Meath, Dunshaughlin Workhouse

The site can be viewed free of charge in any Meath Libraries.

Libraries and Cultural Diversity

In March Meath County Council Library Service took part in the research project, "Libraries and Cultural Diversity". The focus of this project was to investigate multicultural library service provision internationally and nationally in order to help inform strategic policy planning for the further development of such services in Irish Public Libraries. The project also incorporated the first ever Irish Public Library survey of library usage by foreign nationals.

The Project was commissioned by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna (Library Council of Ireland) and involved three local library authorities, namely Dublin City Council Libraries, Meath County Council Library Services and Waterford City Council Library Services.

The project's aims were to explore how Irish Libraries can provide a better library service to the multicultural society in Ireland today by:

- ◆ Identifying current Library views, attitudes and services to the Multicultural society in Ireland
- ◆ To investigate the existing provision of multicultural library services at international level.
- ◆ To identify and profile the current Irish multicultural society in the three Library counties.
- ◆ To define the library service needs of the identified multicultural society for these areas.
- ◆ To develop and implement a relevant library service for the multicultural society in the three counties taking part in the project.
- ◆ To produce a report of the findings at the end of the project in 2005.



Reader Development:

To promote reader development in the library service a number of book clubs for children and adults were started in 2004. The Library Service wishes to expand this service in 2005 to most of the libraries in the county.

Performance Indicators 2004

Registrations:

With the opening of the new Libraries in the county and the increased opening hours across the branches registrations have increased by 100% on 2002 to 22,500. Ashbourne Library registered 2,500 borrowers in it's first week of opening and by the end of the year had registered over 5,000 borrowers which is over half the population in Ashbourne alone.

Registered users 2004

Number of registered Library members as a % of the local population: 16.75%
Issues: Increase of 70% to 370,000 items

Number of books issued per head of population: 2.59
Number of other items issued per head of population 0.16

Internet Access:

% of Libraries that offer Internet Access: 100%
Number of Internet sessions provided per 1,000 population 368

Arts Services

Children's Artsfest

Once again the 2004 Children's Artsfest, aimed at children from 4 to 12 years, was very successful in terms of access, attendance, geographical spread, quality and diversity of art forms. About 570 children attended workshops and performances, which were held at 11 venues between the 16th to 31st July 2004.

Arts and Older Persons Programme

The Kells Theatre School successfully completed their second year of programming with their annual show in the St. Vincent de Paul Hall, Kells. The School was established in 2001/02, as a pilot project, in response to the demand for structured classes in drama, dance and music in the North Meath area.

Arts and Older Persons Programme

Arising from the successful Bealtaine Programme an Arts and Older Persons



Programme was developed to provide two long-term and one short-term arts initiatives with three Active Age groups: Nobber Friendship Club, Oldcastle Active Retirement Group and Ashbourne and District Senior Citizen's Group.

The Oldcastle programme involved creative drama and writing; the Nobber programme involved Acrylic painting based on childhood memories of the participants. Both of these long-term programmes commenced in October 2003 and ended in May 2004 to coincide with the Bealtaine Festival. Painting was also the art form of the short-term Ashbourne programme, which lasted from March to early June 2004. The aim for all three projects was to provide focused, professional arts programme and an enjoyable arts experience for participants.

In each case the end of the programme was marked by well attended exhibitions of the participants work..

Bealtaine 2004

This year's Bealtaine Festival concentrated on performances by professional performance artists, which were hosted by Active Retirement groups in their own venues and public music performances. They consisted of musical afternoons (performances and workshops) with the Rothko String Trio; theatre with Two Chairs Theatre Company and Tall Tales Theatre Company; a Music Network Young Musicwide concert with pianist Max Levinson and clarinetist Carol McGonnell. The Chester Beatty Library provided a Japanese Cultural Workshop.

Other events included:

- ◆ the launch of the Oldcastle Active Retirement group's publication - 'A Slice of Life' - the result of their programme of improvised drama and creative arts workshop facilitated by Alice Barry of Noggin Theatre Company. It was launched by Cllr Anne Dillon Gallagher, Leas Comhairle of Meath County Council
- ◆ the opening of the Nobber Friendships Club's Exhibition 'Marks Emerging' - the culmination of their 8 month visual arts programme facilitated by artist Noreen Walshe, also launched by Cllr Anne Dillon Gallagher and attended by over 150
- ◆ the opening of the Ashbourne and District Senior Citizen's Group exhibition at the end of their short term visual arts programme, facilitated by artist Aileen Hamilton.

Arts in Education

A short-term drama residency, developed in consultation with the National Association of Youth Drama, took place in September in Beaufort College, Navan, with Alice Barry of Noggin Theatre and additional support facilitators in movement and music. It was designed for transition year students with the aim of building and nurturing a tradition of Youth Theatre within the county to complement the plans for a Youth Theatre outlined in the County Arts Development Plan.

Meath Harp School Music Residency

Phase I and II of this residency consisted of workshops in 'Harping in 17th and 18th Century Ireland' with Kathleen Loughnan; 'The Wire Stung Harp in Ireland' with Siobhan



Armstrong; and development of the Meath Harp Ensemble with Dearbhail Finnegan. All three harpists have had wide national and international acclaim.

Phase III consisted of workshops on 'Caring for and Restringing the Harp' with Dearbhail Finnegan; Irish Traditional Harp Music with Grainne Hambly; and the arrangement of 3 pieces of music with 3 part harmony for ensemble work with weekend teaching of the three pieces by Michael Rooney.

Phase IV workshops were classical music with Cliona Dorris, leading concert harpist in Ireland; technique and conditioning exercises with Aibhlin McGrann; and a chamber music workshop with Cormac de Barra, Ireland's leading male harpist. The sheet music library and resource books continue to be extended.

Arts in Context Training Programme

The aim of this programme was to both develop and enhance the facilitation, project planning, development, evaluation and critical analysis of artists working, or wishing to work, in a community context and to expand the numbers of trained facilitators available for work in the community arts sector in the county. This was an extremely successful programme, receiving praise by both participants and facilitators alike for its content and scope. The programme featured seven days intensive training/interaction with artists and arts consultants drawn from the breadth of contemporary Irish arts practice. The modules included:

- ◆ 'The Role of the Community Arts Worker' with Declan Gorman
- ◆ 'Groupwork and Facilitation' with Maeve McIvor
- ◆ 'Programme Planning and Evaluation' with Marcella Bannon
- ◆ Two modules on 'Youth Arts' with Rebecca Bartlett
- ◆ 'Arts and Disability/Arts and Health' with Helen Blackhurst and
- ◆ 'Evaluation Day', also with Helen Blackhurst.

Festivals and Events

Festivals supported this year were the O'Carolan Harp Festival in Nobber; Le Chéile Contemporary Arts Festival in Oldcastle; Fleadh na Mí, Enfield and the Kells Heritage Festival.

Events included:

- ◆ Oícheanta Áirneán, CCE Ashbourne
- ◆ Young Musicwide concert, Max Levinson and Carol McGonnell in St Mary's C of I Navan in May
- ◆ Two concerts by the Rothko String Trio in Kells and Jullianstown, also in May
- ◆ Jazz concert in Oldcastle featuring the Babatunde Lea Jazz Quartet in October
- ◆ Bare Bodkin's production of Shirley Valentine in Navan in early October
- ◆ Two classical concerts in St Mary's (Craig Ogden, Classical Guitar and the Trio Turner)



Visual Arts Programme

A vigorous visual arts programme was put in place in 2004.

The Toradh Gallery programme for 2004 included exhibitions by the following artists:

- ◆ Theresa MacNamee - photography
- ◆ Anne Darcy - mixed media
- ◆ Liam Fox oils/mixed media
- ◆ Brunswick mill studios - group show
- ◆ Rebecca Hughes - mixed media
- ◆ Siobhan Fitzpatrick - oils
- ◆ Mary Noonan - oils/pencil
- ◆ Anne Mullen-O'Brien - mixed media
- ◆ Geoffrey O'Keefe - acrylic
- ◆ Yvonne Cullivan - mixed media

The Ashbourne Civic Office Exhibition Area was the venue for a number of ad hoc exhibitions in 2004, which included artists Aileen Hamilton, Jean Clyne, Noreen Walshe and Patrick Morris. A charity exhibition of paintings and ceramics by Noreen Walshe and Grainne Wright in November in aid of Temple Street Children's Hospital was officially opened by Actor Brendan Gleeson and was a particular success.

Public Art

Under the Per Cent for Art Scheme four sculptures have now been installed:

- ◆ **Voyager** by *Linda Brunker* at Laytown
- ◆ **Equilibrium** by *Orla de Bri* at the MCC Dunshaughlin Civic Office
- ◆ **Horseshoe Seat** by *Betty Newman Maguire* in Ratoath
- ◆ **Flying a Kite** by *Jarlath Daly* in Bettystown

The selection committee representing the County Councils of Kildare, Meath and Westmeath reached a unanimous decision on the artist/artwork for the Kilcock/Enfield/Kinnegad section of the M4 in 2004. The winning artwork chosen was Enclosure by Cork-born artist John O'Connor. He is a well-regarded and renowned artist, with many public art commissions to his name over the past 5 years.

Meath Arts Centre

Final contracts for the construction of the Meath Arts Centre in Navan were signed in August and building commenced immediately. It is estimated that the centre will be completed in December 2005 and will include a Performance Theatre with seating for 320 people, full fly tower facilities for dance, musical and theatrical productions, café/bar facilities, workshop areas, exhibition space and administration offices.



Professional Arts Development Programme Meath County Council Bi-Annual Arts Grants Scheme:

The Noggin Theatre Company, Oldcastle, brought the successful play Rum 'n Raisin, which was funded by the council's Arts Office, to the Sibiu International Festival and the Prague Fringe Festival in May. Agreement was also reached for a further collaboration on another production for 2004/2005.

Funding was also provided for a production of Shirley Valentine by the Bare Bodkin Theatre Company, Navan in October and to the Aurora Theatre Company, Oldcastle, for the play The Good Sister, written by novelist Noelle Harrison (whose novel Beatrice was published this year).

Navan RAPID

From the RAPID Frontline...

Well, we're coming to the end of the third year of the RAPID Programme in Navan and now at last progress really could be called rapid!!

There were three aims for the RAPID Programme when it was launched:

- ◆ to increase investment,
- ◆ to facilitate improved integration of service provision
- ◆ to enhance community development.

Three years later we are seeing genuine success on all three counts.

At first it was very difficult to make progress and people in the community felt a little let down as they had high expectations that things would improve quickly. This didn't happen but thankfully the people in the RAPID estates in Navan are a strong bunch and never stopped believing that things could change for the better. This strength and belief is now at the core of all of the RAPID work in Navan. Everything we do is centred on community and sustainability.

Things really started to happen when a group of local residents came together with the RAPID AIT and carried out the first Navan Needs Analysis Survey. We asked everybody living in the RAPID estates to tell us what they liked and didn't like about their area. The results of this research were launched in July 2004 by Minister Noel Dempsey and provided us with the necessary information and opinions which were needed to start getting things rolling.

Progress has been remarkable. There was investment of over €1m in total from the government and local agencies. This investment includes:

- ◆ Over €200,000 invested in estate enhancement and traffic calming in the RAPID estates.
- ◆ Funding of €200,000 provided for playgrounds. Two of these have been installed (Clogherboy and St. Columban's Crescent) and a third is planned for this year.



- ◆ Over €100,000 provided from the Dormant Accounts fund for use in promoting drug awareness issues.
- ◆ Over €250,000 committed to Navan from the Equality for Women Programme, which will be used to support programmes including Fasttrack to Information Technology (FIT) for women and the Winner Project.
- ◆ Commitment of investment from FAS, DSFA and the VEC to support the FIT Programme in Navan.
- ◆ Over €50,000 committed from ADM to support community development directly.
- ◆ Other investments in training and community events which are vital for the development of any community.

However, it is not just about increased investment, it is much more important than that. We are seeing enhanced levels of participation from the community, people are coming out and saying that they want to be involved in creating a better community for themselves and their children.

RAPID is focused on supporting and promoting community-supported events. These events are about people from the community working with the local authorities, the Gardai, the HSE and others to provide new supports and services for their community.

These community events include:

- ◆ The launch of the second Children's' Summer Camp – the Sunshine Club. This club is specifically for children from the RAPID estates and is run by the community with the support of local groups including Meath Local Sports Partnership, Springboard and Navan Schools Completion Programme and which takes place in Claremont Stadium in July this year.
- ◆ The Clogherboy Kids Club - Younger children in Clogherboy estate will enjoy the new children's group which will start up next year and which will be supported by the community and the HSE Family Support Unit.
- ◆ Féile Na Páisti -In May the second Féile Na Páisti was held, run by Navan CDP and supported by the community and local agencies.
- ◆ In July the second 'Family Fun' day will be held to promote better community amongst people from all nations living in Navan.. As the name suggests this will be a real fun day out for all with football, food and dance amongst many other treats. This event is run and funded by many local groups including: Cultur, Meath County Council, Meath Local Sports Partnership, Navan CDP, CIC, VEC, and many community groups.
- ◆ In December the first RAPID Christmas event was held in Claremont Stadium.

These are just some of the events that RAPID has promoted and supported during the year and we hope that there will be many more to come with the fantastic support of the people of the Navan RAPID estates.

