



## *Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes*

### *Ordinary Meeting*

*6<sup>th</sup> July 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, Pádraig Fitzsimons, Joe Fox, Noel French, Michael Gallagher, Deirdre Geraghty-Smith, 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, Alan Tobin, Emer Tóibín, Sharon Tolan, Gillian Toole, Conor Tormey.

**Apologies:** Councillor Niamh Souhan

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

**Chief Executive:** Jackie Maguire

**Directors of Service:** Des Foley, Fiona Lawless, Barry Lynch

**Meetings Administrator:** Robert Collins

**Senior Executive Officers:** Larry Whelan

### **1 Confirmation of Minutes**

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Special meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

The minutes of the Special meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Francis Deane** and seconded by **Councillor Tommy Reilly**

1.2 Confirmation of minutes of Annual meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

The minutes of the Annual meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Nick Killian** and seconded by **Councillor Tom Behan**.

1.3 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020.



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The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Joe Fox** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor**.

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

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

Sympathy was extended to:

- John McGuinness, Laytown/Bettystown MD and Cianan and Thomas McGuinness (former employees, Laytown/Bettystown MD) on the death of their mother, Mary McGuinness.
- Terry Murray (former employee) and Conn Murray (former employee and former CE of Limerick City and County Council) on the death of their wife/mother, Molly Murray.
- Brendan Plunkett, Kells Civic Office on the death of his sister, Assumpta Plunkett.
- Eileen Maxwell former employee on the death of her sister, Margaret Carolan.
- The National Garda Force on the death of the late Detective Garda Colm Horkan
- The Families and friends of the late Conor McColgan and Amy English
- The Family of the late Cormac Wall
- The Family and Friends of the late Ultan Meehan

Congratulations were extended to:

- Mr Ger Lyons, Horse Trainer for victory in the Tattersalls Irish 2,000 Guineas;
- The Trim Musical Society for their Michael Collins production;
- Authors Ben Smith and Megan Neary on their recent publications;
- Dr Tony Holohan for leading the National Public Health Emergency Team;
- All small businesses in the county that have come through the Covid emergency;
- Ms. Eimer Ni Mhaoldomhaigh on being invited to join the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences;
- The MCC Communications Team for the recent #MyCouncilDay;
- Keith Russell for his recent 24 hour fundraising run;
- Meath Oireachtas Members on their recent appointments: Ms. Helen McEntee TD as Minister for Justice; Mr. Thomas Byrne TD as Minister of State for European Affairs; Mr. Damien English TD as Minister for Employment Affairs and Retail Businesses; and Ms Regina Doherty as Leader of the Seanad. Also, to Ms. Heather Humphreys, TD as Minister for Social Protection, Community, Rural Development and Islands who also represents north Meath;
- Coaches and volunteers in all clubs for their work in return sport to communities across the county.

### **4 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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### **5 Statutory Business**

#### **5.1 Community**

- 5.1.1 To receive an update on the Meath Digital Strategy and a briefing by National Broadband Ireland on the National Broadband Plan

Mr. Cormac McCann, Broadband Officer gave a progress report on the implementation of the Council's Digital Strategy, including the provision of digital infrastructure in the county.

This was followed with a presentation by Mr. Joe Lavin, Chief Commercial Officer, National Broadband Ireland on the roll-out of the National Broadband Plan and how this would be done in Meath over the coming years. He outlined that there are currently 18,989 premises without high-speed broadband in the county, which represents 22% of all premises. He outlined the process for building out the network in the county over the coming years and the various milestones in the delivery of the project.

There were a number of interventions from the following **Councillors: Eugene Cassidy; Michael Gallagher; Nick Killian; Paul McCabe; Yemi Adenuga; Maria Murphy; Joe Bonner; Paddy Meade; Sarah Reilly; Elaine McGinty; Stephen McKee; and Gillian Toole.** A number of members expressed concern with the timelines for delivery, especially in the northern parts of the county. There were also questions on the speed and quality of the service being provided, the level of coordination with existing providers and other semi-state bodies in terms of construction and use of infrastructure and on governance and decision-making issues.

Clarifications and follow-up comments were provided by both presenters.

