



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Ordinary Meeting

8th June 2020, Solstice Theatre @ 1.30p.m.

Presiding

Councillor David Gilroy, Cathaoirleach

Councillors Present:

Councillors Yemi Adenuga, Tom Behan, Joe Bonner, Mike Bray, Eugene Cassidy, Francis Deane, Aisling Dempsey, Seán Drew, Edward Fennessy, Brian Fitzgerald, Pdraig Fitzsimons, Joe Fox, Noel French, Michael Gallagher, Trevor Golden, Wayne Harding, Suzanne Jamal, Geraldine Keogan, Nick Killian, Alan Lawes, Paul McCabe, Elaine McGinty, Stephen McKee, Paddy Meade, Ronan Moore, Maria Murphy, Gerry O'Connor, Aisling O'Neill, Damien O'Reilly, Sarah Reilly, Tommy Reilly, Amanda Smith, Niamh Souhan, Alan Tobin, Emer Tóibín, Sharon Tolan, Gillian Toole, Conor Tormey.

Apologies: Councillor Deirdre Geraghty-Smith

Officials in attendance:

Chief Executive: Jackie Maguire

Directors of Service: Des Foley, Fiona Lawless, Barry Lynch, Kevin Stewart

Meetings Administrator: Robert Collins

Senior Executive Officers: Larry Whelan, Ger Murphy, Dara McGowan

1 Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary Meeting held on 2nd March 2020

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 2nd March 2020 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Paul McCabe**.

2 Matters arising from the Minutes

Members resumed the discussion on the anniversary of the 1920 local elections and the first meeting of Meath County Council, which was carried forward from the AGM. There were contributions from the following **Councillors: Noel French, Paul McCabe; Joe Fox and Joe Bonner**.

3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

Sympathy was extended to:

- The family of the late Timothy Harley retired Caretaker (MCC)
- Dominic Murtagh, G.O. Navan MD on the death of his son, Shane Murtagh.
- Tom Traynor, Housing on the death of his mother, Maureen Traynor.



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

- Helen O'Connell, Trim Library on the death of her father, Brendan O'Connell.
- Stephen O'Hare, Motor Tax and Carol O'Hare, Finance on the death of their mother/mother-in-law, Noeleen O'Hare.
- Philip Traynor, Dunshaughlin Civic Office/RatoathMD on the death of his mother, Liz Traynor.
- Maurice Kelly, Transportation on the death of his father, Brendan Kelly.
- Noel Fleming, Water Services on the death of his brother, Seán Fleming former employee.
- Cllr. Conor Tormey on the death of his wife, Kathleen Tormey and his mother-in-law, Phyllis Twomey.
- Helen McDonnell, Water Services on the death of her father, Linus McDonnell.
- Mary Ballantyne former employee on the death of her mother, Delia Bridget Carolan.
- Mary Dunne, Transportation on the death of her mother, Patricia (Patsy) Reilly.
- James Mangan former Councillor on the death of his wife, Jane Mangan.
- Loreto Guinan, Planning on the death of her mother, Mary Guinan.
- Fiona Lawless, Finance on the death of her sister, Siobhan Rooney.
- The family of the late John Power and Martin Reilly tenant of Meath Co. Council.
- Veronica Rogers & Anne Marie Brady former employees on the death of their mother, Bridie Smith.
- The wife and family of the late Declan Murphy, Civil Defence Volunteer.
- Colm Ennis, GSS, Trim MD & family on the death of his sister, Monica Holmes former employee.
- The family of the late Robbie McCormack, Meath Association, New York.
- The family of Thomas Dunne, cousin of Councillor Paddy Meade.
- The family of Vera Collins, sister of former Councillor Patsy O'Neill.
- The family of John (Johnny) Kierans, Drogheda.
- Alan Watson, member of the Transportation SPC on the death of his father Gerry Watson.
- All the families in Meath that have lost a loved one through Covid 19.
- The family of George Floyd – note of sympathy to be conveyed to the US Embassy.

Congratulations were extended to:

- Various community groups across the county that volunteered help and support during the Covid 19 restrictions;
- Laytown-Bettystown Beach Management Committee;
- Staff and the Executive of Meath County Council, special mention for Community Department staff;
- Frontline workers across the county
- Annie Hoey, Sharon Keogan and Shane Cassells on their election to Senead Eireann;
- Students that graduated in 2020;
- MCC Library Service for its online content;
- Climate Action Forum;



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

- Meath LEO and the Kells Tech Hub;
- Helen Behan for her Bafta Nomination and her work as a nurse;
- Facebook Data Centre Clonee for its funding for start-ups and school laptops.

