



Miontuairiscí/ Meeting Minutes

Ordinary Meeting 10th January 2011, Council Chamber

An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Ann Dillon-Gallagher presided.

Members Present:

Councillors Joseph Bonner, Ray Butler, Sirena Campbell, William Carey, Shane Cassells, Eugene Cassidy, Jimmy Cudden, Francis Deane, Regina Doherty, John V Farrelly, Jimmy Fegan, Brian Fitzgerald, Oliver Fox, Wayne Harding, Jim Holloway, Suzanne Jamal, Nick Killian, Noel Leonard, Tracy McElhinney, Niamh McGowan, Jenny McHugh, Maria Murphy, Seamus O'Neill, Bryan Reilly, Joe Reilly, Tommy Reilly, Catherine Yore.

Officials in Attendance:

County Manager Tom Dowling

Directors of Service: Tadhg McDonnell, Kevin Stewart, Eugene Cummins, Brendan McGrath, Fiona Lawless.

Meetings Administrator Martin Rogers

Senior Executive Officers: Larry Whelan, Ger Murphy (Acting)

Senior Engineer: Gerry Boyle

Apologies: Councillor Eoin Holmes.

1.0 Confirmation of Minutes

- 1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Monthly meeting held on 6th December 2010.
The minutes of Monthly meeting held on 6th December 2010 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor John V. Farrelly** and seconded by **Councillor Tommy Reilly**.
- 1.2 Confirmation of minutes of Preliminary Budget meeting held on 29th November 2010.
The minutes of Preliminary Budget meeting held on 29th November 2010 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor John V. Farrelly** and seconded by **Councillor Tommy Reilly**.
- 1.3 Confirmation of minutes of Statutory Budget meeting held on 9th December 2010.
The minutes of Statutory Budget meeting held on 9th December 2010 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor John V. Farrelly** and seconded by **Councillor Tommy Reilly**.



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2.0 Matters arising from the Minutes

Severe Weather Response

The Cathaoirleach stated that she would like to thank all the staff associated with the Council's response who had acted above and beyond the call of duty to the severe weather experienced for almost 6 weeks from the end of November until into the New Year. She indicated that she was aware that staff, management, engineering, outdoor staff, maintenance staff and caretakers worked around the clock dealing with first of all the month of snow that was endured from about 26th November and then the problems with interruptions to the water supply that occurred between Christmas and New Year. She continued that these severe weather events were becoming more frequent now and whereas snowfalls and freezing weather like this only occurred every 30 or 40 years there have now been two serious spells of weather in the same year. In fact she noted that the recent weather was the worst ever recorded for December since records began.

She pointed out that there was a case for all agencies to examine their emergency response plans and see what changes, if any, needed to be made to deal with these more frequent events. She added that she was aware that Management is now examining the Council response over the past 6 weeks or so and will be considering any changes or improvements that needs to be made for the future.

Points which were made by a number of Members included the following:

- ⇒ The dedication and commitment of Council staff could not be questioned
- ⇒ Surprise at the reports in some of the media about a lack of information particularly about the water situation in Dunboyne
- ⇒ The need for a review of the Council's actions during the period over Christmas particularly the communication system as it related to the emergency out of hours service and the updating of information on the website
- ⇒ The need for a review of the gritting routes and to keep not just the national roads but the regional roads open
- ⇒ The depth of pipes put in by some developers was not adequate
- ⇒ The dependency of the Council for water on other local authorities

In response Council Management through the County Manager Tom Dowling and Directors of Services Kevin Stewart, Eugene Cummins and Brendan McGrath set out the following:

- ⇒ **Communications:** There were (a) 41 written press statements which were copied to all Councillors, media and placed on website (b) 14 live updates on local radio as well as adverts/notices on news bulletins (c) 3 interviews on national TV and radio (d) over 3,081 calls registered on the out of hours emergency service in December with 2332 (76%) answered and 672 calls referred for action. Whilst acknowledging there may have been shortcomings with the emergency contact number during a few days after Christmas this was due to the fact that the system was inundated with calls. An additional emergency switchboard was opened in County Hall on 29th December to support the out of hours service. Communication difficulties were also not helped in that national and local media were operating at significantly reduced levels.
- ⇒ **Salting/Gritting:** It is not possible to salt all roads in the county. The programme operated in accordance with the published schedule which had been agreed by the Council. The vast majority of gritted routes were passable during the severe cold spell.



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Worst hit areas of the county benefitted from additional local gritting. There was close liaison with inter agency groups and also the NRA and salt stocks were maintained and managed very well during the severe weather period.

- ⇒ **Water Supply:** The Council supplies water to approximately 135,000 people (10.6million gallons) and maintaining this supply to the majority of these people was the Council first priority during the severe spell. This was achieved due to strategic water services management despite the fact that at its peak demand increased close to 150% of normal (over 14 million gallons). There were up to 40 water tanks supplied at seriously affected locations. Over 120 leaks were repaired on the public mains but very low numbers were without water and these were in the main related to problems with frozen service pipes. Between 95 and 98% of consumers had a continuous reliable water supply and suffered little or no disruption. Demand on the supply is still operating at about 20% above normal.
- ⇒ **General:** Satisfied that high quality service was provided which was down to strategic and high level management over the period of some 40 days. Lessons will always be learned and a debriefing will be held shortly with staff.