### **6 Reports**

#### **6.1 Chief Executive's Report**

There were a number of interventions from the following **Councillors: Nick Killian; Sean Drew; Ronan Moore; Mike Bray; Damien O'Reilly; Paul McCabe; Pdraig Fitzsimons, Sharon Tolan; and Gillian Toole.**

These interventions focused on the following matters:

**Housing** – construction activity and specific projects; Housing Association delivery; how delivery and Social Housing Support statistics are presented; Housing Maintenance; Housing Adaptation Grants;

**Financial** – Covid supports; update on the commercial rates waiver extension; the rate of payments under the Re-Start scheme;

**Transport** – specific bus stops; progressing bus shelter provision; contract for the Spine Road;

**Enterprise** – How the new Enterprise Grant (€1,000) scheme would be administered;

**Water** – communication on water supply issues in the Trim area.



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Clarification on the issues raised was provided by Mr. Barry Lynch, Ms. Fiona Lawless, Mr. Des Foley and Mr. Larry Whelan.

### **6.2 Report from the Corporate Policy Group**

The Meetings Administrator informed the meeting that the CPG had met on Friday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> to review arrangements for the Council meeting and its draft agenda. As part of this review, the CPG proposed to revise the Standing Orders on the tabling of questions and motions and this would be undertaken in the coming months.

The CPG also approved a new Community Wellbeing Initiative for 2020. This initiative would replace Pride of Place and have the same prize fund of €5,000 per Municipal District, across four project categories. Details of the initiative would be circulated to the Elected Members and would be published shortly, with a closing date of the end of July for entries.

The Meetings Administrator also confirmed that the Climate Action, Emergency and Environmental Services SPC had met on Friday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> and considered a motion tabled by Councillor Sharon Tolan at the June Council Meeting regarding car parking on the beaches. The SPC agreed an alternative motion, which was endorsed by the CPG, as follows:

*“The Council would facilitate limited parking (10/12 spaces) to cater for disabled /age friendly vehicles on the southern side of the main entrance to the beach, subject to clarification on insurance cover for vehicles on the beach, and that the operation of this approach be monitored over the coming months and considered further at the September SPC meeting”*

This was proposed by **Councillor Maria Murphy** and seconded by **Councillor Sharon Tolan** and agreed. **Councillor Nick Killian** asked that the proposal also apply to Gormanston Beach. Ms. Fiona Lawless indicated that this would be discussed at the Ashbourne MD meeting the following day.

**Councillor Damien O’Reilly** asked that a report on the agreement reached by the CPG on the processing of the Members’ Discretionary Funding also be provided. The Cathaoirleach outlined that proposals, meeting the funding criteria, would continue to be processed during the summer months and would be retrospectively noted at the MD Meetings in September.

### **6.3 Report from the Protocol Committee**

The Meetings Administrator informed the meeting that the Protocol Committee had met on Monday, June 6<sup>th</sup>. The Committee considered and agreed a Terms of Reference for the Protocol Committee, which would come before the Plenary Council for adoption in September. The Committee also considered the motion tabled by **Councillor Ronan Moore** in September 2019 on Webcasting of Council Meetings. Based on an Issues Paper prepared by the Executive, the Protocol



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Committee agreed a recommendation, which would come before the Council in September.

The Committee also considered the acquisition of Chains of Office for the MD Cathaoirligh. There were no proposed Training Events or Conferences for Members' attendance to be considered by the Committee.

### **7 Correspondence**

7.1 AILG Plenary Members Activity Report for May 2020.

**Councillor Nick Killian** expressed his disappointment with the recently published Moorhead Report and asked his colleagues to contact their TDs on the issues raised in the report.

Noted by the Elected Members.

7.2 Circular NOAC / 01 /2020 – Review of Corporate Plans – 2015-2019.

Noted by the Elected Members.

7.3 Circular L1/20 – Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government re. Revised grant scheme paid by housing authorities towards remediation, repair or upgrading works to, or replacement of, a domestic waste water treatment system under the EPA's National Inspection Plan.

Noted by the Elected Members.

7.4 Circular L2/20 – Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government re. Introduction of a new Domestic Waste Water Treatment System (DWWTS) grant scheme for remediation, repair or upgrading works to, or replacement of a DWWTS in a Prioritised Area for Action (in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021).

Noted by the Elected Members.

7.5 Circular L3/20 (V2) – Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government re. Introduction of a new Domestic Waste Water Treatment System (DWWTS) grant scheme for the remediation, repair or upgrading works to, or replacement of a DWWTS in a High Status Objective Catchment Area (in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021).

Noted by the Elected Members.

7.6 Circular L4/20 (V2) – Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government re. Grants for the improvement of a private water supply to a house.

**Councillor Damien O'Reilly** asked that this information be circulated more widely.

Noted by the Elected Members.



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7.7 Housing Circular 17/2020 – Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government re. Extension of the Covid-19 Emergency Period.

Noted by the Elected Members.