Heritage Services

Heritage Officer Programme

The Heritage Officer Programme is a partnership agreement between the Heritage Council and Local Authorities.



Heritage forms the core of our sense of national identity and has a major influence on our quality of life. The Heritage Act, 1995 defines heritage as including monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage parks and gardens and inland waterways.

The Heritage Officer function is wide-ranging and approached in an integrated manner, which requires work on a multi-disciplinary basis.

Objectives:

To promote enhanced levels of awareness and understanding, leading to a greater appreciation and conservation, of the natural, built and cultural heritage of County Meath.

In line with the above objectives the Heritage Office engaged in the following initiatives in 2004:

- ◆ **Co-ordinating the preparation and implementation of a County Heritage Plan**
In accordance with the National Heritage Plan (2002) each Local Authority must produce and implement a 5-year County Heritage Plan. In 2004 all preparatory work for the County Meath Heritage Plan was completed. The formal process will begin in 2005.
- ◆ **Collection and dissemination of heritage information**
This process is on going. It informs the Heritage Plan process, the work of the Heritage Officer and promotes awareness in the community on best practice
- ◆ **Promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in heritage**

Tidy Towns Seminar

In order to provide advice to groups on how to enhance the natural, cultural and built heritage of their towns and villages a seminar was held in Warrenstown College, in April 2004. Over 40 people attended and speakers included Mr. David McLoughlin, DoEHLG, Ms. Helen O'Keefe, CAAS Environmental Consultants; Ms. Jill Chadwick, Meath/Louth Conservation Officer, Dr. Niamh Roche, Wildlife Consultant, Ms. Loreto Guinan, Meath Heritage Officer and Mr. Victor Buckley, National Monuments Service, DoEHLG. Information packs were distributed and a number of follow up meetings were held with individual groups.

Tidy Towns Planning Service

The Community & Enterprise Department of Meath County Council established a Tidy Towns Planning Service in 2004 to provide assistance to groups on developing a '5-Year Tidy Towns Plan.' The Heritage Office worked with CAAS Environmental Consultants on a pilot study with Dunderry Tidy Towns Committee to facilitate and develop a comprehensive plan embracing the principals of best practice.

Graveyards

A seminar on 'The Care and Conservation of Graveyards' was held in Navan in September, the aim of which was to provide the public and Meath Local Authority staff



with knowledge of the main provisions of legislation, policy and procedure relating to graveyards.

One hundred and forty people attended. Speakers included Mr. Caimin O'Brien, National Monuments Service, DoEHLG; Mr, Victor Buckley, National Monuments Service, DoEHLG; Ms. Eanna Ní Lamhna, Ecologist and Ms. Frances Tallon, Meath County Library. An information pack was distributed and there were numerous visits to graveyards to discuss site specific issues. In addition:

- ◆ Meath County Council's Community Grant Scheme has provided funding to two graveyard committees to undertake conservation works which the Heritage Officer advised on and supervised in 2004.
- ◆ Meath County Council secured funding to undertake a desk-study inventory of historic graveyards in the county.

Pride of Place

The Objectives:

- ◆ To help and support Tidy Towns Committees to maximise their performance in the National Tidy Towns Competition
- ◆ To foster civic pride by encouraging active community groups to participate in quality of life competitions at county level e.g. Meath County Council Pride of Place Initiatives, at national level e.g. National Tidy Towns Competition and cross-border and international level, e.g. Co-operation Ireland Pride of Place Competition and Entente Florale
- ◆ To facilitate the sustainable community, heritage, ecological and environmental development of towns, villages, country roads and waterways of County Meath
- ◆ To provide a range of supports to community groups, start-up grants, substantial prize fund, best practice workshops on developing the natural and built environment
- ◆ To show recognition of voluntary effort on the part of active community groups through launches, publicity and award ceremonies
- ◆ To foster direct links with youth through the Pride of Place For Schools "POP Group" Competition, and youth organisations and providing workshops inline with the new school curriculum on living things

The Initiatives:

- ◆ The Royal Bloom Competition, aims to beautify towns and villages with prizes for Best Buildings, Best Approach Roads, Best Housing Estates and much more
- ◆ The Harvest Walk Competition, encourages the development of a stretch of tertiary road reminiscent of beautiful walks of bygone years where the group employs environmentally sustainable methods
- ◆ The Waterways Award, encourages the development of the natural beauty of the waterways with awards for Best Bridges, Best Riverbanks and Best Use of Waterside Amenity
- ◆ The Derelict Sites Improvement Project, aims to assist groups to improve the visual effect of a site



- ◆ The Electoral Area Community Project provides one grant of €10,000 in each of the six electoral areas, Navan, Kells, Trim, Dunshaughlin and Duleek. In 2005 the successful groups will spend the funding on actions prioritised in their 5-year Tidy Towns Plan
- ◆ The 34th Irish Hot Air Balloon Championships 2004 was organised by the Irish Ballooning Association and sponsored by Meath County Council as a Pride of Place Initiative.
- ◆ Co-operation Ireland Pride of Place Competition Each year Meath County Council nominates four centres based on populations categories to represent County Meath in the competition.

Community Participation Level in County Meath:

The level of participation in the Pride of Place Initiatives doubled from 40 groups in 2003 to 80 groups in 2004.

- ◆ 230 people attended a total of six best practice workshops on gardening, landscape design, traditional stone building methods, tidy towns seminar and Harvest Walk workshop in April/May 2004
- ◆ 31 schools participated in the POP Group for Schools Competition and 400 people attended the awards ceremony in June 2004
- ◆ 20 groups availed of on-site visits by expert Horticulturalist and artist in June – August 2004
- ◆ Dunderry, Rathmolyon, Trim and Navan represented the county in the Co-operation Ireland Pride of Place Competition in August 2004
- ◆ Moynalty won Tidiest Village in Ireland in the national Tidy Towns Competition in and a silver medal in the prestigious Entente Florale Competition in September 2004
- ◆ Trim won second place in Category 3 Co-operation Ireland Competition in October 2004
- ◆ Moynalty won Best Overall Winner in Meath County Council Pride of Place Initiatives in October 2004



HOUSING

Introduction

The functions of the council in the housing area varied during 2004. They included assessment of housing needs; management and provision of local authority housing; assistance to persons housing themselves or improving their houses; settlement of travellers; assessment and allocation of specific grants and enforcement of certain housing standards and controls.

The following highlights the considerable achievement of the council in this area and reflects the significant impact the programme has made to those in need of housing within the county. Without the support of the elected members of the council, the members of the Strategic Policy Committee, the Local Traveller Accommodation Committee and the Homeless Forum this comprehensive programme would not have been possible

Housing Highlights

Social Housing

Social Housing needs are broadly the needs of households whose means are inadequate to provide them with access to suitable and adequate housing in a location of their choice.

The Council completed a total of 104 houses throughout the county in 2004 and started a further 56 estate houses and three rural cottages.

Affordable Housing:

Affordable Housing is delivered in 3 different ways, i.e.

1. Council builds houses on its own lands and sells to people on the Affordable Housing List. This is known as the 1999 initiative.
2. Council negotiates the purchase of land, houses and or a financial contribution from developers where developments are subject to Part V of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended. This is known as the Part V Initiative.
3. The Affordable Housing Initiative announced by the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern in July 2003, whereby Housing Authorities in association with Private Developers, build houses on state lands for sale to eligible applicants on the Affordable Housing Lists. This is known as the Affordable Housing Initiative.

◆ 1999 Initiative

Up to 2004 the Council built and allocated 65 affordable houses, i.e. 30 Navan, 29 Trim and 6 at Oldcastle. A further 14 were at an advanced planning stage at December 2004 in Navan.

◆ Part V Initiative



A total of 7 houses were acquired and allocated in 2004, with a further 26 at various stages of construction. A total of 9.39 acres of land was transferred to the Council together with financial contributions in the amount of €149,120.

◆ **Affordable Housing Initiative**

A site in the ownership of the Department of Defence at Gormanstown was identified as a location where this scheme of affordable housing could be delivered. Regular meetings were held with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to progress matters in 2004.

Voluntary Housing

The contribution by the Voluntary Sector to the provision of Social Housing Options is considerable, and can be delivered under two separate schemes.

◆ **Capital Assistance Scheme**

Under this scheme a recognised voluntary body may avail of up to 95% capital grant funding for the acquisition/construction/renovation of suitable premises to be occupied by particular categories of people i.e. disabled, elderly, homeless. One scheme of 11 units for the disabled was at an early stage of the planning process in 2004.

◆ **Rental Subsidy Scheme**

Under this scheme a loan is advanced to an approved voluntary body to cover 100% of the agreed costs of new houses. Loans are repayable over a 30 year period. Mainstream social housing applicants are the target group for this scheme, with 75% of tenants coming off the Council Housing Waiting Lists. Two schemes at Navan (16 units) and Dunshaughlin (19 units) were at advanced stages of planning at the end of 2004.

Private Sites:

During the year the Council provided 6 Private Sites to eligible applicants with a further 36 at various stages of planning at the end of 2004.

These sites are fully serviced and are provided at a subsidised rate to eligible applicants.

Improvement Works in Lieu

During 2004, 4 private houses were improved/renovated together with 16 houses extended to relieve either overcrowding or to cater for disabled persons.

Both these schemes are Social Housing Options which allow people to remain in their own homes, rather than perhaps having to move to a newer/bigger house which can cause disruption to children attending local schools etc.

5 Year Traveller Accommodation Programme

The last 5 Year Accommodation Programme ended in 2003 and the council carried out a further assessment for the years 2005-2008 during 2004.



A total of 40 houses together with 10 transfers/casual vacancies were identified as a requirement, together with the purchase of 5 second-hand houses. Bays on Halt Sites will be allocated as vacancies arise.

The Voluntary Sector will also be requested to allocate some of their units.

Homeless Strategy

Work at our Outreach Office continued in 2004, with approximately 300 people presenting as homeless during the year.

Our two Outreach/Resettlement Workers source accommodation for most of those presenting, either in private rented housing, Bed & Breakfast establishments or in various refuges here in Meath or at other locations around the country.

Disabled Persons & Essential Repairs Grants Schemes

The council prepared and adopted a five-year programme that outlined a comprehensive accommodation programme for Travellers and involved a range of measures to meet their accommodation needs.

The council has been very pro active in delivery of the programme with thirty-one standard houses provided and six transfers awarded. A further five houses were provided by the Voluntary Sector and nine families were accommodated in Group Housing Schemes. Three houses were purchased for families, fifty-three families were accommodated in caravan parks (including all newly weds) and thirty three Caravan Replacement Loans were approved.

The council is particularly proud that the programme was delivered nearly in its entirety in four instead of five years.

Tenant Purchase Scheme

Any tenant, who has a satisfactory tenancy for more than one year, may opt to purchase their home under the 1995 Tenant Purchase Scheme.

During 2004, 83 applications were made, 58 were approved and offers made, and a total of 33 sales were completed..

Tenant Liaison

Pre-tenancy Workshops

Pre-tenancy workshops continued during 2004 with the Tenant Liaison Officer (TLO) organising the sessions in association with the local Allocations Officer in each area. The TLO meets with all tenants on the day they receive the keys to their new home and explains in detail the terms of the tenancy agreement before it is signed.

Other issues such as how to make a complaint regarding anti social behaviour and advice on setting up a Residents' Association are also discussed. Links are made between the new tenants and the TLO at these meetings. Tenants are encouraged to contact the TLO if they have any concerns or problems. Some time later the TLO invites



new tenants to another meeting after they have settled into their new homes to establish a residents' association for the estate.

In the case of a casual vacancy the TLO gives as much background information on the estate to the new tenant as possible to help them integrate into their new estate.

Grant Schemes

Estate Grant Scheme 2004

2004 was the ninth year of the Estate Grant Scheme. A total of 52 estates applied for grants, the largest number ever and a total of €15,200 was paid out during the year. The grant scheme is aimed at assisting the residents of Council built estates to maintain and improve the environment in which they live.

The amount of grant, which an estate can receive, is dependent on factors such as the size of the estate and projects undertaken by the residents.

Grants are available for all sorts of projects and the Council actively encourages residents to form Residents' Associations and to take a real interest in the running and maintaining of their estates. The TLO is available to assist Residents' Association with practical help and advice. The TLO may be contacted through the Housing Department, County Hall, Navan.

Estate Award Scheme 2004

Every housing estate that applies for a grant is automatically entered into the Estate Award Scheme where they can win cash prizes to further help them with the development of their estate. The estates are categorised by the number of houses and the works undertaken by the residents.

Under the "Most Improved Estate" category the work of estates that have made a big effort during year to improve their estate but who may not as yet have attained the standard of award winners is recognised.

Individual House Awards

Each year one house, in each electoral area is chosen for an Individual House Award. These houses are chosen from estates that are participating in the Estate Award Scheme. In this category the judge is looking for houses that are maintained to a high standard. In 2004 Meath County Council commissioned local wood turner, Jim Condon to make table lamps for each winner. The lamps were made from 400 year old spalten beech which was indigenous to County Meath. Individual House Award winners also receive a cash prize.

Certificates of Special Achievement

Special presentations were made to both St. Mary's Villas and Bellair, Moynalty, two council built housing estates in recognition of their contribution to Moynalty's success in both the Tidy Villages and Entente Florale Competitions during 2004.



