



## *Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes*

### *Ordinary Meeting*

*8<sup>th</sup> June 2015, Council Chamber*

#### **Presiding**

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Brian Fitzgerald

#### **Councillors Present:**

Councillors, Joe Bonner, Sinéad Burke, Shane Cassells, Eugene Cassidy, Francis Deane, Seán Drew, Eimear Ferguson, Enda Flynn, Wayne Forde, Joe Fox, Noel French, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy, Trevor Golden, Johnny Guirke, Wayne Harding, Jim Holloway, Suzanne Jamal, Tom Kelly, Sharon Keogan, Nick Killian, Caroline Lynch, Stephen McKee, Ronan McKenna, Paddy Meade, Maria Murphy, Gerry O'Connor, Claire O' Driscoll, Maria O' Kane, Damien O' Reilly, Darren O' Rourke, Bryan Reilly, Joe Reilly, Sarah Reilly, Tommy Reilly, Seán Smith, Alan Tobin, Sharon Tolan, Gillian Toole.

#### **Apologies:**

#### **Officials in attendance:**

**Chief Executive:** Jackie Maguire

**Directors of Service:** Kevin Stewart, Fiona Lawless, Des Foley, John McGrath (A)

**Meetings' Administrator:** Olive Falsey

**Senior Executive Officers:** Ger Murphy, David Jones, Michael Griffin, Dara McGowan, Larry Whelan

**Planning Staff:** Pat Gallagher, Senior Planner, Wendy Bagnall, Senior Executive Planner

## **1 Confirmation of Minutes**

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2015 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Nick Killian** and seconded by **Councillor Tom Kelly**.

## **2 Matters arising from the Minutes**

No matters arising.



## *Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes*

### **3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations**

Sympathy was extended to:

- Séamus Bruton, Ashbourne MD, on the death of his partner Vivienne Wood.
- Mary Murphy, Executive Librarian, Ashbourne Library, on the death of her mother Mary Ward.
- Sheila Sheridan & Maeve Sheridan, Corporate Services on the death of their father, and Angela Fahy on the death of her father-in-law, Richard (Dick) Connell, former Revenue Collector for Meath County Council.
- Shauna Henry, Navan Library on the death of her father Seán Henry.
- Family of Breda Keogan, Follistown, Navan.

Congratulations were extended to:

- Tom and Joe Fitzgerald, students of St. Patrick's Classical School on winning the "Young Innovator of the Year" at the ITLG Silicon Valley Global Tech Summit, held in Dublin City University and Head of ITLG, Cian Hughes on his recent appointment as head of the Irish division of Chinese Wave to Wave.
- All involved in the Moylagh 50k walk.
- The community in Clonard on the launch of celebrations re the 1500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the monastery.
- Orla Moyles, Dunshauglin Community College on her success.
- Dunshaughlin U/17 team on winning league cup.
- Ann Tugwell who retired from Dunshaughin CC after 43 years service.
- All who campaigned for a 'yes' vote in the recent Referendum.
- Raymond Coyle on the launch of a new roller coaster at Tayto Park.
- Students form Youth Reach Centre, Trim on their wall mural, which is on display in the town.
- Tattersalls Ireland on their 10<sup>th</sup> International Cross Country event.
- Meath Tourism/Discover Boyne Valley on showcasing County Meath at Bloom, 2015



## *Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes*

### **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 Planning**

- 5.1.1 To receive the Councillors' views in respect of a proposed development by Element Power Ireland Ltd , the subject of the Chief Executive's report to An Bord Pleanála of May 2015 (as circulated) and if thought fit, to resolve to attach recommendations to that report in accordance with Section 37(E) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2014.

The Cathaoirleach proposed that the Motions 9.2 and 9.5 would be taken in conjunction with Item 5.1.1. This was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Sharon Keogan** and seconded by **Councillor Eimear Ferguson**.

Wendy Bagnall, Senior Executive Planner, made the presentation which included information on:

- The proposed development
- The Turbine Site
- Energy Policy and Planning Policy
- LCA 6 Central Lowlands
- Assessment: Shadow Flicker, Flooding, Landscape & Visual Heritage, Ecology

Following the presentation, Item 9.2 –Notice of Motion submitted by **Councillor Wayne Forde** was proposed by **Councillor Forde** and seconded by **Councillor Sharon Keogan**.