### 8 Notice of Question

#### 8.1 Submitted by Councillor Noel French

*“How many single person families were housed last year and how many is it planned to house this year and how many are on the housing list?”*

#### Response

There are currently 1,440 single person households on Meath County Council Social Housing Waiting List. Forty four single person applicants were allocated a social housing unit in 2019. In terms of new social housing units coming into stock in 2020, it is expected that in the region of twenty units of a one bed type will be provided. This figure excludes any one bed casual vacancies that may arise from existing stock.

The strategy to address the needs of single one bed applicants is as follows:

- *In terms of direct construction, provision for one bed units is made in schemes in proportion to the demand in which the scheme is being constructed. In terms of pipeline direct construction delivery, 20% of the units are one bed units*
- *The need for one bed properties is constantly promoted with Approved Housing Bodies, and also with developers in respect of Part V*
- *In 2020, we will be proceeding to allocate a proportion of 2 bed units to single applicants, in recognition of the historic lack of supply of one bed units and resulting bottleneck in demand*

Noted by the Elected Members.

#### 8.2 Submitted by Councillor Damien O’Reilly

*“Call on Meath County Council to provide in tabular format, the social housing need per each application for every settlement in Meath’s towns, villages and town lands.”*

#### Response

ASHBOURNE MD					
	NO. OF APPLICANTS	ONE BEDROOM	TWO BEDROOM	THREE BEDROOM	FOUR BEDROOM
Ardcath	8	1	5	1	1
Ashbourne	464	136	218	99	11



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Bellewstown	7	1	4	2	0
Clonalvy	0	0	0	0	0
Gormanstown	0	0	0	0	0
Kentstown	23	8	11	3	1
Kilbride	4	2	1	1	0
Skyrne	6	2	4	0	0
Stamullen	25	6	6	9	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>17</b>

KELLS MD					
	NO. OF APPLICANTS	ONE BEDROOM	TWO BEDROOM	THREE BEDROOM	FOUR BEDROOM
Athboy	119	49	51	15	5
Carlanstown	37	9	17	11	0
Carnaross	16	6	7	2	1
Cortown	10	4	5	0	1
Crossakiel	16	5	10	1	0
Drumconrath	11	9	2	0	0
Fordstown	0	0	0	0	0
Kells	256	108	100	35	13
Kilberry	7	1	6	0	0
Kilmainhamwood	9	7	1	1	0
Meath Hill	2	1	1	0	0
Moynalty	8	3	5	0	0
Nobber	15	7	6	2	0
Oldcastle	64	31	21	8	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>23</b>

LAYTOWN/BETTYSTOWN MD					
	NO. OF APPLICANTS	ONE BEDROOM	TWO BEDROOM	THREE BEDROOM	FOUR BEDROOM
Bettystown	293	94	150	40	9
Donacarney	25	6	10	7	2
Donore	38	10	17	11	0
Drogheda(Meath)	2	1	0	1	0
Duleek	94	31	38	19	6
Grangerath	41	17	16	5	3
Julianstown	4	2	2	0	0
Laytown	26	15	9	2	0



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Lobinstown	6	1	3	2	0
Mornington	16	5	6	5	0
Newtown					
Slane	36	8	22	6	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>581</b>	190	273	98	20

NAVAN MD					
	NO. OF APPLICANTS	ONE BEDROOM	TWO BEDROOM	THREE BEDROOM	FOUR BEDROOM
Bohermeen	7	2	4	1	0
Castletown	16	4	5	5	2
Navan	1364	530	537	236	61
RathKenny	1	1	0	0	0
Robinstown	4	1	1	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1392</b>	538	547	243	64

RATOATH MD					
	NO. OF APPLICANTS	ONE BEDROOM	TWO BEDROOM	THREE BEDROOM	FOUR BEDROOM
Batterstown	10	4	5	1	0
Clonee	76	23	36	16	1
Dunboyne	98	33	39	17	9
Dunsany	11	2	5	4	0
Dunshaughlin	122	45	50	21	6
Kilcock	2	0	2	0	0
Kilmessan	19	4	7	5	3
Ratoath	62	23	23	13	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>400</b>	134	167	77	22

TRIM MD					
	NO. OF APPLICANTS	ONE BEDROOM	TWO BEDROOM	THREE BEDROOM	FOUR BEDROOM
Ballinabrackey	2	1	1	0	0
Ballivor	54	12	31	6	5
Clonard	6	2	3	1	0
Dunderry	7	2	5	0	0
Enfield	74	30	25	14	5
Kildalkey	7	2	4	0	1
Longwood	26	8	10	5	3