Councillor Tormey expressed his gratitude for the various expressions of sympathy that he had received in recent weeks.

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 Finance

5.1.1 To receive Draft Annual Financial Statement 2019.

A presentation on the draft Annual Financial Statement was made by Mr Paul Timoney, Financial Accountant, outlining total income and expenditure for 2019, the breakdown of this by income sources and expenditure headings and how the Council had managed its revenue deficit and unfunded capital balance.

There was a discussion on the draft AFS with interventions by and questions from the following: **Councillors Sean Drew; Michael Gallagher; Brian Fitzgerald and Gillian Toole**, with clarifications provided where required.

5.1.2 To approve (i) revised expenditure for the financial year ended 31st December, 2019 as set out in Table A in accordance with S104 of the Local Government Act 2001 and (ii) transfers to and from Capital as set out in Table B.

This was approved on the proposal by **Councillor Gillian Toole** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**.

5.1.3 To note a Quarterly Financial Statement for Meath County Council as at 31st March 2020.

The Quarterly Financial Statement was noted by the meeting.

5.2 Corporate Services

5.2.1 To adopt the Audit Committee Charter 2019-2024.

The Audit Committee Charter 2019-2024 was adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Sean Drew** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor**.

5.2.2 To note the Audit Committee Work Programme 2020.

The Audit Committee Work Programme 2020 was noted by the Elected Members.

5.2.3 To note the Audit Committee 2019 Annual Report.



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

The Audit Committee 2019 Annual Report was noted by the Elected Members.

5.2.4 To note the Audit Committee Report in relation to the Annual Financial Statement and Local Government Auditor's Report for the year ended 31st December 2018.

The Audit Committee Report was noted by the Elected Members.

5.2.5 To receive and note Meath County Council's Annual Report 2019.

The Council's Annual Report was noted by the Elected Members.

5.2.6 To adopt the East Border Region Charter and protocols.

Adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Sean Drew** and Seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade**.

5.3 Planning

5.3.1 To receive the Members' views in respect of a proposed development by Lightsource Renewable Energy (ABP-307136-20), for development described as 110kV substation with associated electrical plant, control buildings, welfare facilities, security fencing, additional internal access traces, 110kV overhead line grid connection to existing transmission line on site, which will consist of a 10 year permission, on lands at Harristown, Castlejordan and Clongall, Co. Meath, the subject of the Chief Executive's Report to An Bord Pleanála of June 2020 (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 2000-2019.

A presentation on the proposed development was made by Mr. Frank O'Donnell, Executive Planner, which outlined the proposed development, the site and location for the development and its rationale, in terms of its necessity to deliver the solar farm, which has already been granted planning permission. This current Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) application was received by An Bord Pleanála (ABP) on April 9th and submissions are due by June 29, 2020. Comments made by the Elected Members will be appended to the report to ABP.

Contributions were made by the following **Councillors: Noel French; Ronan Moore; Alan Lawes and Sarah Reilly.**

5.3.2 To note the revised timetable for the Review of the County Development Plan.

The revised timetable was presented by Mr. Sean Clarke, Senior Executive Officer, who advised that due to the Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (Covid 19) Act 2020, it was now anticipated that the Plan would not be adopted until April 2021. Meetings to adopt or amend the Chief Executive's Report would be held on week beginning October 19 and in order to achieve this the 12 weeks the Members have to consider the report may need to be reduced slightly. **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** proposed cutting the Member's timeframe for considering the report to 10 weeks, thereby giving an additional 2 weeks to the Planning Department to ensure the completion of the report.



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

There was a discussion on a number of aspects, with members expressing concern that the review of the County Development Plan is taking place at a time of great uncertainty and at a time where a revision of the National Planning Framework may be required.

Other members sought clarification from the Executive on a number of policy matters. Contributions were made by **Councillors: Nick Killian; Brian Fitzgerald; Gillian Toole; Paul McCabe; Tommy Reilly; Alan Lawes; Michael Gallagher; Alan Tobin; Elaine McGinty; Sean Drew;** and **Maria Murphy**. Both Director of Services, Kevin Stewart and Mr. Clarke provided clarifications on the issues raised, including that any changes to policy would be incorporated into the Plan by way of a variation or Section 28 guidelines.