The Cathaoirleach of Meath County Council, Mr. Tommy Reilly, presented all the winners with their prizes at a special Presentation Night in October in the Conyngham Arms, Slane.

Award Winners in 2004 were:

Category A (1 – 19 houses)

Award	Estate
1 st Place	Knightsfield Park, Dunsany
2 nd Place	St. Paul's Ave, Athboy
3 rd Place	O'Carolan Park, Nobber

Category B (20 – 39 houses)

Award	Estate
1 st Place	St. Cianan's Villas, Duleek
2 nd Place	Loughcrew View, Oldcastle
3 rd Place	St. Mary's Villas, Donore

Category C (40+ houses)

Award	Estate
1 st Place	Hillview, Dunshaughlin
2 nd Place	Seaview, Laytown
3 rd Place	Townpark, Navan

Most Improved Estate

Estate
Castlelawns, Summerhill
Woodview, Navan

As well as their cash prizes all estate award scheme winners received a framed certificate in recognition of their achievement.

Individual House Awards

Electoral Area	Address	Occupier
Navan	7 Woodview Court, Navan	Vivienne Browne
Dunshaughlin	1A Hillview, Dunshaughlin	Esther Hanley
Trim	38 Mornington Heights, Trim	Michael & Elizabeth Forde
Kells	17 Deerpark Heights, Carlanstown	Mary McConnell
Slane	28 Stanley Heights, Slane	Stephen & Mary Traynor



ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

The promotion of sustainable practices is the guiding principal of Meath County Council's Environment Services.

Our remit includes water quality, waste management, litter control and educational initiatives. Our role is largely regulatory, and we gratefully acknowledge the assistance and vigilance of County Meath's residents. National initiatives such as the RACE AGAINST WASTE campaign highlight the importance of this partnership in dealing with the 1.4 Tonnes of waste, which is generated each year by the average household.

Irish waste policy is largely informed by European Directive and Meath County Council now maintains contacts with Environmental Officers across Europe . We have also developed strong operational links with neighbouring counties. Such relationships are crucial to the effective policing of waste movements and the coherent development of infrastructure to deal with the waste that we create

The Council has developed a range of policy statements to guide our service provision in the area of environmental protection. The Council, with guidance from elected Councillors and their Strategic Policy Committees, prepare these plans as detailed below.

A new Council was elected in June 2004. The Environment Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) will include 7 County Councillors and 1 Town Councillor, together with representatives from the Community, Farming and Commercial sector.

The Environment SPC deals with issues such as:

- ◆ Waste Management Planning
- ◆ Litter Plans
- ◆ Policy formulation on Telecommunication masts
- ◆ Bye laws, controlling waste and water
- ◆ Energy Management
- ◆ Fire and Emergency Plans
- ◆ Civil Defence Plans
- ◆ Water Framework Directive

During 2004 the Environment SPC was chaired by Councillor Patsy O'Neill and was serviced by Joe Fahy, Director Of Services for Environment and Emergency Services.



WASTE MANAGEMENT

Meath County Council's responsibilities in the area of waste management are largely informed by regulations drafted under the Waste Management Act and The Litter Act.

Enforcement of Environmental Standards

The Council availed of Grant assistance to employ additional staff for enforcement initiatives. 7 staff was recruited in 2004 who have been deployed as follows:

- ◆ 1 Litter Warden
- ◆ 1 Officer on Packaging and farm plastics regulation
- ◆ 1 Officer on Waste Collection Permits
- ◆ 1 Officer on Waste Permitting
- ◆ 1 Officer on Pollution control
- ◆ 2 Administrative support staff.

Waste Collection Permits

Meath County Council acts as lead authority for the purpose of waste collection permitting in Counties Meath Louth Cavan and Monaghan.

There is an obligation on all operators who collect waste to obtain a waste Collection permit. This permit places an obligation on the operator to maintain records and to transport and deliver waste in a manner that will not cause environmental pollution

The type of wastes that are subject to these requirements include but are not limited to: soils and stones ,construction waste ,slurries, refuse, and hazardous wastes.

The Council recorded the following activity in relation to waste collection permits during 2004:

- ◆ 90 applications received during 2004
- ◆ 85 applications granted during 2004
- ◆ Number of cases where legal action was required
- ◆ 276 permits issued at 31-12-04
- ◆ 14 Waste Collection Permits reviewed in 2004

Waste Management Permits

Any person who wishes to accept, store, recover or dispose of waste requires waste Management Permits. In general the activity will also require planning permission and the activity is tightly regulated and controlled. Waste permits place certain requirements on an operator. These include the keeping of records as well as the protection of the environment and their neighbours from nuisance arising from their activity. Permits are typically granted for 3 years and are generally specific to an identifiable project such as recovery of land for improved agricultural output.

Meath Co Council recorded the following activity in relation to waste management permits during 2004.

- ◆ 57 Applications were received during 2004
- ◆ 41 permits were granted during 2004



- ◆ 9 permits were refused during 2004
- ◆ 20 further information requests were issued in 2004
- ◆ 106 waste management permits were in force at 31-12-04
- ◆ 7 Enforcement notices were issued during 2004

Environment Fund

The landfill levy and plastic bag levies contribute to this fund each year. The proceeds generated are then made available to Councils for various projects and initiatives. Meath County Council acts as a conduit for the landfill levy paid by Greenstar landfill at Knockharley. A levy of €15 per tonne of waste accepted at that facility is collected and forwarded to the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Greenstar's landfill operation began accepting waste in December 2004.

Basketstown Landfill

Meath County Council obtained a revised Waste Licence from the Environmental Protection Agency for its landfill at Basketstown Summerhill during 2004. The licence obligates Meath County Council to monitor the landfill for 30 years from the time it ceased accepting waste in December 2002. We have largely completed the restoration of this facility. The tender process for the remaining licence requirements were initiated in 2004. This will result in a new leachate collection tank and an electronic monitoring system being put in place during 2005.

Waste Management Plan Review

The local authorities of Meath, Louth, Cavan and Monaghan commenced the process of reviewing the existing Waste Management Plan (1999-2004) in July 2004. Pre-draft submissions were invited in July 2004, resulting in the receipt of 27 submissions.

The Local Authorities facilitated the drafting of a joint plan by employing the services of RPSmcos Consultants to assist in the review process. Open days were facilitated with the commercial waste sector and further opportunity was given for the public to contribute to the process on foot of a media campaign in December 2004.

The statutory basis for the adoption of the reviewed Waste Management Plan has been amended by the The Protection of the Environment Act, where the power to adopt the reviewed plan now rests with the County Manager of each Local Authority.

National Overview of Waste Management Plans

This document was published in February 2004 and commented specifically on each Regional Waste Management Plan. The North East Regional Waste Management Plan compared favourably with those of other regions

The following progress was noted:

- ◆ Good progress on the roll out of kerbside collection of recyclables
- ◆ Further progress required in the provision of Bring Banks
- ◆ Good progress in the construction of Civic Amenity Sites
- ◆ Significant private sector investment in the construction of Material Recovery facilities.
- ◆ Limited progress in the provision of Biological treatment facilities.



In the overall context, the report also noted that 19 years landfill capacity remains available to the Region, and the provision of Thermal Treatment facilities had been significantly advanced during the life of the Plan.

National Policy Statement -Taking Stock and Moving Forward

This document, also published in February 2004 is the 3rd in a series of National Policy statements addressing waste management strategies. Chief among the 21 key recommendations are the continued support for integrated waste management, based on regional groupings, together with initiatives to address specific waste streams, which are the subject of European Union Directives. Significantly this Policy Document also indicates the interregional provision of facilities and movement of waste is also being considered.

Litter Control

The Council increased its responses to Litter complaints significantly in 2004. This was in no small way attributed to the employment of an additional full time Litter Warden. Meath County Council also takes part in a National Litter Monitoring survey each year. The results of this survey are used as one of the National Service Indicators for Local Authorities.

The report cited cigarette, food related and packaging waste as the 3 main causes of litter. Typical backstops are in the environs of ATM machines, transport stations, fast food outlets and major events. 140 locations were surveyed for 2003 and the results, detailed in the table below , were returned as Meath Local Authorities service indicators for this area of responsibility.

The results of this survey clearly indicate that although some 1,400 complaints were investigated during 2004 further improvement is required. The distribution by the Council of cigarette receptacles to public houses and public places in 2004 shall have a significant impact on the results for that period which are due for publication in 2005. Meath County Council , together with the 3 Town Councils of Trim, Navan and Kells, is targeting its resources to those areas most significantly impacted by litter . Public education and awareness raising will also be improved.

The following activity was recorded in 2004

- ◆ 1476 Littering incidents investigated
- ◆ 404 Fines issued by Meath County Council
- ◆ 230 Fines were paid to Meath County Council
- ◆ 13 Legal actions were heard during 2004 (incl.10 for non payment of on the spot fines)

Service Indicators 2004

Number of Litter Wardens

Fulltime	3
Part-time	27
Full and part-time per 5000 population	1

**On the spot fines:**

Number issued incl Town Councils	763
Prosecution cases taken because of non-payment of on-the-spot fines	10
Number of prosecutions secured	8

Percentage of areas within the local authority that are:

Unpolluted (ie litter free)	2%
Slightly polluted with litter	19%
Moderately polluted with litter	42%
Significantly polluted with litter	33%
Grossly polluted with litter	5%

Environmental Complaints and Enforcement:

Total number of cases subject to complaints concerning environmental pollution (relating to waste, litter, water pollution, noise pollution, air pollution)	1873
Number of complaints investigated	1868
Number of complaints dismissed	6
Number of enforcement procedures taken (incl. letters, notices, legal proc.)	123

Environmental Awareness and Recycling**Green Schools Programme**

Six Meath Schools achieved the prestigious Green Flag Award throughout 2004. The Green Schools programme is a whole school action programme, co-ordinated by An Taisce with support from Local Authorities. It is part of the worldwide United Nations Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) programme.

Meath County Council held a Green Schools Seminar in September 2004 and supported all local schools in their efforts to fulfil the criteria and to achieve a Green Flag. The schools that received the Award in 2004 are as follows:

- ◆ Rathmore National School, Athboy
- ◆ Gaelscoil na Rithe, Dunshaughlin
- ◆ Ashbourne Community College
- ◆ St. Patricks National School, Slane
- ◆ Carnaross National School, Kells
- ◆ St Marys National School, Ashbourne

All schools showed a huge wealth of environmental awareness, they initiated reduction and recycling waste schemes within the schools, eradicated litter in their schools and environs and brought the Green Theme home to their parents and into the wider community. Meath County Council aims to have all Meath Schools flying the Green Flag by 2010.



Service Indicators 2004

Percentage of Schools participating in environmental campaigns

Primary Schools - 75.00%

Secondary Schools - 50.00%

Schools Anti Litter League

Fifteen Meath Schools competed for top prize in the Schools Anti litter League 2004. All schools received anti-litter packs with pickers, gloves and tabards at the launch of the scheme. For the following six weeks judges visited each school weekly and marks were deducted where litter occurred. All of the schools were extremely vigilant and competition was very tough. St. Patrick's National School, Slane was the overall winner at the Awards Ceremony held in June 2004.

Castletown Tops the Anti Litter League in 2004

Castletown won first prize in the Meath County Council Anti-Litter League 2004. There were over 100 participants in the competition in 2004 and competition was very tough. All towns, villages and housing estates were judged on a weekly basis and marks were deducted where litter occurred. In addition to the winners in each category forty groups achieved litter free status for their areas.

Cathaoirleach Meath County Council, Mr. Oliver Brookes, presented awards to the following winners:

Electoral Area Awards

Slane

- ◆ 1st Mornington (€1,000)
- ◆ 2nd Broomfield & District (€500)

Dunshaughlin

- ◆ 1st Batterstown (€1,000)
- ◆ 2nd Ashbourne (€500)

Kells

- ◆ 1st Moynalty (€1,000)
- ◆ 2nd Crossakiel (€500)

Navan

- ◆ 1st Tara (€1,000)
- ◆ 2nd Dunderry (€500)

Trim

- ◆ 1st Rathmolyon (€1,000)
- ◆ 2nd Longwood (€500)

**Housing Estates (LA)**

- ◆ 1st Woodgrove, Ballivor (€1,000)
- ◆ 2nd Churchview, Batterstown (€750)
- ◆ 3rd Bellair, Moynalty (€500)
- ◆ 3rd Fr. Flood Park, Dunderry (€500)

Housing Estates (P)

- ◆ 1st Brookville, Ashbourne (€1,000)
- ◆ 2nd Castle Close, Trim (€750)
- ◆ 3rs Oak Court, Dunderry (€500)
- ◆ 3rd Park View, Athboy (€500)

Towns and Villages:

- ◆ 1st Castletown (€2,500)
- ◆ 2nd Mornington (€1,500)
- ◆ 3rd Batterstown (€1,000)

- ◆ Man of the Match (Special Achievement Award) Ashbourne (€500)

Litter Free Status			
Castletown	Dunderry	Robinstown	Tara
Carlanstown	Athboy	Crossakiel	Moynalty
Rathmolyon	Enfield	Ballivor	Broomfield and District
Nobber	Ashbourne	Isléan, Dunderry	Reask Drive, Navan
St. Brigids Villas, Navan Fr. Flood Park, Dunderry	Hillside Drive, Castletown	Beechgrove, Athboy	Bellair, Moynalty
Moynalty St. Marys Villas, Moynalty	Park View, Athboy	Castlelawns, Athboy	Ribbontail Way, Longwood
Woodgrove, Ballivor	Earls Meadow, Ballivor	New Inn, Enfield	Blackwater Park, Enfield
Hamilton Place, Trim	Castle Close, Trim	Brookville, Ashbourne	Churchview, Batterstown
St. Cianans Villas, Duleek	Oak Court, Dunderry	Herbert Place, Navan	Hillview, Dunshaughlin
Railway View, Nobber	O'Carolan Park, Nobber		

Clean Up Week 2004

Clean Up Week took place throughout the entire month of April 2004. Meath County Council provided €40,000 in funding for skips, litter pickers, vests, gloves and bags to groups and individuals who subsequently undertook a Clean Up in their area. The scheme was designed to coincide with National Spring Clean, who distributed information packs with safety guidelines; ideas for clean ups for schools/housing estates/rural areas and other helpful information.