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Rathmolyon	12	4	3	4	1
Summerhill	26	15	9	1	1
Trim	284	106	107	63	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>24</b>

SUMMARY PER MUNICIPAL DISTRICT									
	NO. OF APPLICANTS	ONE BEDROOM	%	TWO BEDROOM	%	THREE BEDROOM	%	FOUR BEDROOM	%
ASHBOURNE	537	156	29.05%	249	46.37%	115	21.42%	17	3.17%
KELLS	570	240	42.11%	232	40.70%	75	13.16%	23	4.04%
LAYTOWN/BETTYSTOWN	581	190	32.70%	273	46.99%	98	16.87%	20	3.44%
NAVAN	1392	538	38.65%	547	39.30%	243	17.46%	64	4.60%
RATOATH	400	134	33.50%	167	41.75%	77	19.25%	22	5.50%
TRIM	498	182	36.55%	198	39.76%	94	18.88%	24	4.82%
COUNTY SUMMARY	3978	1440	36.20%	1666	41.88%	702	17.65%	170	4.27%
HAP Tenancies	2,181								
NET NEED	1,797								

**Councillor Damien O'Reilly** sought a clarification on the nature of transfer requests. Noted by the Elected Members.

### 8.3 Submitted by Councillor Alan Lawes

*“Will you name the councillors who attended the meeting that took the decision to cancel democracy and all Meath County County and Municipal meetings after the Covid -19 emergency was declared by Government on March 12th?”*

#### Response

There was no decision to cancel democracy. In fact the Council facilitated the holding of the 2020 Elections to Seanad Éireann, with all Councillors, as well as, Meath TDs and Senators provided with the facility to mark and certify their ballot papers in Buvinda House between March 20<sup>th</sup>- 26<sup>th</sup>.

The meetings of the Trim and Navan Municipal Districts, scheduled for March 20<sup>th</sup> and March 25<sup>th</sup>, were cancelled following consultation with the Cathaoirleach of both MDs. This decision was taken on the basis of the public health guidance available at the time.

In April and May, the full schedule of Municipal District meetings was conducted online, with members receiving a Chief Executive’s Report, as well as a series of briefings from staff on service



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delivery and operational matters. These meetings afforded Councillors with the opportunity to ask questions and make recommendations.

The April and May Council meetings were not held following a number of meetings of the Corporate Policy Group and Party Whips. These meetings took place on various dates during March, April and May. Again, these decisions were taken with the primary objective of protecting the health and wellbeing of the elected members, staff and members of the press and public that may have wished to attend.

Throughout the period of the public health restrictions particular efforts were made to engage with Councillors and keep them informed. Specifically, between March 12<sup>th</sup> and April 24<sup>th</sup>, a total of nine electronic briefings were communicated by the Chief Executive to all Councillors outlining the latest developments, changes in service provision and addressing issues that were raised by elected members.

Since the Covid-19 emergency was declared by Government on March 12<sup>th</sup> only four meetings were not held on public health grounds, out of a total schedule of 23 Council and MD meetings.

**Councillor Alan Lawes** sought a clarification.

Noted by the Elected Members.

### **8.4 Submitted by Councillor Francis Deane**

*“In reference to the Rebuilding Ireland Homeloan Scheme, in the event of people who had been approved for the above scheme, pre Covid 19, in addition to future loan applicants, will there be changes to the assessment criteria for those who were temporarily unemployed and have now returned to work? If so, to furnish the details pertaining to any amendments.”*

#### **Response**

The situation is as follows with regards to the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans, in the case of an approval given pre – Covid 19, if the applicant/s income has been adversely affected a loan cannot be drawn down until such time as the income on which the approval was based returns to that level within a reasonable time frame. If such circumstances arose pre – Covid 19 the same measures would have applied.

With regard to future applicants, one of the main criteria for loan approval is 2 years continuous employment. With Covid 19 crisis, this would affect a large portion of future applications as things stand. However, Meath County Council is awaiting a change/clarification regarding this criterion from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government which is due shortly. Once received these will be forwarded as requested.

Noted by the Elected Members.



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### 8.5 Submitted by Councillor Paul McCabe

*“To ask the Chief Executive under the Litter Pollution Act 1997 the number of*

- 1. fines issued*
- 2. the level of compliance in paying fines that have been issued to offenders*
- 3. and number of successful prosecutions that Meath County Council have obtained through the Courts*

*for the years 2018, 2019 and the first half of 2020, and to ask the Chief Executive to quantify in monetary terms, as far as practicable, the costs borne by the Local Authority in the dealing with illegal dumping and fly tipping for the same periods.”*

#### **Response**

The following tables set out the situation in relation to litter fines and the costs borne by the Council over the three year period requested in respect of illegal dumping, littering and waste management services.