**Councillor Joe Fox** proposed an amendment to Motion 9.2 i.e. to remove Longwood and Clonard from the wording. **Councillor Forde** proposed that 'south Meath' would be inserted instead of the named villages. The motion, as amended, was unanimously adopted.

*"Can I call on my fellow Councillors to fully support my motion of opposition to the company Element Power re the construction of the Maighne wind farms across south Meath."*



## *Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes*

Item 9.5 – Notice of Motion submitted by **Councillor Michael Gallagher** was proposed by **Councillor Gallagher** and seconded by **Councillor Eimear Ferguson**, and was unanimously adopted.

Following a lengthy debate, the Councillors resolved to append the following submissions to the Chief Executive's report on the Strategic Infrastructure Development application by Element Power Ireland Ltd. described as Maighne Wind Farm (An Bord Pleanála reference 09 PA0041)

- The Councillors of Meath County Council expressed their opposition to the wind farm proposal for south Meath.
- Councillors called for the immediate publication of the new wind farm planning guidelines and called for the delay in determination of wind farm proposals until the new guidelines are published.
- Councillors queried if the application will be determined with reference to the current or updated guidelines which are due to be published.
- While acknowledging that there is an outstanding court judgement on the SID status of the Emlagh wind farm, Councillors called for the suspension of all wind farm planning applications until such time as they can be assessed in the context of said court judgement and the new wind farm planning guidelines.
- The Councillors reaffirmed their opposition to a similar wind farm development at Emlagh County Meath.
- Councillors expressed their concern at the potential impact of the Maighne wind farm on the proposed Royal Canal Greenway and other Tourism infrastructure proposed in County Meath.
- Councillors questioned the sustainability of the proposed wind farm location and supported the Chief Executive's call for further information.
- They expressed concern at the potential impacts of the development on the Longwood ACA.
- The Councillors stated that wind speeds in County Meath are not sufficient to make the proposal sustainable, and referenced their submission to the Emlagh Wind Farm 17.PA 0038 in that regard.
- It was acknowledged that County Meath has received a significant number of major infrastructural developments which could, if granted, have a detrimental impact on the county status as the Heritage Capital of Ireland.
- Concern was expressed at the apparent location of such developments on the periphery of the county and the likelihood of subsequent applications to extend similar developments into County Meath.
- Councillors expressed their support for the position of the Council's Heritage and Conservation Officers as expressed in the Chief Executive's report.
- Councillors cited the recent decision of An Bord Pleanála on a wind farm proposal in Mayo as a precedent.
- They cited a shortage of information on the proposal and the lack of consultation with local residents.



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

- They expressed their concerns that local communities had incurred significant financial costs in engaging consultants to set out their opposition to the development.
- Councillors felt that the public were given insufficient time to prepare submissions and defend their localities from such large scale developments.
- They held the view that the applicant has not adequately assessed alternative sites.
- They cited the potential devaluation of house prices in areas near the wind farm and they believed that the construction of wind farms could maintain or increase downward pressure on the value of family homes in the locality.
- Concern was expressed at the potential health impacts of the development on residents with conditions such as Autism.
- Concern was also voiced at the potential impacts of noise and shadow flicker on residents.
- Councillors expressed their concern at the scale of the proposed turbines and it was noted that the average height of wind turbines internationally is 99m.
- Support was expressed for well located sustainable wind farms as evidenced by international best practice.
- Councillors did not believe that the 2020 Energy Consumption targets are achievable.
- Councillors called for an oral hearing to be held into the proposed development.
- The proposal to locate some of the turbines in areas prone to flooding was noted.
- Councillors, while expressing qualified support for the principle of wind farms, felt that they are most appropriately located in off shore environments.
- Councillors voiced support for alternate sustainable technologies such as solar energy.
- Councillors stated that they believed that the technologies proposed would soon become obsolete and that the employment opportunities promised would not arise.
- The Councillors felt that the use of the Strategic Infrastructure Act for wind farm developments disenfranchises 3<sup>rd</sup> parties and they voiced the opinion that local communities should have a greater say in the development of their area.
- Councillors held the view that this commercially driven proposal should be opposed.
- Councillors felt that the number of wind farm proposals was driven by commercial opportunities to avail of guaranteed energy pricing. It was stated that SID applications should not be fast tracked for decision simply to assist companies to avail of market incentives.
- Councillors queried how the turbines would be removed at the end of their working lives and questioned who could guarantee that they would be decommissioned appropriately.
- Councillors queried if the Department of the Environment Community and Local Government had responded to Meath County Council's call for advices in respect of bringing forward variations to the County Development Plan, prohibiting large scale wind farm developments.



