



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Ordinary Meeting 8th April, 2013, Council Chamber

An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Niamh McGowan presided.

Members Present:

Councillors Joe Bonner, Sirena Campbell, William Carey, Shane Cassells, Jimmy Cudden, Francis Deane, Ann Dillon-Gallagher, John V. Farrelly, Jimmy Fegan, Brian Fitzgerald, Joe Fox, Oliver Fox, Wayne Harding, Jim Holloway, Suzanne Jamal, Nick Killian, Noel Leonard, Tracy McElhinney, Jenny McHugh, Maria Murphy, Gerry O'Connor, Bryan Reilly, Joe Reilly, Tommy Reilly, Catherine Yore.

Apologies: Cllr. Eugene Cassidy, Eoin Holmes, Arian Keogan.

Officials in Attendance:

County Manager Brendan McGrath

Directors of Service: Kevin Stewart, Fiona Lawless, Brendan McGrath, Des Foley. Joe Fahy (Acting)

Meetings Administrator Shane Donnelly

Senior Executive Officers: Larry Whelan, Michael Griffin

Planning Staff: Pat Gallagher, Senior Planner

Administrative Officers: Olive Falsey

Senior Executive Engineer: Caroline Corrigan

1.0 Confirmation of Minutes

- 1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 4th March 2013.
The minutes of meeting held on the 4th March 2013, were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Tommy Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding**.

2.0 Matters arising from the Minutes

No matters arising

3.0 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

Sympathy was extended to:

- Vivian Hoey, Housing Department, on the death of his brother Corbett Hoey.
- Paddy Fields, Water Caretaker, on the death of his father Oliver Fields.
- Etchen Dixon, Finance, on the death of his father Joseph Dixon.



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

- Enoch Kepekepe, Environment and Water Services on the death of his father Albert Kepekepe.

Congratulations were extended:

- Communities on their involvement in St. Patrick's Day Parades throughout the county and Civil Defence on their work on the day.
- All involved in the organising of the Hill of Slane Easter festival.
- Cllr. McHugh on her appointment as chair of Meath V.E.C.
- Slane G.F.C. on their recent success.

4.0 Statutory Business

4.1 Planning

4.1.1 To receive External Assessment Report in respect of the Planning Change Programme.

Brendan Mc Grath, Co. Manager, explained that the Review Group in 2011 proposed that a formal assessment would be undertaken of progress on their recommendations relating to planning functions, corporate governance issues and interactions with Councillors. The assessment included an examination of procedures/documents and interviews with relevant staff. It was noted that the report was positive and that the assessment panel recognised the ongoing commitment to continuously seek to maintain excellence in public service provision.

It was also agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Willie Carey** and seconded by **Councillor John V. Farrelly** that a further update would be provided on a two-yearly basis.

4.2 Transportation

4.2.1 To resolve to enter into an Agreement in the terms set out with Louth County Council pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001, whereby Meath County Council will exercise the statutory powers, functions and duties of Louth County Council in relation to the carrying out of the repair of Cusack's Bridge on the Meath/Louth border which is described in the Schedule to the Agreement and to affix the seal of the Council to the Agreement.

Resolved to enter Agreement on the proposal of **Councillor Wayne Harding** and seconded by **Councillor Ann Dillon –Gallagher**.

4.3 Finance

4.3.1 To receive the Annual Report (2012) of the Audit Committee.
Item deferred to May meeting on the proposal of **Councillor Nick Killian** and seconded by **Councillor Tommy Reilly**.



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

4.3.2 Update on financial position.

Fiona Lawless, Head of Finance, informed the meeting that the Annual Financial Statement would be presented at the May meeting. It was confirmed that collections regarding water and commercial rates were down. The meeting was also informed that, while a programme of water disconnections is in place, every effort is made through the water liaison officer to help customers who are in arrears.

4.4 Environment

4.4.1 To receive a presentation and to consider a series of recommendations arising from the carrying out of a comprehensive survey of burial grounds in the County (as recommended by the Environment Strategic Policy Committee). Larry Whelan, Senior Executive Officer, made the presentation, the main points of which were:

- The issues arising from the survey of burial grounds undertaken in 2011, together with extensive studies in relation to Burial Ground issues.
- The objectives of the draft policy and the recommendations for inclusion in the document.

The meeting was informed of the next step i.e. to consult with the relevant stakeholders and prepare a Draft Burial Grounds Policy Document and draft By Laws, which will incorporate the findings of the Survey and the recommendations. It was noted that the Environment SPC has recommended acceptance of these recommendations.

Following the presentation, a lengthy debate took place and the main issues raised were:

- The difficulties facing the Council in acquiring suitable land for burial grounds.
- Rights of way to old cemeteries.

The County Manager, advised that the Local Authority has statutory responsibility for the provision of burial grounds and has to take into account matters such as River Basin Plans in identifying suitable sites in the county.

5.0 Report from Protocol Committee

The Meetings' Administrator advised of a proposal to amend Standing Orders regarding the filling of non-party casual vacancies and that the matter will be considered at the May meeting of the full Council.



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

6.0 Correspondence

6.1 Circular RLR 3/2013 - Regional and Local Road Grants, Restoration Improvement Grant, Discretionary Grant, Specific Improvement & Strategic Grants.

RW 5/2013 – Regional and Local Road Grants – Drainage Grant.

A lengthy debate took place regarding the current situation of local roads and particularly the issue of drainage. Joe Fahy, Director of Services, advised the Councillors that the Community Involvement Scheme is open until 19th April, with €5m. available for the whole country.