Year	(1) Fines Issued	(2) Payments	(3) Court Cases
2018	158	57	15
2019	190	74	11
2020	65	59	4

Please note that payments made may relate to a previous year.

Service	Description	2018	2019	2020 *
E04	Provision of Waste to Collection Services	€142,766	€260,093	€36,875
E05	Litter Management	€519,954	€660,131	€140,970
E06	Street Cleaning	€1,672,467	€1,680,992	€791,221
E07	Waste Regulations, Monitoring and Enforcement	€1,813,124	€2,089,546	€1,044,773
		€4,148,311	€4,456,762	€2,013,839

\*Estimated to date

It is pointed out that sufficient evidence of littering is required in order to obtain a prosecution in the Courts and in many cases, while fines are issued based on information received from members of the public, getting the witness to subsequently attend Court to give evidence often proves very problematic. This is particularly so in the case of reported dog fouling incidences.

In all cases, consideration has to be given as to whether it is in the public interest to proceed to the courts based on the significant legal costs involved and the difficulties in securing payment of such costs, even where a conviction is obtained based on the circumstances of the offender.

**Councillor Paul McCabe** sought a clarification on numbers presented.

Noted by the Elected Members.

### 8.6 Submitted by Councillor Ronan Moore



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*“How many ‘applications for retention’ were submitted in 2018, 2019 and 2020; and how many of these ‘application for retention’ related to the retention of a dwelling?”*

### Response

Year	Number	Relating to Retention of a dwelling	Decision
2018	234	1	Refused
2019	281	1	Granted (Still in appeal period)
2020	67	0	

Noted by the Elected Members.

### 8.7 Submitted by Councillor Aisling O’Neill

*“Is there a timeline for the submissions to be uploaded regarding the County Development plan, as there are still submissions outstanding regarding the Millbourne residents?”*

### Response

Following the enactment of the Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (Covid-19) Act 2020, all planning timelines were paused from 29<sup>th</sup> March to 23<sup>rd</sup> May inclusive, a total of 8 weeks. Only essential services as determined by the government were being carried out. On the resumption of time lines, staff recommenced the uploading of the remainder of hardcopy submissions. These were done in order of theme to ensure the Chief Executive Report is more reader friendly. With over 300 hard copy submissions received by Millbourne Residents, this has taken more time than was hoped due to the need to redact addresses, decipher signatures on each submission and upload onto <https://consult.meath.ie/> . Uploading of these submissions commenced on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June and will be complete by 3<sup>rd</sup> July. All submissions are available to view online.

Noted by the Elected Members.

## 9 Notice of Motion

Under Standing Order 90, **Councillor Maria Murphy** proposed and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O’Connor** an emergency motion for consideration, which was agreed by the required number of members present.

The Motion as follows:



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*"While Meath County Council recognises the requirement for a revised timetable on Irish Rail services at this time and notes the revised rail timetable from June 29<sup>th</sup>, we call on the NTA and Irish Rail to restore the M3 Parkway to Clonsilla service which is currently not operating on Saturdays and Sundays and furthermore to review the large gaps in the off peak services from Monday to Friday."*

There were a number of interventions on this motion by the following **Councillors: Maria Murphy; Gerry O'Connor; Joe Fox; Alan Tobin; Nick Killian; Michael Gallagher; Damien O'Reilly; Brian Fitzgerald;** and **Gillian Toole**. There was an agreement that this was a county-wide issue of concern and undermined the viability of future rail services to the county. It was proposed that this issue be raised with the county's Oireachtas Members and on a proposal from **Councillor Gerry O'Connor**, seconded by **Councillor Joe Fox** it was agreed to amend the motion to include a letter to the new Minister for Transport on this issue. The motion, as amended, was agreed.

### **9.1 Submitted by Councillor Paul McCabe (Deferred from June Meeting)**

*"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.

There were interventions from **Councillors: Paul McCabe; Brian Fitzgerald;** and **Ronan Moore** on this motion, with Councillor Fitzgerald urging caution as the motion was encroaching on Executive functions. The Chief Executive clarified that the local government sector, and the public service generally, is currently looking at a remote working policy. The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding**, was noted.

### **9.2 Submitted by Councillor Paul McCabe (Deferred from June Meeting)**

*"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."*



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### **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.

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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 28<sup>th</sup> 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



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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 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.