Environmental Partnership Fund 2002.

Meath County Council announced the projects, which have been successful in achieving funding under the Local Environmental Partnership Fund Grant Scheme 2004, in August 2004. The Grant Scheme which is part funded by Meath County Council and the Department of the Environment and Local Government was set up to assist groups and individuals who wished to undertake an environmental awareness campaign in their local areas. Each applicant was required to provide some private funding toward the project and all projects were to be completed before April 2005.

The projects successful in securing funding in Meath in 2004 were as follows:

- ◆ Naturally Wild- Naturally Wild Field Studies At Balrath Wood
- ◆ Kells Chamber of Commerce - Waste Not Want Not Seminar for Business
- ◆ IPCC - Compost and DIY Gardening Workshops
- ◆ Sonairte - Nature Trail
- ◆ Magician Marvin - Recycling the Magical Way
- ◆ Down to Earth Theatre - The Treasure Hunt

Recycling Progress in 2004

Over 200,000 visitors visited the Navan and Trim Recycling Centres in 2004, diverting over 8,000 tonnes of household waste material from landfill. A Hazardous Waste Collection was held at each site throughout the year and forty schools and community groups visited the centres on guided tours.

Waste kitchen oil and aerosol cans were added to the long list of materials accepted at the centres which now includes glass, cans, newspapers and magazines, mixed paper, plastic bottles and bags, timber, waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), green waste, scrap metal, waste oils, tubes and lamps, batteries, mobile phones, textiles, books, CD's, records. The Green Christmas Campaign ran for December and January, extending the range of materials accepted at the centre to include plastic packaging, boxes, bows, Christmas trees.

The bottle banks network continues to grow with new sites at Kentstown, Drumconrath, Dunderry and Ballivor in 2004. Meath recycled more glass than any county outside the main cities of Dublin, Cork, Galway and Limerick in 2004.

Recycling of Specific Waste Streams

Category	No. of Bring Sites	No. of Civic Amenity Sites	Total No. of Facilities	No. of Locations (per 5000 population)	Tonnage of Waste Collected for recycling (per 5000 population)
Glass	2	26	26	0.97	230
Cans	2	41	41	1.53	9
Textiles	2	24	24	0.89	28
Batteries	2	2	2	0.07	7
Oils	2	2	2	0.07	1
Others	2	2	2	0.07	693



Water and Air Quality

Water Quality

Meath County Council is the competent Authority for the maintenance of water quality in its administrative area.

The Council works under a general obligation imposed by the EU Water Framework Directive. Under this Directive each State is obligated to achieve good status for all its waters by 2015. Ireland is divided into a number of River Basin Districts and Meath lies in the Eastern River Basin District (ERBD), along with 14 other Authorities.

During 2004, a working group lead by Dublin City Council prepared a characterisation report for the Eastern River Basin District. This report quantified the number of water-bodies in the ERBD that are at risk of not achieving good status by 2015. The next step is to determine a programme of measures that are required to achieve the good water quality status by 2015

Water quality is also a measure of performance under Local Government Service Indicators. Data detailed in the table below is in respect of the most recent assessment by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2003 and was submitted as service indicators for Meath County Council in this area of responsibility

Meath County Council has taken over 4,900 individual samples from water bodies across the county, and uses this information to fulfil our statutory reporting obligations and to identify possible sources of pollution.

Air Quality

The Local Authorities and the Environmental Protection Agency share the responsibility for the licensing of emissions to the atmosphere.

Local Authorities may grant Air Emission licences for smaller scale activities that involve the discharge of emissions to air. The EPA may grant Integrated Pollution Prevention & Control (IPPC) licences for heavier, more industrialised activities.

The following activity was recorded in 2004

- ◆ 9 Licences granted for discharge to waters
- ◆ 2 Licences were granted for discharge to sewers
- ◆ 3 Licences granted for discharge to air.

Energy

Energy Agency

An Cathaoirleach planted a six-year old Oak Tree in Burtonstown to celebrate National Tree Week. Students from Rathfeigh and Kentstown National Schools attended with their teachers.



Meath County Council , through the auspices of Meath Energy Management Agency LTD, provides expert advice on a range of Initiatives to promote energy awareness and common sense actions to minimise energy costs.

The Company is joint funded by Meath County Council and the EU for a 3 year period from 2002 to 2005.

The agency is open to the public at 2A Cannon Row Navan and information is available on our website - www.mema.ie. The Company is chaired by Cllr Seamus Murray . Cllrs Michael Gallagher and Patsy O Neill joined the board following the local elections in June 2004.

- ◆ During 2004, the following initiatives were facilitated:
- ◆ Energy Audit of Meath County Council operations
- ◆ Advice to Meath County Council on energy efficiency aspects of new projects
- ◆ Provided expert advice on energy efficiency to developers
- ◆ Consulted on Navan Town Park Development
- ◆ Completed baseline study of Sonaitre Development
- ◆ Made presentation to EU partners in respect of energy awareness activity in County Meath.
- ◆ Worked with the ESB on Energy Awareness Week and National Car Free Day
- ◆ Facilitated the “walking bus” initiative with the Road Safety Officer for 4 schools.
- ◆ Reported on its activities to Meath County Council and the EU
- ◆ Presented a number of seminars to stakeholders
- ◆ Provided educational resource to local schools

Veterinary Services

Meath County Council operates a service contract with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland under which, the Council undertakes to provide veterinary services in local abattoirs and small meat processing plants in this county.

In 2004 the scope of the service contract was extended to include the Council carrying out the functions of licensing abattoirs under the Abattoirs Act 1988 and approving small meat plants under the E.C. (Fresh Meat) Regulations 1997, the E.C. (Meat Products and Other Products of Animal Origin) Regulations 1995 to 2002 and the E.C. (Minced Meat and Meat Preparations) Regulations 1996. Previously these functions had been done by the Department of Agriculture.

During 2004 the Council inspected the following level of activities:

- ◆ 8 abattoirs
- ◆ 4 small meat plants
- ◆ 3,957 cattle
- ◆ 21,167 sheep
- ◆ 9,378 pigs
- ◆ 1,200 tonnes of meat products.



The inspection of one large abattoir transferred to the Department of agriculture during 2004 when it obtained an EU licence and one small abattoir closed during the year. One small meat plant also closed in 2004.

A small meat plant is defined as
“one producing less than seven and a half tonnes of products per week. In these plants inspections included the deboning and vacuum packing of beef, production of minced meat, cutting of lamb and pork carcasses and the production of bacon products. Inspection also encompassed the storage and distribution of these and other meat products and poultry products”.

The veterinary service was also involved in the inspection of dairy farms that produced liquid milk, control of dogs, enforcement of regulations on fallen animals and animals waste, animal welfare issues and the control of horses.

Roger Moore, is Meath County Council's Veterinary Inspector .

Fire Service

The Meath Fire Authority continues to provide a first class fire and emergency response service.

Fire Fighting

Meath County Council is the fire authority for the administrative area of County Meath, including the three Town Councils. Under an informal agreement, Drogheda Fire Authority provides a fire and emergency service in the East Meath area.

The central fire station is based in Abbey Road, Navan. There are six other fire stations located throughout the county at Ashbourne, Dunshaughlin, Kells, Nobber, Oldcastle and Trim.

During 2004, Meath County Council and Dublin City Council entered into an agreement whereby the Computer Aided Mobilisation Project (CAMP) service will provide arrangements for the mobilisation of Meath fire brigades.

The Fire Service co-ordinates with other statutory services as part of the provision of the Major and Local Emergency Plans. Regional training exercises and a mock major emergency exercise, organised by the fire service, takes place on a regular basis.

New Equipment

A new fire appliance at a cost of €260,000 was purchased and delivered to the Kells fire station. This brings to three the number of new appliances purchased by the Meath fire service.



Extension to Navan fire station

A €380,000 three-bay extension to the Navan fire station was completed in 2004. The extension will house a hydraulic platform, recently purchased, to meet the requirements of dealing with high level buildings, together with other specialised fire and emergency equipment.

Fire Prevention

The fire service plays a major role in Fire Prevention activities in addition to normal fire fighting activities. The measures in place include:

- ◆ Education – visits to schools, the elderly and national fire safety week, which usually takes place in October.
- ◆ Inspections- A planned programme of inspections is in place and the emphasis is on inspection of Apartments, Hotels, Hospitals, Discos/Dance Licensed Premises, Licensed Premises, Nursing Homes and venues, which attract large numbers of patrons such as Slane concerts and the Fairyhouse Easter Meeting. The fire department deals with applications under the Dangerous Substances Act, 1979 as amended and Petroleum Emission Regulations
- ◆ During Performance Inspections – Regular spot checks take place at discos, licensed clubs and premises where large functions take place. The emphasis during these inspections is on over crowding and fire safety. The Gardai are available to assist inspections when necessary.
- ◆ Fire Safety Certificates- Commercial developments are obliged to procure a fire safety certificates from the Local Authority. The Local Authority maintains a register of Commencement Notices and Fire Safety Certificates.

Fire and Emergency Plan

The fire and emergency services have prepared an emergency plan, which addresses potential hazards and the response necessary in the event of an emergency. This draft plan will be considered by the Environment SPC in 2005.

False Alarms

The council is pleased to record a substantial drop in the level of false alarms call outs during 2004. The figure for 2003 was 68 malicious call outs while in 2004 this was reduced to 21. The support of the Gardai and the public is mainly responsible for this improved situation and the council is grateful for this support.

Service Indicators

The average time in minutes to mobilise a Fire Brigade in our Part time stations is 5.25 Minutes**

The percentage of attendance's at the scene where the first attendance is at the scene :
Within 10 minutes is 39%, within 20 minutes is 44%, after 20 minutes is 17%

The number of Fire Certificate applications received in 2004 was 313, with 279 applications being processed during that time.



**In this instance, response time is defined as the time taken from when the Brigade has been ordered to an incident, to the time at which the Brigade has been recorded as having left the fire station.

The total breakdown for turnouts during 2004 is set out hereunder.

Meath County Council Fire Service

Domestic Buildings	Number
Chimney fires in Houses	116
Other House Fires	71
Apartments, Flats and Bedsitters	4
Caravans/Mobile Homes	3
Industrial	Number
Factories	17
Storage Buildings/Warehouses	1
Institutions	Number
Schools	1
Commercial	Number
Shops, supermarket	2
Offices	1
Hotels/Guesthouses/Boarding Houses etc..	2
Service	Number
Public Houses	6
Restaurants	1
Other	Number
Motor Vehicles	91
Offices	1
Hotels/Guesthouses/Boarding Houses etc..	2

Other Environmental Services

Animal Control

Meath Co Council is the statutory authority for the control of Dog and Horses

A Dog Warden was employed directly by Meath County Council during 2004. This service had been provided through the auspices of the ISPCA in previous years. New Pound Facilities have also been identified with the assistance of Collon Animal Sanctuary. This facility has been supplemented with access to the Louth Co Pound. Some 5,329 licenses were issued in 2004.

Burial Grounds

Meath Co Council manages 111 Burial Grounds throughout the county. New Cemeteries have been provided at Navan, Ashbourne and Duleek in recent years. Ten Cemetery Committees were funded through the Amenity and Lawnmower Grant Schemes in 2004 for maintenance and improvement works of local burial grounds and



the Council's Heritage Officer is available to provide expert advice on the preservation of the county's heritage.

Amenity Grants/ Lawnmower Grants

These schemes provide grant assistance to the many and diverse groups who carry out maintenance and environmental improvements in their local communities. The type of works grant aided include:

- ◆ subvention of grass cutting costs
- ◆ purchase of equipment, including strimmers and lawnmowers
- ◆ assistance towards the purchase of plants and shrubs

This scheme builds on the tremendous voluntary effort of local communities, and is available for small improvement schemes that do not fall within the remit of the Council's Community Grant Scheme.