6.2 Circular WP 03.13 - European Union (Household Food Waste and Bio-Waste) Regulations 2013.

Noted

6.3 Local Property Tax Retention.

Circular Planning Section/Local Government Section PS/LGFPT 2/2013 – Finance (Local Property Tax) Regulations 2013 (S.I. 91 of 2013).

A number of queries were raised as to how Local Authorities will be funded and what criteria will be used to determine the baseline funding excluding what is raised locally. The matter was noted.

6.4 National Ports Policy.

Noted

6.5 Planning Circular Letter PL.3/2013 – Addendum to Development Contribution Guidelines for Local Authorities (No.24).

Noted

Other noted items of correspondence included:

- Electoral (Amendment) (Dáil Constituencies) Act 2013 – Revision of Dáil Constituencies.
- Transfer of Responsibility for Supervision of Commercial Vehicle Testing Centres from the Local Authorities to RSA.
- Rural Water Programme: Block Grant Allocations, 2013-05-07
- Membership list of Meath Economic Forum – Kevin Stewart advised regarding one additional member, Miriam Doyle, Legal Affairs Director with Coco Cola.

7.0 Notice of Question

7.1 Submitted by Councillor Tommy Reilly:

“Can the Manager give this council a report on what discussions has taken place with the group that was set up by Tom Dowling regarding the new port at Gormanstown.”

A response to the question was provided by Michael Griffin, S.E.O., Planning and Strategic Transport.



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

8.0 Notice of Motion

8.1 Submitted by Councillor Wayne Harding:

“In light of the new analysis received that Meath County Council call on the Minister for Transport Tourism and Sport to make the necessary funding available for a new application to An Bord Pleanála for the N2 Slane Bypass.”

Following a debate on the motion, it was unanimously adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Wayne Harding** and seconded by **Councillor Shane Cassells**.

8.2 Submitted by Councillor Wayne Harding:

“That Meath County Council call on the Minister for the Environment to exempt all estates from the local property tax that were previously exempt from the household charge.”

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Wayne Harding** and seconded by Councillor Shane Cassells.

A response to the motion was provided by Michael Griffin, S.E.O. which noted that the criteria on which the exemptions from the Household Charge and the Property Tax are defined, have been substantially changed. Following a debate on the motion an amended motion i.e.

“That Meath County Council call on the Minister for the Environment to exempt all estates from the local property tax that were previously exempt from the household charge (other than those estates that have been since taken in charge) and to exempt those estates which contained houses that have been certified as having pyrite.” was proposed by **Councillor Joe Bonner** and seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding**. The motion was adopted following a ‘show of hands’ vote. Result: **14** For, **9** Against, **2** Abstained, **4** Absent.

8.3 Submitted by Councillor Shane Cassells:

“That Meath County Council and the library service do not proceed with the planned action to introduce a fee to members of the public for the use of the borrowbook.ie scheme in our public libraries and that the ethos of the library as a resource available to all is maintained, especially in these current harsh economic times.”

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Shane Cassells** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**.

A response to the motion was provided by the County Librarian, which outlined the rationale behind the planned action. A lengthy debate



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

followed and it was agreed that the matter would be discussed further with the County Librarian and that the motion at 8.3 would be deferred.

8.4 Submitted by Councillor Noel Leonard:

“That Meath County Council contact Minister Brian Hayes immediately and request that the now decommissioned Garda station in Kilmessan not be sold on the private market by the OPW but instead be transferred to the Council for the purpose of providing a community facility for the people the village in order to offer some facilities to them.”

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Noel Leonard** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**. A lengthy debate took place on the motion and it was adopted following a ‘show of hands’ vote.

An extension of time (five minutes) was granted on the proposal of **Councillor John V. Farrelly** and seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding**.

8.5 Submitted by Councillor Tommy Reilly:

“As Minister Phil Hogan has announced grants for the upgrading of septic tanks that this council contact Minister Hogan for an update on when these works can commence.”

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Tommy Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Bryan Reilly**.

A full debate took place and Larry Whelan provided responses to a number of queries. He informed the meeting that no details have yet been made available regarding grant funding, or how it will be administered, but that 40 inspections will be conducted by trained Council staff. The motion was unanimously adopted.

9.0 Schedule of Manager’s & Approved Orders (For Information Only)

- 9.1 Schedule of Manager’s Orders - Infrastructure
- 9.2 Schedule of Manager’s Orders - Environment
- 9.3 Schedule of Manager’s Orders – Housing Construction

Noted



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

10.0 Presentations by other Bodies/Statutory Agencies

No presentations

An extension of time (five minutes) was granted on the proposal of **Councillor John V. Farrelly** and seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding**.

11.0 Any Other Business

- The issue of directional signage on M3 was raised by Councillor Brian Fitzgerald and it was agreed that Transportation would investigate the matter.
- The issue of Heritage Signage and the replacement of same was raised by Cllr N Killian.
- Councillor McElhinney advised that DKIT would be providing an information session in the Solstice Arts Centre on the 28th April and Councillors/Officials would be receiving an invitation in respect of same shortly.
- Kevin Stewart, DOS reminded Councillors that the Inaugural Meeting of the Meath Economic Forum would take place on Wednesday 9th May 2013.
- An Cathaoirleach reminded the Councillors that Pieta House “ Darkness Into Light” Walk would take place on the 11th May.

This Concluded the Business of the Meeting