There were interventions from **Councillors: Paul McCabe; Ronan Moore; and Joe Bonner** on this motion. The Chief Executive outlined that the 2020 Budget had already been allocated through various budget lines and that the Council was not in a financial position to provide another grant scheme. The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Aisling Dempsey**, was noted.

### **9.3 Submitted by Sinn Féin Councillors (Deferred from June Meeting)**

*"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."*





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The motion, proposed by **Councillor Michael Gallagher** and seconded by **Councillor Ronan Moore**, was agreed.

### **9.4 Submitted by Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons (Deferred from June Meeting)**

*“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”.*

There were interventions from **Councillors: Pdraig Fitzsimons; Tom Behan; Alan Tobin; Alan Lawes; Paddy Meade;** and **Wayne Harding** on this motion, with **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** proposing an amendment, seconded by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** and agreed as follows: *“That Meath County Council writes to the Rateable Valuation Office seeking a review 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 and exacerbated by the effects of Covid-19 pandemic”.* The motion as amended, proposed by **Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin**, was agreed.

### **9.5 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín**

*“That Meath County Council having regard to the extractive industry, that where it comes to the attention of the Council that a development is unauthorised, that the Council will immediately injunct any continuance of development/ activity at that site until such time as the issues have been determined in a court of law or otherwise and sanction the developer appropriately as they would others that transgress planning law. That Meath County Council when invited by An Bord Pleanála to comment on a planning file, that the Council shall not under any circumstances lend its support to a development which has a track record of unauthorised development.”*

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

Sections 152 to 160 of the Planning and Development Acts set out the statutory process Planning Authorities must follow with respect to any alleged unauthorised development investigations. Legal advice is sought on matters relating to Section 160 (injunctions in relation to unauthorised development). Each case must be dealt with on its own merit and therefore proceeding directly to Section 160 could go against the spirit of the legislation.

In relation to the second part of the question, Section 35 of the Act provides for the refusal of planning permission for past failures to comply. The costs related to same can be substantial, there can be different companies involved and it is our view that it is cumbersome, and that is reflected in the fact that no other Planning Authority has used this provision to date as far as we are aware. The Council’s legal advice recommends against using it as it could leave the local authority open to judicial review.





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There were interventions from **Councillors: Gillian Toole; Michael Gallagher; Ronan Moore; Noel French; Paddy Meade; Alan Tobin and Tommy Reilly**. Mr. Larry Whelan provided some clarifications and the Chief Executive outlined a need for a review of the legislation. The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Emer Tóibín** and seconded by **Councillor Gillian Toole**, was noted.

### **9.6 Submitted by Councillor Damien O'Reilly**

*“Calls on Meath County Council, to permit Approved Housing Bodies to purchase housing stock in any town, village and townland in the county regardless of social housing need in that area, for as long as the national housing crisis persists in Ireland.”*

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

In providing support to Approved Housing Bodies for turnkey opportunities, the Housing Authority must be satisfied that there is sufficient housing demand in the area in which the proposed housing is located, both at the time of the expression of interest, and future demand. Confirmation of same is required by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in respect to all funding submissions from Approved Housing Bodies, and funding approval is dependent on such demand being present.

The need to confirm that social housing demand exists, is to avoid a scenario where units acquired for social housing purposes cannot be allocated due to lack of interest from applicants on the social housing waiting list, thus unnecessarily creating vacant properties, loss of rental income to the Approved Housing Body concerned, and ultimately inefficient use of exchequer funding.

Meath County Council has been, and will continue to be fully supportive of Approved Housing Bodies in the delivery of new social units in the County. This is reflective in the scale of delivery in recent years, with 389 units delivered by the Approved Housing Body Sector in 2018/2019 throughout the County, with a further 270 units representing pipeline delivery that has funding approval. In the context of this delivery, the instances in which Meath County Council has not been in a position to support a proposal coming forward from an Approved Housing Body have been minimal.

On a proposal from <b>Councillor Gerry O'Connor</b> and seconded by <b>Councillor Mike Bray</b> , it was agreed to extend the meeting to 6.15pm.
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There were a number of interventions on this motion by the following **Councillors: Damien O'Reilly; Alan Tobin; Alan Lawes; Joe Fox; and Tommy Reilly**. An amendment to the motion was proposed by **Councillor Joe Fox** and seconded by **Councillor Tommy Reilly** to include reference to 'affordable housing'. This was agreed as follows: *“Calls on Meath County Council, to permit Approved Housing Bodies to purchase housing stock in any town, village and townland in the county for the provision of social and affordable housing, regardless of social housing need in that area, for as long as the national housing crisis persists in Ireland.”* The Chief Executive highlighted that what the motion was



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proposing was not in the gift of the Council and that sanction was required from the Department, once it considered the housing need in the particular area. The supporting information and amended motion, proposed by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding**, was noted.

