



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Kells Municipal District

Ordinary Meeting

20th October 2014, Kells Civic Offices

An Cathaoirleach, **Councillor Eugene Cassidy**, presided.

Councillors Present: Seán Drew, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy, Johnny Guirke, Sarah Reilly.

Apologies: Councillor Bryan Reilly

Officials in Attendance:

Director of Service: Kevin Stewart

Meetings Administrator: Claire King

Administrative Officer: Fiona Skehan

District Engineer: Fiona Beers

Senior Executive Officer: David Jones

Administrative Officer: Brian Murphy

1 Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 15th September 2014.

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 15th September 2014 were adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Michael Gallagher** and seconded by **Councillor Johnny Guirke**.

1.2 Confirmation of Minutes of Special Finance Meeting held on 9th October 2014.

The Minutes of the Special Finance Meeting held on 9th October 2014 were adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Sarah Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor David Gilroy**.

2 Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.



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3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

Sympathy was extended to:

- The family of the late Colm Melia, Millbrook Road, Oldcastle.

Congratulations were extended to:

- Athboy for winning the overall prize in the Pride of Place Awards.
- Cortown for winning the Junior Championship Final.

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

5 Statutory Business

5.1 Housing

- 5.1.1 To receive a presentation from the Housing Department on the current housing programme.

Brian Murphy, Administrative Officer, Housing Department, delivered a presentation to Councillors on the current Housing Programme, which included the Housing Department staff structure, functions and services provided under the main headings of Capital/Grants, Social Housing, Technical Services and Homelessness/Housing Investigations. Information specific to Kells Municipal District was also provided.

Matters raised by Councillors included the following:

- Clarification was sought on the social housing waiting list figures for Athboy – it was agreed to revert with this figure;
- Confirmation that no homeless cases from the Kells Municipal District were being dealt with – it was pointed out that these figures are subject to change;
- Clarification was sought on the social housing waiting list figures for Athboy – it was agreed to revert with this figure.



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- The letters issued to Rental Accommodation Scheme tenants in respect of their responsibility to pay utility bills, including water charges, and the related media coverage – the letter was read out and it was agreed that the tone of the letter was not threatening;
- The status of a separated individual in respect of accessing the social housing waiting list – it was confirmed that the 2011 regulations required a legal directive to be in place with regard to absence of a property entitlement before an individual can be placed on the waiting list; this can include a judicial separation.
- Confirmation that a social worker can provide a letter to become eligible for rent supplement on an emergency basis.
- Clarification on the Mortgage to Rent Scheme.
- The provision of double glazing in current housing stock – a full stock survey is to be commenced in early 2015, which will identify requirements and inform the maintenance programme and this will be presented to the Municipal District when complete.
- Confirmation that those who avail of the Rental Accommodation Scheme are removed from the social housing waiting list.
- The actual numbers on the waiting list who would accept an offer of a house if made and the requirement to be on the list to avail of other schemes.
- The Housing Strategy due to be published.
- The role of the voluntary housing sector.
- The land available for housing.
- The possibility of purchasing rural houses to meet specific needs.
- Confirmation that Part 5 obligations remain where the developer of a housing estate goes into liquidation.

Responses were provided by the Administrative Officer and Director of Services.

5.2 Planning

5.2.1 To consider taking in charge the following estate and the making of a



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declaration that the roads within the estate shall be public roads in accordance with Section 11 Roads Act 1993 and the Planning & Development Act 2000-2014". (See report below)

- Priory Gate, Athboy.

This was approved on the proposal of **Councillor David Gilroy** and seconded by **Councillor Seán Drew**.

In response to a query raised by Councillor Drew, it was confirmed that, whilst formal guidance and protocols were due to be published by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government / Irish Water, the assessment of estates as part of the taking in charge process remained the same and included the water / wastewater infrastructure, that Irish Water were informed of any deficiencies identified and that bonds are not released if deficiencies found.

6 Notice of Question

6.1 Submitted by Councillor Sean Drew

"Can the Executive please advise what plans are in place for the former Heritage Centre/Courthouse building on the Navan Road in Kells?"