## *Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes*

The Councillors resolved to express their opposition to the proposed wind farm and that their views should be appended to the Chief Executive's report prior to its submission to An Bord Pleanála

### **6 Reports**

#### 6.1 Report from the Corporate Policy Group

The Meetings' Administrator advised that the Corporate Policy Group reviewed the agenda for the full Council meeting and received information on the particulars of some of the items.

#### 6.2 Report from the Protocol Committee

The Meetings' Administrator advised that the Protocol Committee:

- Considered a request from the South Meath Social Economy Ltd. to make a presentation to the full Council. It was agreed to recommend that this presentation would be made at the July meeting.
- A list of conferences relevant to the business of the Council was approved.

The recommendations from the Protocol committee were agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Eugene Cassidy** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Fox**.

### **7 Correspondence**

7.1 Circular Letter WP 04/15 – Department of Environment, Community and Local Government re. Waste Management (Collection Permit) (Amendment) Regulations 2015; and Waste Management (Facility Permit and Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.

7.2 Noted by the Councillors.

7.3 Correspondence from Dublin City Council as lead authority for the Eastern-Midlands Waste Management Plan Region.

7.4 Noted by the Councillors.



## Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

### 8 Notice of Question

#### 8.1 Submitted by Councillor Darren O' Rourke

*'To ask the Chief Executive how many houses are planned to be bought by Meath County Council by year end; and for the location of same. Ceist a chur ar an bPríomhfheidhmeannach an méad teach atá sé ar intinn ag Comhairle Contae na Mí a cheannach roimh deireadh na bliana agus a suíomh a chur in iúl. '*

#### **Response:**

Through a managed acquisition programme, Meath County Council will initially target the acquisition of twenty units in 2015, subject to funding approval through our announced capital allocation under the Social Housing Strategy. However, the Housing Department will endeavour to exceed this initial target, and will liaise with the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government during 2015 as our acquisition programme progresses.

In terms of location, the acquisition programme will be guided by the need to fulfil existing housing demand, value for money, supply and purchase price capping levels. A key guiding principle will be the need to achieve a distribution across each Municipal District, subject to the aforementioned factors.

Noted by the Councillors.

### 9 Notice of Motion

#### 9.1 Submitted by Councillor Wayne Forde

*"The members of Meath County Council call on the Government to review the funding allocation to Meath County Council taking into account the significant growth in population and the increasing demand for a diverse range of services across six Municipal Districts."*

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

The financial management of Meath County Council is monitored on an ongoing basis i.e. monthly management accounts are distributed to budget holders and quarterly accounts are submitted to the DOECLG.

It is also intended to carry out a formal review of the half year accounts.



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

In the overall context of the management of Meath County Council finances, a submission will be made to the Department, in 2015, to review the funding allocation to the Council.

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Wayne Forde** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**.

Following a debate and advice from Fiona Lawless, Head of Finance, the motion was noted.

### **9.2 Submitted by Councillor Wayne Forde**

*"Can I call on my fellow Councillors to fully support my motion of opposition to the company Element Power re the construction of the Maighne wind farms across Longwood Clonard and Enfield, and other parts of Meath."*

See Item 5.1.1

### **9.3 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin**

*"To ask Meath County Council to ringfence all monies collected for dog licences and fines etc. to be used exclusively for supporting initiatives including dog foul bins, signage including dangerous breeds and education services. This money should also be used to support the pound as well as control measures including neutering."*

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

While the merits of this motion are fully accepted in trying to promote responsible dog ownership, it is pointed out that the Council each year spends in the region of €150,000 from its own resources in the running of the Dog Control Service i.e. expenditure exceeds income by this amount.