5.4 Community

5.4.1 To receive details and approve the allocations under the Community Grants Scheme 2020, as recommended by the Housing, Community & Cultural Development SPC on May 21, 2020.

Approved on the proposal of **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Francis Deane**.

Councillor Sharon Tolan sought clarification regarding the inclusion of Laytown Tidy Towns Committee on the list of approvals.

5.4.2 To receive details and approve the allocations under the Regional Festivals and Participative Events – Small Grants Scheme in Co. Meath as recommended by the Housing, Community & Cultural Development SPC on May 21, 2020.

Approved on the proposal of **Councillor Noel French** and seconded by **Councillor Aisling Dempsey**.

5.4.3 To receive details and approve the allocations under the Carranstown Environmental Projects Grants Scheme 2019, as recommended by the Indaver Community Liaison Committee and endorsed by the Laytown/Bettystown Municipal District Councillors on May 14, 2020.

Approved on the proposal of **Councillor Sharon Tolan** and seconded by **Councillor Tom Behan**.

5.5 Transportation

5.5.1 To enter into an agreement with Cavan County Council pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act, 2001, whereby Cavan County Council, will exercise the statutory powers, functions and duties of Meath County Council which are described in the Schedule to the Agreement, in relation to N3 Virginia By-Pass Project.

Approved on the proposal of **Councillor Eugene Cassidy** and seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade**.

6 Reports

6.1 Chief Executive's Report (including Up-date on the Financial Impacts of the Covid-19 crisis)



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

The Chief Executive introduced the report, with a focus on the finance section and the overview of the impact that the Covid 19 crisis has had on the Council's finances, in particular, the impact on income from commercial rates and from goods and services. She outlined the provisions that the Government has put in place thus far for a rates waiver for three months but explained that a further provision was necessary, in order to cover the full impact of the crisis. The report also outlined a number of areas where potential savings were possible. However, the Chief Executive did highlight that the information provided to the members at this time does not provide the full picture and that the true impact will be clearer in the coming months.

There were a number of interventions from the following **Councillors: Wayne Harding; Mick Killian; Tommy Reilly; Sarah Reilly; Maria Murphy; Sean Drew; Brian Fitzgerald; Gillian Toole; Ronan Moore; Alan Tobin; Damien O'Reilly; Sharon Tolan; Michael Gallagher; Eugene Cassidy; Paul McCabe; Trevor Golden; Yemi Adenuga; Alan Lawes; and Pdraig Fitzsimons.**

While most of the interventions focused on the financial situation, a number of other issues were also raised, including: Housing (purchase of second-hand homes; lands in public ownership; Council housing construction; adaptation grants; Carrick Street site in Kells; anti-social behaviour by MCC tenants); the Business Re-Start Grants; Litter; Playgrounds; Library Services; the Vacant Sites Register; Cycle-lanes; Cruinniú n'Og; Heritage Grants; JPC/SPC meetings; and roads in north Meath. Responses were provided on these by members of the Management Team and the Chief Executive.

6.2 Report from the Corporate Policy Group

The Meetings Administrator informed the meeting that the CPG had met on four occasions in the previous five weeks, three meeting via Zoom and one face-to-face meeting in the Solstice Theatre. At these meetings, the CPG had discussed service delivery issues during the restrictions; the practical arrangements for meetings of the Council and Municipal Districts (MDs); the business of the meetings and the financial impact on the Council of the Covid crisis.

Councillor Gerry O'Connor raised a point about the status of the MDs and their meetings. Director of Services, Des Foley explained their statutory status and that the meetings of the MDs were held via Zoom in line with public health guidance during April and May and that the June meetings would be face-to-face meetings.

6.3 Report from the Protocol Committee

There was no report, as the Protocol Committee did not meet.

7 Correspondence

7.1 Correspondence from the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission in response to Notice of Motion 9.9 adopted at the February 2020 meeting of the full Council re. prohibitive and exorbitant costs associated with connecting into the public water, public waste water and sewerage systems particularly for one-off houses.



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.2** Correspondence from Department of Justice and Equality in response to Notice of Motion 9.8 and 9.9 at the September 2019 meeting of the full Council and Item 7.2 at the December 2019 meeting of the full Council re. call for immediate closure of all Meath based Direct Provision Centres.