A response was provided by Kevin Stewart, Director of Services, as follows:

The former courthouse building was developed for use as a heritage centre in 2000. The centre closed in 2010 as the Council was incurring significant operational and staff costs that could not be met by the income being generated from visitor numbers.

In addition, the fabric of the building required attention and since the centre closed approximately €169,597.28 has been spent on carrying out works to the roof and walls of the building and in dealing with dry rot and other issues. Further spending on internal works such as plumbing, electrical, decoration and general repairs will be needed to bring the building to a standard where it can be redeveloped as a heritage centre/visitor information point.

The Council was successful in securing a funding offer from Failte Ireland to assist with the centres redevelopment as an important stop off point on the Boyne Valley trail.

However the available funding €125,087 is not sufficient in itself to bring the building to the required standard and additional capital funding will be needed to complete that



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project. Currently there is no obvious additional funding source available so we are unable to progress any further with the project at this time.

In summary the only current plans for the building are its redevelopment as a heritage centre / visitor attraction as part of the Boyne Valley trail however I am not in a position to give any timeframe within which that could happen until such time as sources of funding become available.

The Council would be willing to consider suggestions for an appropriate alternative use for the building.

In response to a clarification sought by Councillor Drew in respect of the €125,087, Kevin Stewart stated that this funding was allocated for the exhibition and could not be used for infrastructural works. He re-emphasised that all suggestions for the building would be considered. He also informed Councillors that Fáilte Ireland had been asked to assess the Civic Offices for the purpose of providing a stop on the Boyne Valley Trail but that their consultants had concluded that the space available was not adequate.

6.2 Submitted by Councillor Sarah Reilly

“To ask the Executive why the playground in Oldcastle is closed and what the future plans are for its reopening?”

A response was provided by Fiona Skehan, Administrative Officer, Kells Municipal District, as follows:

The playground in Oldcastle was closed as the equipment was deemed to be unsafe for use due to vandalism. The Council is currently engaged with Creative Play Solutions, who carry out repairs to the playgrounds in Kells Municipal District, to provide us with a costing for the repair of the equipment. Appropriate funding for same will then need to be identified.

Fiona Beers confirmed that costings for the repair works had been received and that work would commence in the coming weeks. Councillor Reilly welcomed this and stated that she believed an annual allocation should be made for playgrounds.

7 Notice of Motion

7.1 Submitted by Councillor Sarah Reilly

“That Kells Municipal District calls on Meath County Council, as a collective body, to request the Minister for Transport to provide compensation to any household that pays



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for works to be completed under a CIS by way of a monetary write down in their LPT bill.”

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Sarah Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Seán Drew**.

8 Correspondence

8.1 Correspondence received from John Grant, Principal, O' Carolan College, Nobber.

Kevin Stewart briefly outlined the procedure involved in deleting a structure from the Record of Protected Structures, as per Section 55 of the Planning Act. It was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Sarah Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Eugene Cassidy** that the process should commence.

9 Any Other Business

Councillor Sarah Reilly suggested that in relation to paid parking in Kells, that the option of paying for one hour parking and getting a second hour free be considered. Kevin Stewart informed Councillors that the options for paid parking in Kells were currently being assessed based on analysis of parking fees income, usage, etc. and that this option would be considered as part of this exercise. A report will be made available before the budget meeting.

Councillor Michael Gallagher enquired as to whether there was a list of bridges included in the bridge repair works scheduled to take place. Fiona Beers confirmed that there was.

Councillor Seán Drew raised the following issues:

- Hedge cutting at Rathbracks;
- Commended the quality and timing of the works on John Street and Castle Street, Kells;
- Commended the work at the roundabouts carried out by Meath County Council under the Public Area Enhancement Scheme;
- Commended the work of the Gateway employees at the Spire of Lloyd;
- Enquired as to the process for banning HGVs in Kells – it was confirmed that this was an objective in the Development Plan and that there was a process outlined in the Roads Act; a report on this will be brought to the next meeting.



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It was brought to the attention of the meeting that Kells Scouts Group had requested to make a presentation to a meeting of Kells Municipal District. It was agreed that they be invited to attend the November meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:

Cathaoirleach