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Introduction

Information Systems Department Mission Statement

“To provide quality customer services, enabling universal participation, innovation, and excellence in eGovernment and technology”

About the Information Systems Department

Meath County Council’s Information Systems (IS) Department supports approximately 600 internal clients. We provide and support diverse systems including

- ◆ Electronic mail; Internet, Intranet and Extranet
- ◆ Web based systems
- ◆ Agresso financial systems that support the Council’s financial management information systems and transaction processing;
- ◆ Geographical information systems that provide essential information on roads, cables, pipelines, etc in the county
- ◆ Imaging and document management systems
- ◆ Planning administration systems
- ◆ Housing administration systems
- ◆ Databases and thin client technology

In pursuance of our mandate to promote universal participation and eGovernment, we also provide and support many web systems for voluntary and community groups; business support initiatives; public access sites, and library systems. We develop many of these systems ourselves and work in partnership with the Local Government Computer Services Board and key suppliers.

We support clients in over 20 sites including County Hall, 6 Area Offices, 3 Town Councils, 12 libraries and other local offices. We also support all our elected representatives. As our clients increasingly demand the capability to work remotely, we are implementing several mobile technologies to enable them to use the Council’s systems from anywhere. These technologies improve efficiency and productivity among staff and are now essential tools in the delivery of quality customer service.

Client Support

The systems and services we provide are pervasive, extending to every area of the Council’s activities, so it is essential that we provide a high level of support to all clients. Through our Help Desk we respond to approximately 5,000 support calls a year, of which we resolve over 97% within a very short period. We have developed a sophisticated call management system that automatically sends an e-mail to a client when an action is taken on their support call, from initial logging to final resolution.

Many internal processes have been fully automated or enabled by technology and these are key to driving increased efficiency in the Council. We make extensive use of



collaborative working technologies based around our Intranet systems, file sharing systems, electronic mail and calendar sharing systems. These improve the way we work together and enable significant productivity gains.

Systems Development and Web Technologies

Overview

Our Systems Development Section continued to contribute to process improvement and service innovation during 2004.

- ◆ A Public Liability Claims System was developed and implemented across the organisation. It has facilitated the processing of claims in a more efficient and effective manner than was previously possible, with workflow being one of the key features included. It has also allowed for enhanced communications between County Hall and Area Offices, using web based forms, which has also increased efficiency and improved customer services.
- ◆ A Meeting Administration System was developed and launched during 2004. This system is available to our Elected Members through the Members' Portal and allows them to access Council agendas and minutes, submit notices of motion and refer to the results of past votes. It has facilitated easier communication between the Council and Elected Members, furthering the objective of enhancing local democracy.
- ◆ During 2004 we began implementing a Content Management System that will add considerable value to our internal Intranet systems. These are used as Council-wide communications tools and enable a high degree of collaborative working and knowledge sharing. The content management system will enable users to update content on their area of the Intranet without relying on the IS Department. In conjunction with this project, content on the entire Intranet is being updated and improved.
- ◆ The call management system developed for the IS Department was provided to other departments during 2004 and this work continues.
- ◆ Work began in 2004 on the development and implementation of an access control system for County Hall and this project was recently completed, with the system being fully managed by the client department.
- ◆ In co-operation with the Council's Community and Enterprise Department, the IS Department is heavily involved in supporting the penetration of Information Technology throughout the county and in all communities. Through the Communities Online Together and MoBhaile projects, over 130 web sites have been developed for community and voluntary groups, of which over 90 are available from our main website, www.meath.ie.
- ◆ IS staff have trained over 250 individuals in the development and management of their web sites and have contributed considerably to the promotion of universal participation, e-democracy and e-inclusion in the county. Our work in this regard was recognised nationally when the Council was presented with an award by An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, for "Innovation Through Technology." Our groundbreaking work in the Communities Online Together project ensured that Meath County Council was nominated as a pilot site for the national MoBhaile project, which is being co-ordinated by the Local Government Computer Services Board.



Infrastructure

Network, Server and Telephony Infrastructure

Meath County Council serves the community through a network of Area Offices based in Ashbourne, Trim, Kells, Dunshaughlin, Duleek and Navan. We also provide libraries, site offices, utilities such as water and sewerage plants, fire stations, swimming pools, etc. We support staff who work remotely and can now offer services and support at almost any location. This dispersed network demands the provision of reliable, secure and available local area networks (LAN) and a Wide Area Network (WAN). It also requires resilient and secure computer systems.

At the heart of our information systems infrastructure are the computers (servers) that support our applications. Approximately 40 servers are located in County Hall in Navan, with additional servers at our Area Offices, some libraries, and other locations.

Our WAN is provided through leased lines, ISDN lines, broadband DSL (digital subscriber line), dial up connections and unlicensed wireless links. These connections are vital to the continuing delivery of services to our clients. With more geographic and multi media content, the need for additional capacity through high bandwidth LANs and WANs grows daily. We are continually improving our networks as network traffic and demand for services increase relentlessly. Our LANs are based on fast fibre optic and CAT5 cables and we now offer gigabit throughput following a network upgrade in County Hall in 2004.

Ashbourne Library moved into the new Civic Offices in 2004. The library is significantly larger and has grown from having one public access PC to its current complement of 12. From having no PCs for staff, they now have six. We are now planning to provide additional services and Internet access to the public in our other libraries.

During 2004, the Council moved much of its voice communications to the government voice VPN. County Hall and all Area Offices now save significant amounts by using the VPN. We intend to continue to identify and exploit opportunities for cost saving through the innovative use of modern technologies and are actively pursuing several new cost saving possibilities.

Spatial Services

In 2004 our Spatial Services division participated in an EU-sponsored research project, Hydroplan, under the Fifth Framework Programme for managing European waste and drinking water networks. The objective of the project is to demonstrate and disseminate a European knowledge management framework, leading to a procedure for sustainable waste and drinking water asset management. To achieve this objective five pilots on operational sewage and drinking water networks will be carried out to demonstrate the practicability of the Hydroplan methodology. The methodology will be applied to two drinking water networks: the east Meath public supply scheme in Ireland and the Imperia public water supply in Italy.



The development of Metropolitan Area Networks (MAN) throughout the county will contribute to its economic development. Spatial services supported Meath's several MAN applications through the provision of geographical information and mapping services on which the applications were based.

County Meath is developing rapidly and there is a need to identify, locate and electronically record the locations of key assets in the county including roads, water, drainage and sewerage assets, as well as services and utilities provided by other entities. Spatial Services is carrying out the necessary surveys to gather the required data and is actively gathering data on water assets. This information is made available to staff in all areas to assist them in considering planning and other development applications and in planning the provision of new services.

Universal Participation

The Council's website, www.meath.ie, provides a comprehensive information service to citizens at home and abroad and is the key starting point for discovering the many services provided by the Council. Our Meath website is also the gateway for the Communities Online Together sites and many other public service sites such as www.motortax.ie, www.meathartscentre.ie, Trim, Navan and Kells Town Councils, and many more. Visitors can make enquiries about the electoral register; make planning enquiries through planning.meath.ie; view agendas and minutes of County and Town Councils, and much more. Many important public documents are made available through the Meath website, which provides citizens with readily accessible information on a wide variety of topics.

Demand for information over the Internet continues to grow and our main web site is now delivering an average of 750,000 pages per month, an increase of over 50% on the previous year; our investment web site invest.meath.ie delivers an average of 11,500 pages per month; our tourism site, www.meathtourism.ie delivers a staggering average of 325,000, and our online planning enquiry service, planning.meath.ie, delivers 43,000 pages per month.

The Future

The IS Department will continue to support the effective and efficient delivery of the Council's services through the implementation of appropriate technologies. The drive for cost management, service innovation, increased productivity, quality customer service and universal participation will continue unabated.

Our challenges are to continue to deliver high quality services within tight budgetary constraints, provide a real return on our investment in information technology, and deliver commensurate benefits to employees, elected members, other public agencies, and the general public.



PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The Planning Department is responsible for implementing the provisions of the Planning & Development Act 2000 and the Planning & Development Regulations 2001. This involves inter alia.

- ◆ The making of physical planning policy
- ◆ The preparation and review of the relevant Development Plans /Local Area Plans.
- ◆ The consideration of applications for planning permission
- ◆ The control of development and the enforcement of planning legislation
- ◆ The giving of advice on planning matters to the public and to other Council Departments
- ◆ The promotion of industrial and other development in the County.

Legislative Background

Planning & Development Act 2000

The Planning and Development Act 2000 consolidates all previous Planning Acts and much of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations. As well as consolidating existing provisions, the Act contains many significant changes and new initiatives such as Strategic Development Zones, radical new measures in relation to housing supply, the introduction of a more open procedure for drawing up Development Plans and measures designed to streamline the planning system.

The Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 implement the Planning and Development Act, 2000 in its entirety. The Regulations incorporate and update the Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations, 1994 to 2000 (which were made under the 1963 Planning Act) and all the Regulations made to date under the Planning and Development Act, 2000 itself.

Implementation of the Planning Legislation involves:

- ◆ The making of physical planning policy.
- ◆ The preparation and review of the relevant Development Plans, Local Area Plans and Area Action Plans.
- ◆ The consideration of applications for planning permission.
- ◆ The control of development and the enforcement of planning legislation.
- ◆ The giving of advice on planning matters to the public and to other Council Departments.
- ◆ The promotion and enhancing of economic development of the county and to support and stimulate industrial, commercial tourism and community development throughout the county.
- ◆ The monitoring and enforcement of development, including unauthorised development and regulatory codes including Building Control and Fire Safety.



Building Regulations

Building regulations are a set of legal requirements, the purpose of which is to promote good practice in the design and construction of buildings in the interest of the health, safety and welfare of people who use buildings.

The regulations set out the basic requirements to be observed in the design and construction of buildings. They apply to new buildings and also to extensions, material alterations and certain changes of use of existing buildings. They replace building byelaws, which operated in some areas throughout the country.

The Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government recommend an inspection rate of buildings by Building Control Officials of between 12% and 15%. Meath County Council is proud of its performance in this regard, having achieved an 85% inspection rate during 2004.

Departmental Guidelines

Guidelines on Sustainable Rural Housing

In March 2004 the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government issued draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Rural Settlement for the purposes of public consultation.

Following consideration of all views expressed during the Consultation process the guidelines will be issued as Ministerial Guidelines under the Planning Act 2000.

The draft Guidelines are based on the presumption that people who have roots in or links to rural areas, and are part of and contribute to the rural community, will get planning permission for houses provided they meet the normal requirements in relation to matters such as road safety and proper disposal of waste water.

Registration of Quarries

In April 2004 The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government published guidelines on Quarries and ancillary activities, and also commenced Section 261 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. This provides that owners and operators must comply with certain requirements and obligations relevant to their continued operations of a quarry.

All Quarries, other than these for which planning permission has been granted within 5 years of Section 261 being commenced, are required to register with Meath County Council before 27th April 2005. Failure to register will result in the Quarry being deemed unauthorised and subject to enforcement proceedings, irrespective of the previous legal status of the operation. Quarries, which have been abandoned for a considerable length of time (e.g. several years), will not be able to recommence operations without seeking planning permission and it will not be possible to register an abandoned quarry in order to recommence its use.



Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment

In March 2004 The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government published draft Guidelines on the Implementation of an EU Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

SEA involves assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of plans and programmes (and modifications thereof), prior to their adoption. The rationale for SEAs is that once the strategic plans and programmes on which decisions are based are themselves environmentally robust actions flowing from them should be environmentally acceptable and deficiencies in the project based EIA will be corrected. The Directive applies to such plans and programmes, which commence before the 21st July 2004.

Planning Control

Major Planning Applications received or determined during 2004

- ◆ A major warehouse park comprising 8 units and a garden centre over a total gross floor area of 11,200 sq/m) on the old Navan Carpets site Kells Road Navan
- ◆ Tara Mines – extension of the Mining Area near Ardraccan, Navan
- ◆ Major Housing Developments in Dunshaughlin, Ashbourne, Oldcastle and Trim
- ◆ Intensification of Waste Processing Activity at Dunboyne Industrial Estate
- ◆ Hotel Developments in Navan.

2004 Application Statistics

In 2004 Meath County Council and the three Town Councils of Navan, Kells and Trim received a total of 2616 planning applications.

This represents an increase of approximately 5% on 2003 and 28% on the 1997 figure. The grant rate for all applications determined in 2004 was approximately 69% and on average 78% of all applications were determined within the statutory 8 weeks without the need for further information requests.

A total of 637 planning applications for rural one off houses in the countryside and 167 housing developments were determined during 2004.

An Environmental Impact Statement accompanied a total of 13 planning applications received in 2004.

In cases where the Planning Authority's decisions were appealed to An Bord Pleanala the Bord confirmed our decisions in 72% of cases, varied our decision in 11% of cases and reversed our decision in 16% of cases.

Enforcement of Planning Control

Enforcement of Planning Control is the responsibility of the Planning Authority.

Where development takes place without planning permission, or where it does not comply with conditions of permission, the authority may take enforcement action. Under



the Planning and Development Act 2000 planning authorities are obliged to follow up genuine complaints about breaches of Planning Control within a given timeframe, are entitled to retain fines imposed by the Courts for planning offences (to help finance more active planning control) and can refuse to grant planning permission, subject to the consent of the High Court, to any developer who has seriously failed to comply with a previous permission. These provisions came into force in March 2002. The authority can issue warning notices and followed as necessary by an enforcement notice and possibly court action. Any individual or group may seek a High or Circuit Court order against a developer, stopping an unauthorised development or use.