There are now two Dog Wardens, but one recruited in 2014 also combines Litter Warden Duties.

In 2014, a total of 4676 Dog Licences were issued either from the Post Offices or directly from the Council Offices. The Wardens dealt with 583 stray and unwanted dogs in 2014, the vast majority of which ended up in the Council's Dog Pound at Greenpark Dunshaughlin, which is operated under contract with Kanine Management Services Ltd. Only 22 dogs were put to sleep in 2014 with the remainder either re-homed, reclaimed by their owners or transferred to Dog Welfare Groups.





## *Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes*

In addition to their duties associated with stray and unwanted dogs, the Wardens also engage in enforcement activities particularly with regard to licensing requirements and dog fouling. With the benefit of the second Dog Warden, it is now proposed to intensify activity in this area and it is intended to work on a blitz basis with regard to dog licences which should lead to an increase in the number of licences purchased, and a greater presence at amenity areas such as public parks, beaches etc in respect of the menace of dog fouling.

The need for and efficiency of special dog fouling bins will be examined on a case by case basis. Pooper Scooper bags are already in place at a number of locations throughout the County.

The Council has in recent years been involved in a number of Education and Awareness campaigns which seek to promote responsible dog ownership. This includes the installation of signage and audio devices highlighting the need to clean up after your dog, as well as support for the Green Dog Walkers programme. Funding for such measures is provided for in the Environment Department's education and awareness budget. The Council has participated in the Limited Neutering and Microchipping Programme 2015 which is supported by Dogs Trust – new Regulations have been introduced providing for the microchipping and registration of all dogs by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

Further enhancements of responsible dog ownership are provided for in the Parks and Playgrounds Bye Laws adopted in 2014, which includes responsibilities for control of dangerous dog, as defined in the Control of Dogs Regulations. Dog fouling will also be addressed in the proposed Laytown/ Bettystown Beach Management Plan.

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Sarah Reilly**.

**Councillor Sarah Reilly** proposed, seconded by **Councillor Maria Murphy** that a letter should be written to the DoECLG seeking a review of S.22 of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997/2003

Following a lengthy debate, the motion was adopted and it was agreed that the matter would be referred to the Environmental SPC for consideration.

### **9.4 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin**

*"I ask that Meath County Council undertake a further review of the website meath.ie in order to include new features like detailed district maps and introduce a mobile enabled design so that the website can be used on the go and in particular by visitors to our county."*



## Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

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

Meath County Council has recently extended its use of social media to include Facebook. In addition, a review of content and services on meath.ie is underway as part of a planned redesign of the website. All Departments in the Council will review additional information that could be published via the website and other channels. Members can then provide links via Facebook etc. to content of interest.

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O' Connor**.

Following a debate, the motion was noted.

#### 9.5 Submitted by Councillor Michael Gallagher

*'That this council reaffirms its opposition to the proposed Emlagh windfarm and affirms its opposition to Maighne windfarm; calls for the immediate publication of the new windfarm planning guidelines and, acknowledging that there is an outstanding court judgement on the SID status of the Emlagh windfarm, calls for the suspension of all windfarms planning applications until such time as they can be assessed in the context of said court judgement and the new windfarm planning guidelines.'*  
*Go n-athdhearbhaíonn an Chomhairle seo a cur i gcoinne feirm gaoithe Imleach Bheagáin agus go ndearbhaíonn sí a cur i gcoinne feirm gaoithe Maighne; go n-éilíonn sí foilsiúcháin láithreach na treoirlínte nua pleanála fheirme gaoithe agus á n-aithint go bhfuil breithiúnas cúirte faoi bhun maidir le stadás SID fheirm gaoithe Imleach Bheagáin, éilíonn sí gach iarratas pleanála a chur ar fionraí go dtí gur féidir iad a mheasúnú i gcomhthéacs an bhreithiúnais sin agus na dtreoirlínte nua pleanála fheirme gaoithe.'*