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.3** LG 2/2020 – Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government re. Ethical Framework for Local Government – Annual Declaration Forms.

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.4** Correspondence from Department of Rural and Community Development re. Rural Development Investment Programme.

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.5** Correspondence from Immigrant Council of Ireland.

Noted by the Elected Members.

8 Notice of Question

8.1 Submitted by the Sinn Féin Councillors

"To ask the Chief Executive to confirm (a) the amount of decline of commercial rates income to date since the start of the Covid 19 public health emergency (b) the total expected income shortfall as a result of the Government's waiving of commercial rates as an aid to business recovery (c) the additional expenditure incurred by the Council to date as a result of the emergency; and if the CE will detail any contact or discussions with the Department of Housing and Local Government about a compensatory package for the Council to offset the decline in rates income and the added expenditure?"

Response

Meath County Council continues to assess the impact of Covid-19 on the financial position of the Council. An initial review of the Income and Expenditure elements of the 2020 Revenue Budget has been undertaken and the detail of this is provided in the Monthly Chief Executive Report (Item 6.1).

The Council is working in liaison with the other local authorities in providing the Department with a detailed impact analysis of the Covid-10 crisis on the local government sector. The Council Executive welcomes the statement made by Minister John Paul Phelan to the Dail on May 28th particularly on future local government finance and support for the sector more generally.

Councillor Aisling O'Neill sought a clarification on capital projects.



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Noted by the Elected Members.

8.2 Submitted by Councillor Gerry O'Connor

“Can the executive provide details of how much of the €600k Councillors discretionary fund for 2020 has been “Paid” to date and provide in tabular form the breakdown of these allocations per Municipal District and per Councillor?”

Response

Under the 2020 Municipal District Scheme, a total of €19,500 was paid out up to 12th March 2020, when the scheme was temporarily suspended. The total paid out excludes all payments associated with internal and external allocations, including those brought before municipal district meetings, that had not been fully processed for payment by the above date.

Allocations totaling €65,403 had been brought to a municipal district meeting for noting prior to 12th March and/or were due to be brought to the March meetings of Navan and Trim Municipal Districts. However, processing of these payments had not been completed by 12th March 2020.

Municipal District	Ashbourne	
Councillor	Amount paid out	Amount noted at MD but process for payment incomplete by 12/03/2020
Joe Bonner	0	15,000
Suzanne Jamal	0	0
Darren O'Rourke/Aisling O'Neill	0	2,100
Amanda Smith	0	0
Alan Tobin	0	0
Conor Tormey	0	0
Total	0	€17,100

Municipal District	Kells	
Councillor	Amount paid out	Amount noted at MD but process for payment incomplete by 12/03/2020
Mike Bray	0	0
Eugene Cassidy	0	0
Sean Drew	0	1,500
David Gilroy	0	0
Johnny Guirke/Michael Gallagher	2,500	0
Paul McCabe	0	4,000
Sarah Reilly	0	0
Total	€2,500	€5,500



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Municipal District	Laytown-Bettystown	
Councillor	Amount paid out	Amount noted at MD but process for payment incomplete by 12/03/2020
Tom Behan	0	0
Wayne Harding	0	0
Annie Hoey	0	0
Sharon Keogan	0	5,000
Stephen McKee	0	3,200
Paddy Meade	0	0
Sharon Tolan	0	0
Total	0	€8,200

Municipal District	Navan	
Councillor	Amount paid out	Amount noted at MD/due for noting in March but process for payment incomplete by 12/03/2020
Yemi Adenuga	0	0
Francis Deane	0	0
Edward Fennessy	0	753
Padraig Fitzsimons	0	0
Alan Lawes	0	0
Tommy Reilly	500	400
Emer Toibin	0	0
Total	€500	€1,153

Municipal District	Ratoath	
Councillor	Amount paid out	Amount noted at MD but process for payment incomplete by 12/03/2020
Brian Fitzgerald	0	7,000
Deirdre Geraghty-Smith	0	0
Nick Killian	1,500	2,350
Maria Murphy	500	5,500
Gerry O'Connor	2,000	2,000
Damien O'Reilly	2,500	500
Gillian Toole	0	0
Total	€6,500	€17,350

Municipal District	Trim	
Councillor	Amount paid out	Amount noted at MD/due for noting



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

		in March but process for payment incomplete by 12/03/2020
Aisling Dempsey	0	0
Joe Fox	0	0
Noel French	10,000	1,100
Trevor Golden	0	0
Ronan Moore	0	15,000
Niamh Souhan	0	0
Total	€10,000	€16,100

Noted by the Elected Members.