Meath County Council in response to an unprecedented intensification of development in recent years has allocated additional resources to the Enforcement area including staff at Technical and Administrative level. As a result the level of inspections of developments has significantly increased and with a particular emphasis being on supervision of projects during the early stages.

Enforcement Statistics

During 2004 Meath County Council received a total of 486 complaints and following investigation of same 205 Warning letters were issued and 143 Enforcement Notices served. It was found necessary to initiate Court proceedings in respect of 16 cases during 2004.

Decentralisation of Planning Functions

Many of the Planning Functions previously only carried out in the Meath County Councils Headquarters in Navan are now carried out at Area Level and including in the new One Stop Shops in Duleek, Dunshaughlin and Ashbourne. It is now possible to lodge view, or make submissions on planning applications at these locations.

The decentralisation of the Planning function to the Area Offices, which is underpinned by Information Technology, has lead to a greatly enhanced service for members of the public.

Pre-Planning Clinics

Meath County Council holds pre –planning clinics at area level on a monthly basis enabling persons intending to apply for planning permission for one off houses or domestic extensions to engage in discussion with Planning Officers in advance of submitting such applications.

The pre-planning clinics has resulted in improvements to the quality of planning applications being made as well as offering savings to many applicants in having plans etc drawn up unnecessarily because they would not meet the requirements specified in the County Development Plan.

Forward Planning

Strategic Planning Guidelines

Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area were first published in 1999. Regional Planning Guidelines provide a long term strategic planning framework for the development of the Greater Dublin Area within the context of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and the National Spatial Strategy 2002 –2020 (NSS). New



Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area and covering the period 2004 to 2016 were made by the Mid East & Dublin Regional Authorities in April 2004 and came into effect in July 2004.

Clonmagadden Valley Strategic Development Zone Navan

Following the designation of a site at Clonmagadden Valley Navan as a strategic development zone for residential development a draft Planning Scheme was prepared and underwent a public consultation procedure. The Planning Scheme was the subject of An Oral Hearing by An Bord Pleanála in March 2004 and the Bord approved of the scheme subject to modifications in May 2004

Development Contribution Scheme

Under Section 48 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 Planning Authorities were required to draw up a General Development Contribution Scheme in respect of public infrastructure and facilities provided by or on behalf of the Local Authority that benefit development in the area. This legislation enables a Planning Authority when granting planning permission to include conditions requiring the payment of a contribution in respect of such infrastructure and facilities that is provided or that is intended will be provided by or on behalf of a Local Authority. The contributions payable under this scheme will help fund the Capital Costs of a wide range of infrastructure and facilities. A scheme for County Meath and including the Town Councils of Navan, Kells and Trim was adopted in March 2004.

Economic Development and Promotion

Highlights 2004

Significant progress was achieved during 2004 in the implementation of the County Council's Economic 'Development and Promotional Strategy. Achievements included:

IDA Investment Projects

2004 saw a continued increase in the quantity and quality of itineraries to the IDA Park in Navan, following the groundwork done in the second half of 2003. Navan narrowly missed out on some major investment projects in 2004 (eg Kelloggs, Q Logic) for reasons unrelated to our location. Our ability to market Meath successfully as a business location has improved considerably as a result of these visits, and a successful outcome from IDA visits is confidently expected during 2005.

Relocation Projects

- ◆ LIR Chocolates was a big success for Meath in terms of Relocation from Dublin. The company moved from Dublin to the former Case building in the IDA Park in Navan at the end of 2004, and will be officially opened during 2005. They will employ over 60 staff.
- ◆ The OPW announced the selection of a site at Kilcarn as the location for a new 35,000 sq ft office building, intended to accommodate staff who are currently located in offices on the Kells Rd.
- ◆ Detailed presentations were also made to the Drogheda Port Company who are looking for a new location for their operations.



- ◆ A noticeable increase in enquiries from small and medium sized companies looking for buildings in Meath was experienced particularly during the latter half of 2004.

Promotional Activities

- ◆ The new Meath Investment Brochure, "Hidden Resources" was launched in May 2004 at Fairyhouse Racecourse by Mr Gary McGann, CEO of the Smurfit Corporation. This brochure was extremely well received in both local and national media.
- ◆ A new website (www.workinmeath.ie) was launched in conjunction with the Meath County Enterprise Board in December 2004. The launch campaign consisted of leaflet distribution and media coverage. This website is intended to gather data on the employment skills pool that exists in the county. This data will be aggressively marketed during 2005 as a key element in our campaign to attract industry to the county.
- ◆ The series of meetings with the county's major companies continued during 2004, giving the County Manager an opportunity to meet with the business leaders in Meath.
- ◆ Initial actions were taken to set up formal linkages between Meath County Council and the third level educational institutions adjacent to the county, with a view to providing academic services for Meath businesses: National University of Ireland at Maynooth, Dublin City University, Dundalk IT and Blanchardstown IT.

Infrastructural Investment

- ◆ Two Meath towns – Navan and Trim – were approved for investment under the Government's MAN Broadband programme. Applications in respect of a further 7 towns are under preparation.
- ◆ Ballivor became the first Meath town to be approved for a Community Broadband project.



HUMAN RESOURCES

Introduction

The Human Resources Section has specific responsibility for:

- ◆ Departmental Returns
- ◆ Developing HR Policies and Procedures
- ◆ Industrial Relations
- ◆ Leave
- ◆ Partnership
- ◆ Performance Measurement
- ◆ Recruitment
- ◆ Staff Contracts
- ◆ Superannuation
- ◆ Training and Personnel Records

Staff Structure

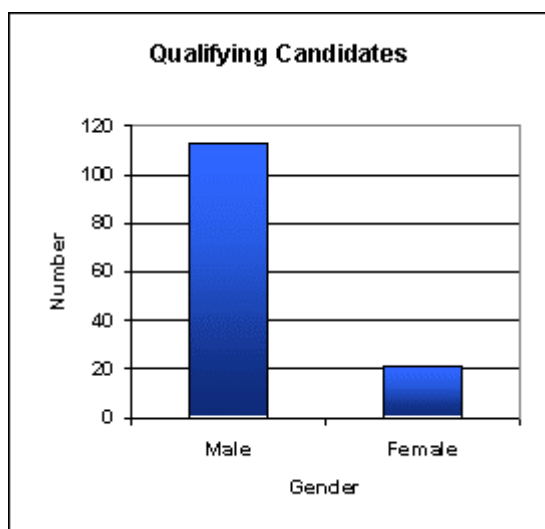
Management Team

- ◆ Tom Dowling, County Manager
- ◆ Brendan McGrath (Director of Service – Environment & Housing),
- ◆ Jackie Maguire (Director of Service - Corporate Services & Human Resources)
- ◆ Kevin Stewart (Director of Service - Planning & Economic Development)
- ◆ Fiona Lawless (Head of Finance)
- ◆ Eugene Cummins (Director of Service - Infrastructure),
- ◆ Tadhg McDonnell (Director of Service - Community & Enterprise)

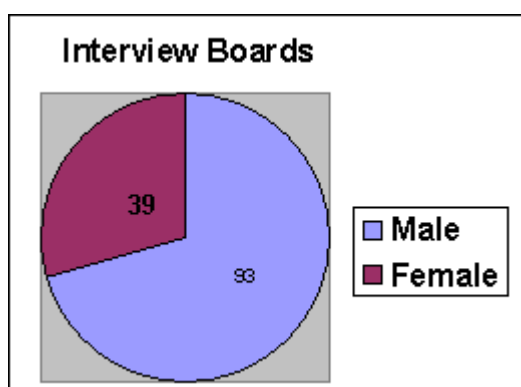
Staff Structure	Number
Managerial	7
Administrative	253
Engineering / Technical	127
Operational / Outdoor Staff	242
Fire Service	70
Contract	70
Other	2

Competition Statistic 2004

During 2004 a total of 22 competitions for positions higher than Grade 5 were held. The following is a breakdown of the gender balance of the qualifying candidates.



Of the interview boards conducted during 2004 the gender breakdown of the Interview Boards was as follows:





Workplace Partnership

The partnership process involves management, unions and staff agreeing on common objectives and working together to ensure organisational success. Partnership is an ongoing process and requires the engagement of people across the organisation. It is the preferred way of doing business and is a vital approach for the introduction of change.

Union Representatives (9)	Management (7)
Robert Bradley (Joint Chair)	Michael Arthurs (Joint Chair)
Arnold Blake	Noeleen Doggett
Eugene Farrelly	Greg Duggan
Stephen O'Hare	Brigid McQuaid
Jim Gibney	Jackie Maguire
Seamus Flynn	Paddy Sheils
Tony Collier	Michael Griffin
Andy Noone	
P.J. Weldon	

Partnership Action Plan

The Partnership Committee signed off its Action Plan in March. This plan was developed in line with the provisions set out in LANPAG's strategy document, 'Deepening Partnership'. The Committee agreed on a new mission statement i.e. 'Meath Local Authorities improve their service delivery and the working lives of their staff'. The Committee also agreed four objectives i.e.

- ◆ Identification of issues
- ◆ Wider involvement of people
- ◆ Training
- ◆ Developing the Partnership Culture

The plan will be reviewed in 2005.

New Members

In May, the Partnership Committee said goodbye to its Management Joint Chair, John Quinlivan, who took up a position in South Dublin County Council.

Michael Arthurs, Senior Executive Officer, was nominated as Management Joint Chair to replace John, and the County Manager nominated Michael Griffin, Senior Executive Officer as a new Management Representative on the Committee.

Return To Learning (RTL)

32 employees participated in the RTL programme in 2004. It was undertaken in 4 phases and covered Computer Studies, Communications, Maths. and Personal Development. Certificates of attendance were awarded by Tom Dowling, Co. Manager at a function in the Newgrange Hotel on 9th. June.



The programme was activated again in November and 9 employees are currently attending classes in Intermediate Computers. LANPAG has recently received the 'Lifelong Learning Award' from CIPD for the Return to Learning Programme

New Partnership Working Groups

Three new Partnership Working Groups were set up in September 2004 and began work on three projects: Workplace Healthy Options (WHO), Quality Customer Services and Staff Facilities at proposed new Co. Hall.

The WHO group organised a very successful 'Healthy Living Day' for staff and their families on Saturday 4th. December, at Simonstown Sports Centre. Tom Dowling, Co. Manager welcomed all, and the guest of honour, Sean Boylan gave an inspiring talk on his life and work as a herbalist. There was an abundance of fruit and healthy drinks on offer as well as free treatments such as reflexology, Indian head massage, reiki, aromatherapy. The children enjoyed face-painting, dance, as well as free coaching in football skills.

Corporate Plan

The review of the Corporate Plan took place in 2004. The guidelines to its preparation suggested that all staff should be consulted and involved in the process. The Partnership Facilitator organised and facilitated 20 staff consultation sessions through the Partnership process. The information captured through this extensive consultation was very valuable in the preparation of the Corporate Plan and the subsequent annual operational plans.

Policies

In 2004, the Partnership Committee agreed an acting-up policy for indoor and outdoor staff and also a policy for staff mobility.

Performance Verification Group (PVG) Action Plans

The Partnership Committee received information on the quarterly action plans submitted to the Performance Verification Group. Louth Co. Council hosted the PVG site visit for Meath, Louth, Monaghan and Cavan in October. One of the topics reviewed by the PVG group was Workplace Partnership, and the Facilitator presented an update on progress in Meath.

Staff Support Service

Meath County Council is committed to helping, in complete confidence, any employee who is experiencing personal problems or difficulties. For this reason the council established an independent Staff Support Service for the benefit of all staff during 2003. This service is a confidential, first contact self help service and is available to staff and pensioners of all Meath Local Authorities

The County Manager, Tom Dowling officially launched the Council's Staff Support Service on Friday, 5th December 2003. An "Information Day" was held in the Council



Chamber, where representatives from local agencies were available throughout, with information about their own services.

In 2004, the two Staff Support Advisors began a course of study on Employee Assistance and Social Support with NUI, Galway.

In December, Staff Support Service Business Cards were distributed to ensure awareness of the service among staff.

Training and Development

Meath Local Authorities employ over 800 staff and collectively are one of the largest employers in the county. There is a firm commitment to the modernisation agenda and to promoting the on-going development of our workforce in line with organisational objectives.

Training, education and development of staff is one of the functions of Human Resources and is progressed through Workplace Partnership.

The training policy of Meath Local Authorities aims to:

- ◆ Develop employees to achieve maximum effectiveness in their current role by addressing deficiencies in knowledge and skills.
- ◆ Develop a flexible and multi-skilled workforce capable of rapid response to changing service needs.
- ◆ Develop, motivate and retain staff.
- ◆ To promote lifelong learning
- ◆ Provide skills for future innovations within MLA.

CPD Accreditation

Meath County Council was awarded a three-year accreditation for its Continuous Professional Development Programme for engineers and technicians. Meath is the first Local Authority in Ireland to be accredited for three years. The CPD team would like to compliment and thank the engineering and technical staff for their co-operation in making the programme a success.

The members of the CPD team are:

Michael English, David Keyes, Sean Mulligan, Michael Arthurs, Sean Clarke, Olive Falsey.

Congratulations to staff who graduated this year having completed certificate, diploma, degree, and masters' courses and also those who pursued ICT training and were successful in exams.