### **9.7 Submitted by Councillor Damien O'Reilly**

*“Call on Meath County Council, to begin the process of evicting anti-social tenants in the county’s housing stock. This will allow for the reallocation of this stock to respectful tenants who have being waiting over 7 years for allocations in the county.”*

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

Meath County Council’s Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy outlines the procedures to address breaches by tenants of their tenancy agreements in respect to anti-social behaviour.

A Housing Authority can seek an order for possession of a house when a tenant breaches his/her tenancy agreement.

The procedures for seeking an order for possession are also set out in Meath County Council’s Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy (Section 6 refers), in line with the provisions of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 2014, and involve the issuing of Notices of Breach of Tenancy and/or Statutory Warning Notice in the first instance. In cases of persistent breaches of tenancy, despite the issuing of warnings, and subject to sufficient evidence, Meath County Council will proceed to seek a possession order. Clear verifiable evidence is required in order for any case to advance to legal proceedings.

It should also be noted that the emergency period as defined in Part 2 of the Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (Covid-19) Act 2020, regarding Termination of Local Authority Tenancies and Traveller Evictions, has been extended by Government order to 20 July 2020.

There were a number of interventions on this motion by the following **Councillors: Damien O'Reilly; Noel French; Nick Killian; Maria Murphy; Alan Tobin; Mike Bray; Paul McCabe; Gillian Toole; Joe Fox; Ronan Moore; Sean Drew; Michael Gallagher; and Yemi Adenuga**. These interventions recognised the seriousness of the issue and the problems anti-social behaviour creates for neighbours and communities. It was recognised that the Council has a legal obligation to house people and often has to deal with clients with complex needs beyond that of a housing need. Members suggested that the Council also has obligations to others in the community and that its processes and procedures for dealing with anti-social tenants could be reviewed again by the SPC.

Mr. Barry Lynch provided some clarifications on questions raised and agreed that the SPC could review the current processes in place.



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It was agreed that the motion, proposed by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Noel French**, be referred to the Housing and Community SPC for further consideration.

In concluding remarks, **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** made some comments regarding the interventions of other members that he was asked by An Cathaoirleach to withdraw. In a follow-up intervention, **Councillor Yemi Adenuga** expressed her disappointment with the concluding comments of Councillor O'Reilly and asked that he withdraw them. She did not wish to be associated with the comments made.

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

### 9.8 Submitted by Councillor Mike Bray

*"That Meath County Council reviews the presence of 80 km/h signs at the starting point of local roads in which an 80 km/h speed is not possible as well as being a danger to residents and road users. And to consider the replacement of such signage with "Slow / Go Mall" signs as is the case in other local authority areas."*

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

The Rural Speed Limit sign was introduced in March 2015 as an alternative to the 80km/hr sign for use on specific single lane rural roads where the logic of indicating a speed limit of 80km/hr for such roads, was considered to be an inappropriate speed at which to drive roads of this type. The sign was recommended for these roads while maintaining the default speed limit of 80 km/hr without showing the actual speed in numerical form.

As part of the county wide speed limit review carried out in 2017/2018 a number of 80 km/h speed signs on local tertiary roads were identified to be removed or replaced with the Rural Speed Limit sign, where appropriate. The updated Special Speed Limit Bye-Law for County Meath was adopted by the Elected Members in December 2018 and came into effect in April 2019. As part of the signage contract for the new speed limit bye-law any 80km/h speed signs which had been identified as being inappropriate as part of the county speed limit review were removed or replaced.



If Councillors or members of the public are aware of any location where an 80km/hr speed limit sign has been used inappropriately, please advise the Transportation Department and the location can be reviewed in line with National Guidelines.



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The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Mike Bray** and seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding**, was noted.

### **9.9 Submitted by Councillor Alan Lawes**

*“Calling on Meath County Council in line with its own climate emergency policy to: plant as many verges as possible with wildflowers along Meath roads and Motorways. This would not only save the Council money on mowing costs but would also encourage biodiversity and improve our environment.”*

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

The Council’s Climate Action Strategy launched in September 2019, contains as an objective that the Council become a partner to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and encourage citizen science initiatives to promote awareness and active engagement on local pollinator plans.