8.3 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin

“When will the successful applicants be notified for this year’s Community Amenity Project Scheme?”

Response

It is hoped to present details of the submitted applications and proposed grant amount recommendations at the September MD briefings/meetings. These recommendations will then be presented at the October Full Council meeting for consideration and approval by the Members. The successful applicants will be notified after the October Full Council meeting.

Noted by the Elected Members.

8.4 Submitted by Councillor Paul McCabe

“To ask the Executive how much revenue was received in commercial rates for the months February, March, April and May 2020?”

Response

The table below sets out the income received in relation to Commercial Rates for the period Jan – May 2020.

For 2020, €43,941,094 of Rate Demands has been generated. Facebook has paid in full, both Irish Water and Eirgrid which are 2 new Global Accounts for Meath Council in 2020 have already paid. The monthly direct debit for March was 1.3M and has reduced to 700,000 in May, the May figure for direct debit should be the same or greater than March.

Commercial Rate Receipts 2020						
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Total
Receipts	680,699	1,248,488	5,041,674	5,480,156	1,397,033	13,848,050



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

The receipts figure for May is draft as the month had not yet ended at time of compilation of the figures.

Noted by the Elected Members.

8.5 Submitted by Councillor Mike Bray

“If the waiver is to be extended, what are the estimated shortfalls in commercial rate collections for June, July, August and September 2020 in monetary and percentage terms and have the council explored any contingency plans to make up for these potential shortfalls?”

Response

Meath County Council continues to assess the impact of Covid-19 on the financial position of the Council. An initial review of the Income and Expenditure elements of the 2020 Revenue Budget has been undertaken and the detail of this is provided in the Monthly Chief Executive Report (Item 6.1).

Noted by the Elected Members.

9 Notice of Motion

9.1 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin

“In light of the easing of the easing of restrictions, the ability to adhere to HSE guidelines and the importance of community based volunteerism, call on Meath County Council to reinstate the 2020 Pride of Place competition with amongst other sensible changes, an online awards night.

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

The operation of the Pride of Place initiative was examined in detail taking into account the current Covid-19 restrictions. The majority of the volunteers and some of the judges are older people and many of these have been cocooning for some time. Being mindful of the public health guidance regarding social distancing and staying at home as much as possible, it was determined that the most appropriate course of action for 2020 was to postpone the pride of place initiative.

In lieu of Pride of Place for 2020 a “Community Wellbeing Initiative” is being finalised with details to be circulated before the end of June.

The supporting information and the motion, proposed by **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Sharon Tolan**, was noted.

9.2 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin

That Meath County Council engages with all hotels, bars, restaurants and coffee shops to help ensure that, as these businesses start to trade once again, outdoor spaces that could be utilised for tables



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

and seating are sought, regulated and allocated in the open air or possibly under limited cover to increase their capacity thus giving them a chance to return to some sort of normal trade.”

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

Meath County Council has a track record in working with the Chambers of Commerce and other groups in the county to support and facilitate the development of local businesses. The Council will continue to liaise with these groups and with local businesses to ensure that the county’s leisure, hospitality and retail sectors remain viable and return to business, as the current restrictions are eased.

There was an intervention from **Councillor Nick Killian**. The motion, proposed by **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Maria Murphy**, was noted.

9.3 Submitted by Councillor Gerry O’Connor

“That Meath County Council executive immediately reverse the decision to suspend Councillors Discretionary funding.”

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

Meath County Council continues to assess the impact of Covid-19 on the financial position of the Council. An initial review of the Income and Expenditure elements of the 2020 Revenue Budget has been undertaken and the detail of this is provided in the Monthly Chief Executive Report (Item 6.1).

On a proposal from **Councillor Gerry O’Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Francis Deane**, it was agreed to extend the meeting to 6.15pm.

Following the introduction of the motion by **Councillor Gerry O’Connor** there was an amendment proposed by **Councillor Wayne Harding** on behalf of the Corporate Policy Group as follows: that €10,000 of the Discretionary Funding would be made available to members with the remaining €5,000 being reviewed in September when further information would be available on the Council’s financial situation.