Some of the in-house training provided in 2004 included:

- ◆ Phase 3 Induction – Feb. & Nov.
- ◆ Expert Witness
- ◆ First Aid



- ◆ Frontline Training
- ◆ Abrasive Wheels
- ◆ PAI Chemicals
- ◆ Safepass
- ◆ Electrical Skills
- ◆ Technical Report Writing
- ◆ Loading Shovel

Staff Library

A library of resources for staff is being developed in the Training Department. During the year, stock was purchased and processed. When finished, the library will be a valuable resource of books, periodicals, and AV material.



CORPORATE SERVICES

Introduction

The Corporate Services Section has specific responsibility for the following:

- ◆ Accommodation
- ◆ Ethics Register (Staff & Members)
- ◆ Internal & External Communications
- ◆ Corporate Plan
- ◆ Customer Complaints & Appeals
- ◆ Higher Education Grants
- ◆ Health & Safety
- ◆ Irish Language Policy
- ◆ Local Democracy
- ◆ Meetings Administration
- ◆ Register of Electors
- ◆ Service Indicators
- ◆ Twinning

Local Democracy

Corporate Services facilitated the taking of the local elections for Meath County Council, which were held on 11th June 2004. The election count was held in Simonstown GAA Centre over a three-day period from Saturday 12th June 2004 to Monday 13th June 2004 inclusive.

A total of 63 candidates contested the election for five electoral areas and the elections results are set out in the linked pdf's hereunder.

[Dunahaughlin Area Local Elections Results \(pdf 38kb\)](#)

[Kell Areas Local Elections Results \(pdf 21kb\)](#)

[Navan Area Local Elections Results \(pdf 47kb\)](#)

[Slane Area Local Elections Results \(pdf 25kb\)](#)

[Trim Area Local Elections Results \(pdf 36kb\)](#)

Communications

Introduction

During the year Meath Local Authorities took a positive decision to pro actively communicate, and where possible, to improve mutual understanding and two way communications with our members, staff, customers and the media.



Initiatives undertaken included publication of staff and public newsletters, direct consultation with elected members and staff, radio programmes and advertising, and a comprehensive survey of our external stakeholders.

Survey of External Stakeholders

The council commissioned Lansdowne Market Research to conduct a survey of its stakeholders. These groups comprised:

- ◆ Businesses in Meath
- ◆ Community and Voluntary Groups
- ◆ Sports clubs and associations
- ◆ Schools
- ◆ Chambers of Commerce

The survey focused specifically on two key areas:

- ◆ Experience of contacting the council and satisfaction with that experience.
- ◆ Awareness and attitudes to the Corporate Plan and its development in addition to overall satisfaction with the council's services.

This survey was the first of its kind to be undertaken by Meath Local Authorities and formed part of the review of the Corporate Plan.

Direct Consultation

Staff

A number of in – house consultation sessions were undertaken, which were facilitated by the Partnership Facilitator. Material captured will be a sounding board for setting objectives in the new Corporate Plan 2004 –2009, which will be published in early 2005

Elected Members

A collective consultation session was arranged for the elected members of the Meath Local Authorities. Mr. Ciaran Lynch from the Tipperary Institute facilitated this session, which was designed to ensure agreement and co-operation on objectives and strategies to be adopted by Meath Local Authorities for the overall benefit of the county.

Local Radio

During the year every opportunity was taken to use the local radio as a conduit for disseminating information to the broadest possible audience.

Programmes

Working in partnership with the Community & Enterprise Section a total of 12 regular programmes were aired on LMF. These programmes highlighted Council activity in areas including services delivered through the Motor Taxation Offices, Higher Education Grants, Housing Grant Schemes and Environmental Awareness Programmes, to name but a few.



Public Information Announcements

During 2004 Meath Local Authorities continued to access the airwaves for any public information announcements. These announcements which related to a range of issues including Road Works, Water Disruptions and Public Meetings were broadcast on all news bulletins throughout the day.

Customer Response Management System

In our efforts to deliver the best possible communication service to our customers in an effective and caring manner, Corporate Services introduced a Customer Response Management System into the section. This system which was developed in-house by the Information Technology Department was designed to assist day-to-day management of customer and media contacts. It enables the section to deal with all queries and provides the relevant information in a traceable fashion and has proved very successful to date.

Higher Education Grants

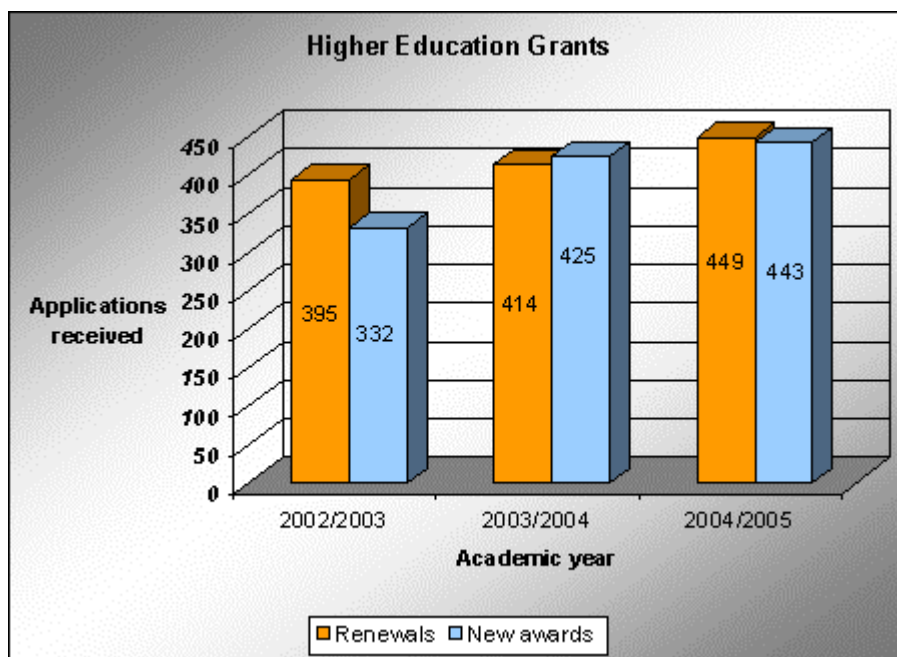
In 2004, Meath County Council assisted students under the 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 Higher Education Grants Schemes. There are various categories of grant and these are listed below:

- ◆ Full Maintenance and Full Fees
- ◆ Part Maintenance (75%) and Full Fees
- ◆ Part Maintenance (50%) and Full Fees
- ◆ Part Maintenance (25%) and Full Fees

A total of 443 new applications and 449 renewal applications were received for the 2004/2005 academic year. The value of a full grant was €2,945 and overall expenditure in 2004 amounted to in excess of €2.3m. This expenditure, with the exception of €14,045.55, is recoupable from the Department of Education and Science.

For the 2004/2005 academic year, Meath County Council paid the 'Special Rate of Maintenance Grant' (Top-Up Grant) to 101 students.

Statistics on applications received for the last 3 years are as follows:

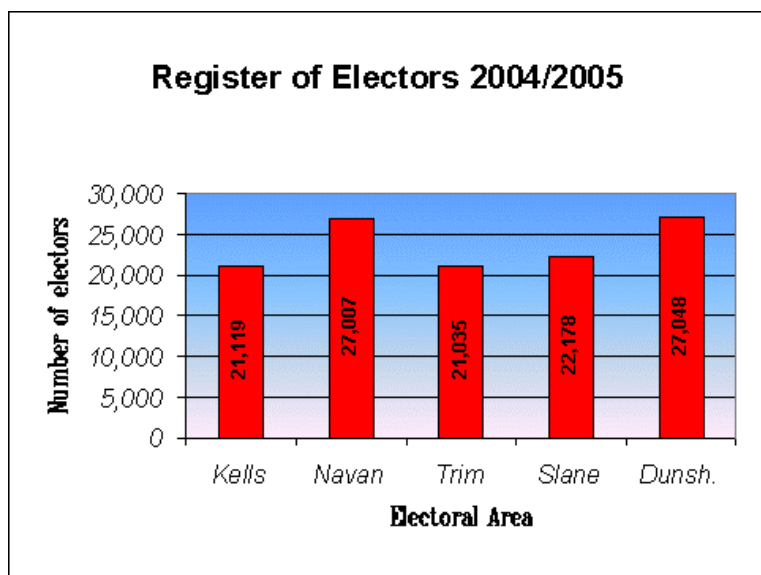


Register of Electors

The statistics relating to the Register of Electors 2004/2005 are as follows:

- ◆ Dail Electors: 117,254
- ◆ Presidential Electors: 116,300
- ◆ European Electors: 117,427
- ◆ Local Electors: 118,387
- ◆ Postal Voters: 296

The chart below gives a breakdown of Local Electors by Electoral Area:

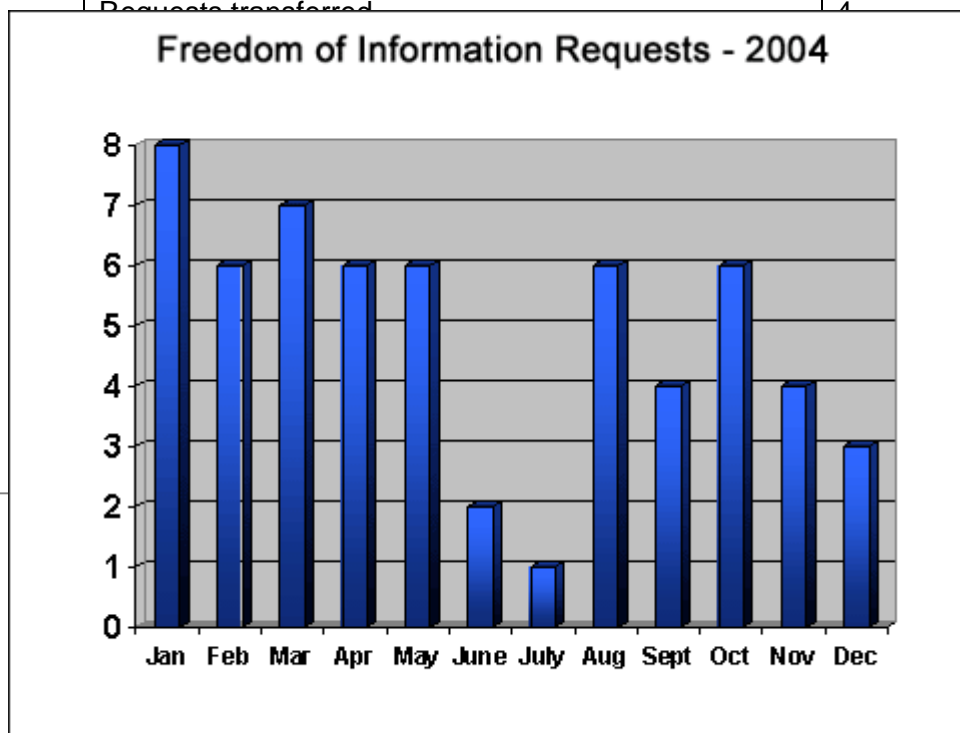


Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act, 1997, introduced to allow public access to records, not already available under alternative legislation, applied to all local authorities from 21st October 1998. The Freedom of Information (Amendment) Act, 2003 made a number of changes to the 1997 Act, the most significant of which saw the introduction of fees for non-personal information. The Freedom of Information (Fees) Regulations 2003 apply to all requests received after 7th July 2003. A fee of €15 is payable in respect of any application for non - personal information while a fee of €75 is payable in the case of a request for an internal review. A fee of €150 must accompany requests for a review to the Information Commissioner.

The following are the 2003 statistics relating to Freedom of Information requests.

Status	Number
Applications Received	59
No. of requests granted	27
No. of requests refused	11
Requests transferred	4





FINANCIAL REPORT

Meath County Council Annual Financial Report 2004

	Revenue (€m)	Capital (€m)
Management/Administrative		
Housing & Building	5.670	22.344
Roads Transportation & Safety	30.368	97.772
Water & Sewerage	16.004	27.200
Development Incentives & Controls	5.372	1.029
Environmental Protection	7.660	3.016
Recreation & Amenity	4.069	5.015
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	5.385	0.086
Miscellaneous	3.429	3.693
Total	77.957	160.105
Income (see funding sources below)	41.350	169.888
Net Transfers		(0.897)
Net Revenue Cost to be funded from County Rates & Local Government Fund	(36.607)	
Rates	11.512	
Local Government Fund	21.850	
Charges to Urbans	0.983	
Transfer from (to) Reserves	0.720	
Surplus/(Deficit) for year	(1.542)	8.886
Opening Balance 01/01/04	(8.395)	1.805
Closing Balance	(9.937)	10.691
Funding Sources		
State Grants & Subsidies	23.771	140.284
Borrowings		0
Other Receipts		29.604
Rents from Houses	3.741	
Housing Loans	1.018	
Commercial Water	1.775	
Planning Fees	2.555	
Recreation & Amenity Activities	0.387	
Fire Charges	0.836	
Pension Contributions	1.150	
Miscellaneous	6.117	
Total	41.350	141.691



Members allowances and expenses for Conferences	€
Chairman's Allowance	26,894
Councillors' Gratuities	69,995
Member's Expenses/Salaries	697,743
Attendance at Conferences abroad	44,853

Note: A copy of the full Annual Financial Statement for 2004 is available on request from the Finance Section, County Hall, Navan, Co. Meath



NAVAN TOWN COUNCIL

Overview

Navan has experienced phenomenal growth over the past number of years and is now identified as one of the fastest growing towns in the country. It is now ranked as the ninth largest town in Ireland, outside the cities.