In February of this year the Council signed up as partners to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan committing to consider the Plan across policies, plans and management decisions where possible and report same to the National Biodiversity Data Centre. To effect organisational change in maintaining and creating pollinator friendly spaces, staff training was undertaken earlier in the year with staff participating from various sections within the organisation.

In relation to pollinator planting along motorways and roadways, road safety would be the primary consideration here, in terms of the planting, cutting and maintenance and also how the type of pollinator would impact on road and vehicular visibility. Planted pollinator areas require certain management to ensure effective yearly propagation, for example, the cuttings need turning a few days after the cutting to ensure successful seed distribution and then the cuttings require removal to prevent overgrowth or dominant growth of grasses.

While extensive and a variety of pollinator planting is of course welcome there are added benefits to creating these as part of public open spaces where appropriate awareness signage can be placed as an educational tool and also that locals can enjoy these off-road spaces. Finally, many local road verges will already contain pollinator friendly plants that may not be included as part of a wildflower planting mix, for example, ivy or brambles, both are important pollinators but also provide shelter for wildlife.

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Alan Lawes** and seconded by **Councillor Ronan Moore**, was noted.

### **9.10 Submitted by Councillor Yemi Adenuga**

*“That Meath County Council, openly stand up against racism and lead a campaign for same, in the wake of the ongoing global fight against racism and the growing support for the #blacklivesmatter*



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*movement, and with the support of interested elected members, develop audiovisual and print materials to educate and inform the people of Meath on issues of racism, diversity and inclusion”.*

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

The Council, in cooperation with Louth County Council has a Joint Migrant Integration Strategy 2019-2022 for both counties which is being implemented. This strategy sets out a vision, which includes: *“Institutions and organisations in the two counties will work together to promote intercultural integration, embrace the advantages of a rights-based approach to diversity and integration and build a society of equals at local level.”* A key element of this vision is a zero tolerance towards racism and discrimination in society in Louth and Meath. The Council is committed to realising this vision and will work with all appropriate stakeholders in doing so.

The Council considers that education and awareness-raising are important in preventing and combatting racism, fostering understanding and promoting tolerance across society.

Earlier this year, the Council implemented a communications initiative to promote women and diversity in local politics, with the support of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. This successful project was run with the cooperation of the female members of the Council and worked with local schools. The Council will, where possible, implement projects of a similar nature in future to address the issues of combatting racism and promoting diversity in local communities and society in Meath generally.

In introducing her motion **Councillor Yemi Adenuga** outlined some of her own personal and her family’s experiences of racism. She referred to the objectives of the Council’s Migrant Integration Strategy, the role of Councillors and the Council and the need for further action to educate and lead against racism in the county. The motion proposed by **Councillor Yemi Adenuga** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O’Connor** was unanimously agreed.

#### **9.11 Submitted by Councillor Paul McCabe**

*“That Meath County Council roundly condemns the recent murder of Detective Garda Colm Horkan in county Roscommon and that we offer our solidarity and condolences to his colleagues in An Garda Síochana. And that Meath County Council wholly condemns any act of violence perpetrated against members of our emergency services and frontline workers.”*

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Paul McCabe**. The motion, proposed by **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Noel French**, was agreed.

#### **9.12 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín**

*“That Meath County Council calls on the Irish Government to recognise that Parental Alienation is “substantial and sustained dissatisfaction within a care-giver - child relationship associated with*



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*significant disturbance in functioning” as coded by the World Health Organisation in the latest International Classification of Diseases (version 11) and to implement recommendation 36 of the Report of the Reform of the Family Law System (October 2019).”*

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Emer Tóibín**. The motion, proposed by **Councillor Emer Tóibín** and seconded by **Councillor Noel French**, was agreed.

### **9.13 Submitted by Councillor Alan Lawes**

*“Meath County Council calls on the Minister for Education to remove all literature from the school curriculum that casually and repeatedly uses offensive racial language, such as “To Kill a Mocking Bird” and “Of Mice and Men”, which have no place in today’s education curriculum.”*

There were a number of interventions on this motion by the following **Councillors: Alan Lawes; Ronan Moore; Noel French; Yemi Adenuga; and Nick Killian**. The motion was amended on a proposal by **Councillor Gerry O’Connor** as follows: *“Meath County Council calls on the Minister for Education to review, in light of the Black Lives Matter movement, all literature on the school curriculum and how the curriculum is delivered in our schools”*

The amended motion, proposed by **Councillor Alan Lawes** and seconded by **Councillor Michael Gallagher**, was agreed.

## **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 & Enterprise

Noted by the Elected Members.

## **11 Any Other Business**

None