See Item 5.1.1

#### 9.6 Submitted by Sinn Féin Cllrs.

*'That this Council will review its approach to the maintenance and upkeep of housing estates and engagement with residents there to ensure that all estates in the county receive an excellent service from Meath County Council in relation to: infrastructure upkeep and maintenance, litter management, grass cutting, address of anti-social behaviour, etc; that the council should consider the establishment of an estate management unit with dedicated countywide or Municipal District responsibility and that its schedule of engagement should be available publicly. Go ndéanfar an Chomhairle seo athbhreithniú ar an gcur chuige atá aici ar chothabháil eastát tithíochta agus ar theagmháil le cónaitheoirí chun go gcinnteofar go ngeofar*



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

*gach eastát sa Chontae seirbhís den scoth ó Chomhairle Chontae na Mí maidir le cothabháil , bainistiú dramhaíola, bearradh féir agus díriú ar iompraíocht fhrithshóisialta; go gcuirfidh an Chomhairle bunú roinn bainistiú eastát faoi chaibidil le freagracht tiomnaithe uilechontae/Bhardas agus go mbeidh an sceideal teagmhála ar fáil go poiblí.'*

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

Meath County Council operates a multi strand approach to the management of its estates. The approach encompasses housing allocations, maintenance, voids, landlord tenant relations and tackling anti social behaviour, with a high level of coordination currently in place between the established Housing Teams (Housing Support, Housing Welfare, Capital/Grants and Technical Teams respectively), which is required in order to maximise positive estate management outcomes. Medium to long term initiatives will be subject to funding submissions to the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government for progression on an ongoing basis, while the need to work in partnership with other departments, and outside agencies in the management of our estates is recognised.

Key policies are in place to facilitate the Council's approach to estate management, including Meath County Council's Scheme of Letting Priorities, Anti Social Behaviour Policy and Tenant's Handbook. The Anti Social Behaviour Officer and Tenant Liaison Officer play pivotal roles, both in preventing and responding to anti social behaviour, and encouraging the involvement of resident groups in the management of their estates.

In respect to maintenance, the Housing Department is currently reviewing the process, and is developing a housing maintenance system, with the aim of improving efficiencies in this area. It is centred on a categorisation approach to requests, and a service level agreement between Meath County Council and tenants, outlining roles and responsibilities in respect to housing maintenance services.

The Housing Department recognises the need to review on an ongoing basis the aforementioned approach to estate management, and implement any improvements that may be deemed necessary, so that residents of Council estates can live their lives in both a pleasing physical and a safe environment.

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Darren O' Rourke** and seconded by **Councillor Eimear Ferguson**.

Following a lengthy debate, it was unanimously agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Nick Killian** that the matter would be brought to the next Housing SPC meeting for consideration.



## Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

### 9.7 Submitted by Councillor Darren O' Rourke

*'That this Council declares its intention to begin the process of reducing, by the maximum reasonable level, the rate of LPT payable by householders. Go bhfógrófar an Chomhairle seo an cuspóir atá aici tús a chur le próiseas ísliú, an méid is féidir ar bhonn réasúnta, an ráta CMA atá le íoc ag sealbhóirí tí.*

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

Local Authorities are required to undertake a detailed process to determine the Local Property Tax and this includes public consultation and the significant input of the Corporate Policy Group, the Whips and the full Council. Any reduction in the Local Property Tax will have to form part of this process.

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Darren O' Rourke** and seconded by **Councillor Eimear Ferguson**.

Following a lengthy debate, and advice from Fiona Lawless, Head of Finance, the motion was noted.

## 10 Chief Executive's Report and Schedule of Chief Executive & Approved Orders (For Information Only)

Noted by the Councillors. The Cathaoirleach advised that the Chief Executive's report would, in future, be placed as a statutory item on future agendas to facilitate comment and discussion on the report.

10.1 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Transportation

10.2 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Environment

10.3 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Housing Construction

Noted by the Councillors.

## 11 Any Other Business

The matter of the Joint Policing Committee was raised and it was noted that the first meeting had not yet taken place.