There were a number of interventions by **Councillors: Joe Bonner; Maria Murphy; Nick Killian; Alan Lawes; Joe Fox; and Francis Deane**.

The proposal from the CPG was rejected and the motion, proposed by **Councillor Gerry O’Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Maria Murphy**, was agreed. The Chief Executive noted the decision, in light of the information provided to the meeting on the Council’s financial position.

On a proposal from **Councillor Paddy Meade** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin**, it was agreed to extend the meeting to 6.30pm.



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

9.4 Submitted by Councillor Sharon Tolan

"In order to protect public health, and assist with ensuring public health guidelines can be followed, call on Meath County Council to continue to prohibit vehicle access to all Meath beaches, at least until social distancing is no longer advised by public health officials."

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

Meath County Council has and will continue to review vehicular access to all amenity sites including the beaches and in doing so will consider the guidance provided by the Government. At this moment the beaches are closed to vehicular access and it is intended to review this decision following the next Government announcement as part of the National Reopening of Society and Business Plan.

The motion was proposed and introduced by **Councillor Sharon Tolan** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin**. There were contributions from the following members: **Councillors Paddy Meade; Alan Tobin; Stephen McKee; Alan Lawes; Wayne Harding; Amanda Smith; Nick Killian; Joe Bonner; Suzanne Jamal; and David Gilroy.**

Clarifications were provided by Acting Director of Services, Larry Whelan.

It was agreed that this motion be referred to the Climate Action and Environment Strategic Policy Committee for consideration.

On a proposal from Councillor Nick Killian and seconded by Councillor Mike Bray , it was agreed to extend the meeting to 6.45pm.
--

9.5 Submitted by Councillor Mike Bray

"That Meath County Council establishes a special taskforce with the relevant stakeholders and the local community in light of the impact the Covid-19 pandemic is having and will continue to have on people's mental health and well-being."

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

The Community Response Forum was established early on in the Covid-19 emergency with the Local Authority co-ordinating the Community Call response at local level. There are a large number of agencies working together to ensure those who need the help get it. Since the start of the emergency, community groups have been providing invaluable assistance to people in their communities by collecting groceries, medication and fuel. Recently, an initiative of the Response Forum saw Meath Age Friendly coordinate the collation and delivery of 1200 packs to isolated and vulnerable persons. This initiative was in collaboration with Flexibus, Community Guards and 3rd Age who delivered the packs across the county.



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

On 24th April 2020, the Government launched the new initiative called #InThisTogether to help look after people's physical and mental wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic. #InThisTogether signposts useful advice to help people of every age group to cope with the ongoing restrictions. Local Authorities around the country are moving services online, producing mental health materials and reaching out to local communities to help maintain positive mental health. In Meath County Council, an internal group has been set up to focus on the 3 pillars of the national initiative: Staying Connected; Staying Active; and Minding Your Mental Health. With a focus on assisting the older people in society that don't have access to social media/internet, a booklet is being prepared which will set out local initiatives being provided by Meath County Council including the library, Meath Age Friendly, Meath Local Sport Partnership, Heritage and others. It is hoped to deliver this booklet to households during June.

There were interventions from **Councillors Joe Bonner and Nick Killian**. The motion, proposed by **Councillor Mike Bray** and seconded by **Councillor Tom Behan**, was noted.

9.6 Submitted by Councillor Paul McCabe

"That Meath County Council adopts a remote working policy to enable Council staff to work from home, where possible and practicable, in the future and that Meath County Council recognises the great work and commitment to public service has been demonstrated by Council staff over the past number of months."

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

Meath County Council has introduced an element of remote working to assist with the delivery of essential services during the recent restrictions on movement, when full access to the offices by all staff was not possible. Where feasible, this arrangement to provide an element of office based and remote based working will continue, for the short to medium term in line with Government guidance.

This motion was not considered and carries over to the next meeting.

9.7 Submitted by Councillor Paul McCabe

"That Meath County Council develops a once off financial grant scheme, to work in addition to the Community Grant scheme to help alleviate the financial trauma being experienced by community and voluntary groups across County Meath and that we recognise the enormous value of these groups in county Meath."

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

There are several grant schemes available to community groups funded by Meath County Council and the Department of Rural and Community Development.



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

The grant schemes for community groups which are funded through Meath Council's own resources include the Community Grants Scheme and the Community Amenity Project Scheme. The Community Grants Scheme provides funding of over €165,000 for 2020 and the Community Amenity Scheme has a fund of €600,000, both of which the groups can avail of to assist in vital work they carry out in their areas.