3.0 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

Sympathy was extended to the family of the late Kieran Kelly, former employee.

Congratulations were extended to the town of Trim on achieving 2nd place in the Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) Anti-Litter League.

4.0 Statutory Business

4.1 Environment

- 4.1.1 To receive briefing note on 'Protocol for the Use of Biosolids in Agriculture in Co. Meath'

A presentation was provided by Ger Murphy and Declan Grimes from the Environment Section. It was noted that a protocol had been prepared and had been presented to the Environment SPC on 15th December 2010. The aim of the Protocol will be to ensure compliance with legislation and to control and regulate the safe use of the product

- 4.1.2 To receive report on "Anti-Litter & Illegal Dumping" Campaign 2010. A presentation was provided by Ger Murphy and Peter Brady from the Environment Section. Following the presentation issues raised by the Members included dog littering, the use of CCTV at bottle banks, the dumping of tyres, the indiscriminate dumping on private land, designation of one point in towns for posters during elections. The issues raised were responded to by the officials.



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5.0 Correspondence

- 5.1 Correspondence from Coillte re Coillte Consultation Opportunity – Update of District Strategic Plans.
Noted.
- 5.2 Correspondence from Department of Education and Skills re Meeting Request to discuss Educational Needs in Navan.
Members noted and welcomed the fact that the Department had acceded to the Council's request to meet a delegation. It was noted that the Protocol Committee had considered this matter and recommended that the Navan Area Members, the Town & Area Manager and Senior Planning Officials should attend such a meeting. It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Shane Cassells seconded by Councillor Jim Holloway that the Navan Area Members along with the Town & Area Manager and Senior Planning Officials would attend the meeting in Tullamore. Such meeting to be confirmed with Department for Tuesday 18th January 2011.
- 5.3 Correspondence from Union of Students in Ireland re processing of Higher Education Grants by Meath County Council

Members noted and welcomed the fact that the letter praised the Council for its performance in handling the increased number of grants in 2010/2011 academic year. Members agreed that the staff involved in the processing of these grants were deserving of such compliments.

6.0 Report from Protocol Committee

Members were advised of the following two recommendations from the Protocol Committee meeting held this morning:

(1) that the delegation to attend the meeting with the Department of Education & Skills in Tullamore to discuss the educational needs of Navan should consist of the Navan Area Members, the Town & Area Manager and Senior Planning Officials.
This was approved by the full Council on the proposal of Councillor Shane Cassells seconded by Councillor Jim Holloway.

(2) that the Council participate in the new Public Liability Insurance Scheme for Elected Members provided by Irish Public Bodies as advised in the correspondence of 21st December 2010.

This was approved by the full Council on the proposal of Councillor John V. Farrelly seconded by Councillor Willie Carey.

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



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8.0 Notice of Question

8.1 Submitted by Councillor Francis Deane:

“Could I please request an up to date report on the salt barn at Mullaghboy Industrial Estate. Taking into consideration the many school days lost as a direct result of snowy and icy conditions, would Meath County Council consider supplying local schools with salt if these schools were to purchase salt bunkers?”

Written response circulated.

8.2 Submitted by Councillor Jim Holloway:

“What is the current situation in relation to commissioning the new Reservoir at Carn Hill, Navan and the operation of the extraction/treatment plant at Kilcarn in respect of a number of issues:

- 1. a reason why Carn Hill Reservoir is not operational considering that the structural work is complete;*
- 2. the reason for the delay in the joint operation the reservoir and the extraction/treatment plant at Kilcarn as intended in delivering capacity to Navan and guaranteeing water supply to the surrounding area and villages;*
- 3. apart from the problems associated with the recent weather conditions but considering the fact that residents in parts of Navan, particularly Johnstown, and those living in the wider area and villages have for years not enjoyed the benefit of a secure public water supply, what is the timeframe for the full commissioning of the Carn Hill Reservoir?”*

Written response circulated

9.0 Notice of Motion

None

10.0 Schedule of Manager’s Orders (For Information Only)

- 10.1 Schedule of Manager’s Orders - Infrastructure
- 10.2 Schedule of Manager’s Orders - Environment
- 10.3 Schedule of Manager’s Orders – Housing Construction
- 10.4 Schedule of Manager’s Orders – Community & Enterprise

The schedules of Manager’s Orders were noted



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11.0 Presentations

- 11.1 To receive a presentation from Mary Murphy, Sports Co-ordinator, Meath Local Sports Partnership (MLSP).

A presentation was provided by Mary Murphy on the key programmes and measures being undertaken by the Meath Local Sports Partnership. As there was a scheduled MLSP Board meeting (which Mary had to attend) it was agreed that if Members had any questions they could forward them in writing directly to Mary for response.

12.0 Any Other Business

None