The Town Council continues to face huge challenges in responding to the demands generated by this growth. These come in the form of the provision of improvements to the infrastructural deficit in roads, water, waste-water and amenity facilities

2004 Highlights

Water

The programme to replace the Navan Asbestos Cement Water mains commenced in May 2004. Phase 1 is due to be completed in March 2005 with Phases 2 and 3 expected to start in early 2005. This scheme, at an estimated cost of €4.6m, is essential for the development of the town and is welcomed.

Road-Works Programme

The road-works programme and traffic management plans for 2004 included the installation of pedestrian crossings at O'Growney Terrace and at the playground in Clogherboy. Bus shelters were installed on Railway Street and routing two-way traffic on Abbey Road, thereby significantly improving traffic flow throughout the town.

Environmental

Environmental initiatives proved very successful in 2004 with the painting and decorating of street furniture, shop-fronts and the council's planning office at Railway Street. The public and businesses were encouraged to promote a litter free town and this was evident with an increase of six points in the Tidy Towns competition and the town's short-listing in the Co-operation Ireland competition.

Green pocket areas such as Brú na Bóinne Park and the 5th Province area, which was opened by Mayor Alison Boyle in June 2004, have been redeveloped. The pocket area on the corner of Circular Road and the N3 was enhanced to accommodate the Special Olympics Commemorative stone.

An environmental improvement scheme commenced at the junction of the Athboy Road / Brews Hill / Commons Road to enhance and improve this area.

Town Twinning

Twinning delegates from Bobbio, Italy returned to our town in October. Earlier in the year a delegation from Navan, including members of Parkvilla soccer club, visited Bobbio to strengthen links with the town



Local Democracy

Local Elections 2004

Local Elections took place in June 2004.

Navan Town Council had 6 of its existing candidates returned and 3 new faces arrived on the Town Council – all 9 members of the council have integrated very well and are working for the good of the town and its people.

We extend our best wishes to the 3 former council members.

The Future

Major Projects

- ◆ Significant progress was made with advancing the major projects for the town during the year.
- ◆ The Council proceeded to compulsorily purchase the land for the Kennedy Road Civic Space and a decision from An Bord Pleanála is due in 2005.
- ◆ An Environmental Impact Statement for the new 68-acre Town Park went on public display and will advance to tender stage in 2005.
- ◆ The feasibility study on the Fairgreen development was presented to the members in December 2004 and will be debated again in 2005.
- ◆ Construction of the Theatre / Arts Centre commenced in September 2004 and completion is anticipated by late 2005.

2004 Work Programme

- ◆ Abbey Road – 2 way traffic
- ◆ Leighsbrook Lane – Construction of left hand side footpath
- ◆ Connolly Avenue – Provision of ramps
- ◆ New Cornmarket – Installation of paving, lighting, road markings and provision of drainage
- ◆ St Enda's Villas – Provision of footpaths
- ◆ Abbeylands Crescent – Installation of ramps and road repairs
- ◆ St Patrick's Terrace – Erection of barrier
- ◆ McDermott Villas/ Parnell Park – Road repairs
- ◆ Housing – Survey undertaken to identify condition of windows, doors, fascias and soffits

Members

- ◆ Alison Boyle
- ◆ Andy Brennan
- ◆ Shane Cassells
- ◆ John Duffy
- ◆ Pdraig Fitzsimons



- ◆ Anne Gibney
- ◆ Jim Holloway
- ◆ Joe Reilly
- ◆ Tommy Reilly

Staff

Staff of Navan County Council

Position	Name
Manager	Jackie Maguire
Town Engineer	Pat Kinsella
Town Clerk	Fergus Muldoon
Revenue Collector	Liam Kealy
Town Foreman	Raymond Mooney
Gardener	Michelle Grimes
Traffic Wardens	Jim Murney, Robert O'Reilly, Seamus Brady, Brendan Kenny



TRIM TOWN COUNCIL

Overview

Trim Town Council continues to play an integrated role in the development of the town. Working in consultation and harmony with the local community, as well as providing, maintaining and improving the physical infrastructure, it is leading the way in providing recreation and amenity facilities and developing the social infrastructure to meet the needs of a fast growing town. It wishes to facilitate and support initiatives and projects at local level.

The council is conscious that people of Trim and their elected representatives must continue to be progressive and positive towards the further development of Trim. This is necessary in order to provide indigenous employment, increased and improved service outlets in terms of shopping, dining out, overnight accommodation, entertainment, performing arts and social outlets for the local community and for an increasing tourism trade.

The Town Council has already been successful in attracting a major government department (OPW) under the Government's Decentralisation programme.

2004 Highlights

Watergate Street Bridge

The newly constructed Watergate Street Bridge was opening officially in September 2004. Its completion is a major benefit to the town and has allowed for the introduction

FBD Milk Rás 2004

Trim was one of the stages on the 2004 Rás and this was another highlight in the year for the town.

Special Olympics

A commemorative stone, to mark the occasion of the Special Olympics World Summer Games 2003 and the contribution made by the Host Town Committee, was unveiled in Castle Street, Trim to mark the town's hosting of a truly memorable occasion.

Re-location of Council Offices

The Council offices re-located to the newly refurbished Mornington House, Summerhill Road, Trim.

National Council for Special Education

The National Council for Special Education who moved into the former council offices in Mill Street during the year is a boost to the town



Pride of Place

Trim came to the fore in the Pride of Place Awards in 2004, being runner – up to Broughshane, Co. Antrim in the Co - Operation Ireland 2004 Large Town Category of the Pride of Place Awards.

Other initiatives from the local Tidy Towns Committee, the Chamber of Commerce and Youthreach, together with residents associations, saw the entire community working in harmony to enhance the visual amenity of the town. Collectively these initiatives have laid the foundations for Trim to closely contest the national Tidy Towns and the International Living Communities Award in 2005.

Housing

The Town Council continues to maintain its housing stock in order to provide a quality standard of housing to as many people as is possible. 2004 saw the completion of the Central Heating Programme with all Town Council houses now enjoying the benefit of central heating systems.

Supporting our Community

Trim Town Council continued to financially support the local communities and various organisations in their efforts to enhance the local environment. The Council made financial provision for the following in 2004:

Financial Contributions 2004

Organisation	Amount
East Coast & Midland Tourism	2000
Heritage Towns of Ireland	1500
Local Tourism Promotion	4400
Contribution to Arts Society	500
Amenity Grants to Residents Associations and new Projects	7000
School Meals	6000

The Town Council provides financial contributions towards River Safety and the swimming pool, library and fire services – all of which are of great benefit to the Town and its inhabitants.

It continues to promote and participate in the cultural exchanges with Etrepagny in France.

Recreation, Amenities and Town enhancement

The Town Council is committed towards providing improved and an increased number of recreation and amenity facilities in the town. During the year it provided a new pathway in the Porch Fields which it is hoped will be extended to Newtown Bridge in the coming years. Evidence of its dedication towards providing and enhancing parks and open spaces for the enjoyment of the townspeople and visitors is clearly evident. New street signage and street furniture further enhanced the town and development



commenced of a new linear park between the Avondale and Elder Grove estates and the river.

The children's playground continues to provide great enjoyment. An alternative surface finish is under consideration.

Local Democracy

Local Elections took place in June 2004.

Trim Town Council had 6 of its existing candidates returned and 3 new faces arrived on the Town Council – all 9 members of the council have integrated very well and are working for the good of the town and its people.

We extend our best wishes to the 3 former council members.

Members

- ◆ Ray Butler
- ◆ Phil Cantwell
- ◆ Trevor Golden
- ◆ Robbie Griffith
- ◆ Vincent McHugh
- ◆ Caroline Ní Loinsigh
- ◆ Danny O'Brien
- ◆ Jimmy Peppard
- ◆ Gerry Reilly

Staff

Position	Name
Manager	Oliver Perkins
Town Clerk	Larry McEntee
Town Engineer	Mark Farrell
Town Foreman	Anthony Conlon
Traffic Warden	Cathal Rogers
Revenue Collector	Sean Colgan



KELLS TOWN COUNCIL

Overview

Kells Town Council is the local authority for the urban district of Kells. It is composed of nine directly elected councillors who are elected for a period of 5 years.

The Council provides a wide range of services that are vital for the development and functioning of the town. These services include housing, planning control, development planning, sanitary services (in conjunction with Meath County Council), urban roads and environment. In addition the Council contributes financially to the County Council to support a number of countywide services including fire service, swimming pools and libraries.

The Council's current budget stands at €2.4million, a significant portion of which is spent directly in the town.

Kells Town Council is a key service provider in the expanding town of Kells while also providing a democratic and representational forum for the people of Kells

The Future

Kells One-Stop-Shop

Kells Town Hall was originally designed as a bank by William Caldebeck in 1853 and became the Town Hall in 1974. In 2005, work will begin on an extensive development of the building to secure its future as the administrative centre for the Local Authority in the town and electoral area. The building is being extended from c. 3,000 sq. ft. to c. 9,500 sq. ft. at a cost of €4 million. Great care and attention is being given to preserve the architectural merits of the building and the setting in which it is located. When open, the new One-Stop-Shop will provide a range of local authority services to the public including planning, housing and motor tax.

When finished in Summer 2006, Kells Town Hall will be a building that will project the image of a town looking to the future and proud of the past.

Economic Development in Kells

Kells Enterprise & Technology Centre

Kells Town Council is delighted to announce the launch of Kells Enterprise & Technology Centre (KETC). Due to open in September 2006, KETC will be located in the Lloyd Industrial Park, Cavan Road. Kells Enterprise & Technology Centre Ltd. was set up to oversee the development of the centre. The primary role of the company is to provide incubation / workspace units for the Manufacture and High Technology service sector at economic rent to assist the growth of small businesses and to alleviate the initial start-up costs.

The Centre is a two-storey building, covers a total floor area of 2280m² and comprises units varying in size from 20m² to 750m². The centre is fully accessible. The design



features cater for an advanced IT infrastructure, meeting rooms, training room and video conferencing facility. The administrative centre will supply reception / secretarial services, meeting and conference facilities along with business advice mentoring.

KETC is supported by Kells Town Council, Enterprise Ireland and Meath County Enterprise Board. The project received funding under the National Development Plan 2000-2006, from the European Union and the Irish Government.

For further information, contact Meath County Enterprise Board on 046-9078400 or by email at kells@meath.com

Kells Business Park

In late 2004, Kells Town Council purchased approximately 10 additional acres on the Cavan Road to create the Lloyd Industrial Park. At present, approximately 5 acres are available to service industrial development.

Local Democracy

Local Elections took place in June 2004.

Kells Town Council had 6 of its existing candidates returned and 3 new faces arrived on the Town Council. We extend our best wishes to the former council

Kells Town Councillors – Contact Details

- ◆ Curran, Cllr. Brian, 4 St. Colmcille's Villas, Kells (Non-Party) - Tel: 046-9249984; Email – bcurran@members.kellstc.ie
- ◆ Caffrey, Cllr. Peter, Cavan Road, Kells (F.F.) - Tel: 046-9241145; Email: pcaffrey@members.kellstc.ie
- ◆ Collins, Cllr. Brian, Cavan Road, Kells (L.P.) - Tel: 087-6829205; Email: bcollins@members.kellstc.ie
- ◆ Drew, Cllr. Sean, 8 Kenlis Crescent, Kells (F.F.) - Tel: 046-9280080/9249215; Email: sdrew@members.kellstc.ie
- ◆ Farrelly, Cllr. A.O., Moycottage, Maudlin Street, Kells (F.F.) - Tel: 086-8625142; Email: aofarrelly@members.kellstc.ie
- ◆ Ferguson, Cllr. Conor (Leas Cathaoirleach), 14 Fr. McCullen Park, Kells (S.F.) - Tel: 087-2211102; Email: cferguson@members.kellstc.ie
- ◆ Grimes, Cllr. Tommy (Cathaoirleach), 14 Fr. McCullen Park, Kells (L.P.) - Tel: 046-9241025; Email: tgrimes@members.kellstc.ie
- ◆ Reilly, Cllr. Bryan, Rockfield Road, Kells (F.F.) - Tel: 086-8599184; Email: breilly@members.kellstc.ie
- ◆ Sweeney, Cllr. Oliver, Hurdlestown, Kells (F.G.) - Tel: 046-9240518; Email: osweeney@members.kellstc.ie

Members

- ◆ Peter Caffrey
- ◆ Brian Collins



- ◆ Brian Curran
- ◆ Sean Drew
- ◆ AO Farrelly
- ◆ Conor Ferguson
- ◆ Tommy Grimes
- ◆ Bryan Reilly
- ◆ Oliver Sweeney

Staff

Position	Name
Manager	Brendan McGrath
Town Clerk	Bill Sweeney
Town Engineer	Tom Traynor
Rent /Rate Collector	Noel McMahon
Town Foreman	Pat McCabe
Traffic Warden	Ian Brecknell
Revenue Collector	Noel McMahon