The Department of Rural and Community Development have also announced a number of financial supports for the community and voluntary sector since the start of the Covid-19 emergency commenced to assist not only the community groups participating in the Community Call but also the entire Community & Voluntary sector. The schemes published are set out below.

A €2.5 million fund to support community and voluntary groups involved in the delivery of COVID-19 community response efforts. The COVID-19 Emergency Fund, provided immediate and urgently needed to groups that are participating in the government's "Community Call" initiative which is being led by the Local Authorities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding was allocated to Local Authorities who are administering the funding to groups involved in the Community Call effort. The grant will cover capital costs incurred by groups in setting up for Community Call. Co. Meath got an allocation of €88,912.

A €35 million Covid-19 Stability Fund for Community and Voluntary, Charity and Social Enterprises. The Stability Fund is to assist community and voluntary, charity and social enterprises who are experiencing financial difficulties due to a reduction in their fundraising income and / or traded income as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The grant awarded will be dependent on the need identified and the demand for the available budget. It is envisaged that grants awarded will vary in size ranging from €2,000 to €100,000. This fund closed to applications on 21st May 2020. This scheme is being administered by Pobal.

A €5 million government commitment to a Philanthropy Fund - Innovate Together, which focused on supporting responses to the COVID-19 crisis that require innovative and adaptive solutions to existing and emerging challenges. The Fund was open for applications from community and voluntary organisations, charities and social enterprises that have either increased, adapted or created a new innovative product/service in response to problems caused by the Covid-19 crisis. The Fund sought applications from projects achieving impact in a number of areas. This fund closed to applications on 28th May 2020. This scheme is being administered by Social Innovation Fund Ireland.

The Town & Village Renewal Scheme recently announced an initiative to assist towns and villages in assist with the works to assist in the response to Covid-19. This new Accelerated Measure will include a simplified application and approval process to enable smaller projects which are part of a response to COVID-19 to be approved and delivered quickly. The Measure will provide funding of up to €25,000 per project, increasing to €40,000 for higher impact projects. Proposals should typically



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

be for supplies or services of a capital nature or for short term works projects rather than the longer term interventions usually funded under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. The Local Authority can submit up to 5 projects in each of the 2 rounds of the scheme with the Department making the final decision of which projects will receive funding. The scheme is currently open for expressions of interest which can be submitted to the Community Section of Meath County Council.

Additional funding of €500,000 to Volunteer Centres to support the COVID-19 volunteer efforts. This will provide additional financial support to the Volunteer Centres to assist them to scale up during the COVID-19 emergency. The scheme is being administered through Volunteer Ireland. There are currently 22 Volunteer Centres and 7 Volunteer Information Services located in Ireland.

This motion was not considered and carries over to the next meeting.

9.8 Submitted by the Sinn Féin Councillors

"This Council acknowledges the significant financing issues arising from the loss of commercial rates and other revenues due to the Covid19 emergency.

We note the Government's announcement of a three-month rates waiver for affected sectors of the economy and the commitment to provide local authorities with an additional €260m to cover this shortfall.

However, we do not believe that a three-month waiver or the funding provided will fill the growing financial deficit that Local authorities are accruing due to Covid19.

We call on the Government to give a clear commitment to ensure that Local Authorities will not experience any loss in revenue arising from the inability of businesses to pay commercial rates or from the loss of any other revenue source such as car parking, council rents or other charges. We also believe that the initial round of funding announced be provided to Councils as a matter of urgency. We further call on government to state that they will fully fund any extension of the commercial rates waiver and any other revenue shortfall.

This Council resolves that there must be no loss of staff or reduction in front line services arising from the Covid19 restrictions and instructs the Manager to write to the Taoiseach, Minister for Finance and Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government to communicate the view of the members as expressed in this motion."

This motion was not considered and carries over to the next meeting.

9.9 Submitted by Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

“That Meath County Council writes to the Rateable Valuation Office seeking a change in the formula for calculating rates, in particular, to the Licencing Trade where Rates have increased at an alarming scale, with many publicans struggling to survive as a result”.

This motion was not considered and carries over to the next meeting.

10 Schedule of Chief Executive & Approved Orders (For information only)

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

10.4 Schedule of Chief Executive’s Orders – Community

Noted by the Elected Members.

11 Any Other Business

None.