



## *Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes*

### *Ordinary Meeting*

***7<sup>th</sup> September 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

**Meetings Administrator:** Robert Collins

**Senior Executive Officers:** Larry Whelan

### **1 Confirmation of Minutes**

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Tommy Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Maria Murphy**.

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

**Councillor Gillian Toole** raised an issue highlighted at the July meeting regarding unworkable or ineffective legislation and asked if a list of such legislation had been identified and provided to Oireachtas members.



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

Sympathy was extended to:

- The family of the late former Councillor Ann Dillon-Gallagher.
- Marian Mulroy, Finance Department on the death of her mother, Mary (May) Maguire.
- Brendan Markey, Housing Department on the death of his mother, Patricia (Patsy) Markey.
- Joe Adams, Housing Department on the death of his father, Tony Adams.
- Siobhan O'Connor, IT Department on the death of her father, John O'Connor.
- Catherine McGuigan, Community Department on the death of her sister, Sharon McGuigan Audley.
- Jackie Maguire, Chief Executive on the death of her brother-in-law, Sean Harten.
- The family of the late John Hume.

Congratulations were extended to:

- Councillor Paddy Meade and his fiancé
- All winners under the Meath Chronicle's Lockdown Heros Awards
- All Leaving Certificate students 2020
- Holly Brennan, Gold Medalist, national under-20 champion, 5,000m event
- Aaron Smyth, Silver Medalist, national under-20, 5,000m event

### **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 note the report on Budget Process 2021.**

Both the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance gave an overview of the budget process for 2021 and the difficult context within which this would take place. The report was noted by the Elected Members.

##### **5.1.2 To consider the report of the Chief Executive prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Local Property Tax (Local Adjustment Factor) Regulations 2014.**

**For the purpose of resolving as follows:**

- a. Vary the basic rate and set a local adjustment factor that will apply for a period of one year from the next Local Property Tax liability date, or**



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### b. Not vary the basic rate.

The Head of Finance made a presentation on the Local Property Tax (LPT) and its contribution to the Council's overall budget. She outlined the statutory process involved in agreeing the Local Adjustment Factor, including a public consultation process which was undertaken during June and July. The elected members were informed of their reserved function in terms of varying or otherwise the local adjustment factor, by increasing up to 15% or decreasing by as much as 15%. The presentation also outlined the Equalisation Fund, which resulted in 20% of the tax collected in the county (approximately €3.5m) going into this Fund. The report of the Chief Executive recommended that the basic rate of the LPT for 2020-2021 be increased by 15%, to help address the impact on the Council's financial situation arising from the Covid emergency.

A number of elected members spoke in response to the presentation, with some members seeking clarification on points such as the: discretionary spend and the potential loss of income from new properties not liable for the LPT. Other members called for the Baseline Review to be implemented and a change to the Equalisation Fund process. Most members that spoke suggested that the basic rate should not be varied. These included: **Councillors: Damien O'Reilly; Gerry O'Connor; Brian Fitzgerald; Ronan Moore; Joe Bonner; Sean Drew; Nick Killian and Alan Tobin. Councillor Alan Lawes** suggested that the basic rate should be decreased by 15%.

An Cathaoireach put the resolution before members to vary the basic rate of the Local Property Tax and a role call vote was taken as follows:

Councillor	Yes	No	
Cllr. Yemi Adenuga		No	
Cllr. Tom Behan		No	
Cllr. Joseph Bonner		No	
Cllr. Mike Bray		No	
Cllr. Eugene Cassidy		No	
Cllr. Francis Deane		No	
Cllr. Aisling Dempsey		No	
Cllr Sean Drew		No	
Cllr. Eddie Fennessy		No	
Cllr. Brian Fitzgerald		No	
Cllr. Pdraig Fitzsimons		No	
Cllr. Joe Fox		No	
Cllr. Noel French		No	



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Cllr. Michael Gallagher		No	
Cllr. Deirdre Geraghty- Smith			Not Present
Cllr. David Gilroy		No	
Cllr. Trevor Golden		No	
Cllr. Wayne Harding			Not Present
Cllr. Suzanne Jamal		No	
Cllr. Geraldine Keogan		No	
Cllr. Nick Killian		No	
Cllr. Alan Lawes	Yes		
Cllr. Paul McCabe		No	
Cllr. Elaine McGinty		No	
Cllr. Stephen McKee			Not Present
Cllr. Paddy Meade		No	
Cllr. Ronan Moore		No	
Cllr. Maria Murphy		No	
Cllr. Aisling O'Neill		No	
Cllr. Gerry O'Connor		No	
Cllr. Damien O'Reilly		No	
Cllr. Sarah Reilly		No	
Cllr. Tommy Reilly			Not Present
Cllr. Niamh Souhan		No	
Cllr. Alan Tobin		No	
Cllr. Emer Tóibín		No	
Cllr. Sharon Tolan		No	
Cllr. Gillian Toole		No	
Cllr. Conor Tormey		No	

Result: To vary the basic rate = 1 vote; To not vary = 35 votes; Not Present = 4

The Elected Members therefore resolved to not vary the basic rate, for a period of one year from the next Local Property Tax liability date.

**5.1.3 To receive a year to date Financial Statement for Meath County Council as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.**



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This was noted by the Elected Members.

### **5.1.4 To note the dates for Municipal Districts to consider and adopt the draft Budgetary Plan.**

The dates for the Municipal Districts, with a proposed change of date and time for the Kells MD meeting were agreed on a proposal of **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Trevor Golden**.

## **5.2 Planning**

### **5.2.1 To receive the Members' views in respect of a proposed development by Indaver (ABP-307433-20), for development described as increase in annual total waste for treatment from currently permitted 235,000 tonnes to 250,000 tonnes, increase in annual amount of hazardous waste from currently permitted 10,000 tonnes to 25,000 tonnes, development of aqueous waste tank farm, hydrogen generation unit, bottom ash storage building, development of a single storage warehouse, new concrete yard, weather canopy demolition and rebuilding of an existing single storey modular office and ancillary site works at Carronstown, Duleek, the subject of the Chief Executive's Report to An Bord Pleanála of September 2020 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. Philip Maguire, Executive Planner, which outlined the proposed development, the site and location for the development and its assessment in terms of planning policy. This current Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) application was received by An Bord Pleanála (ABP) on June 25, 2020 accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS). Comments made by the Elected Members will be appended to the report to ABP.

Contributions were made by the following **Councillors: Sharon Tolan; Paddy Meade; Elaine McGinty; Paul McCabe; Joe Bonner; Ronan Moore; Alan Tobin; Wayne Harding; Gillian Toole; Gerry O'Connor; and Brian Fitzgerald** and included;

- The increase in HGV movements and the impact on traffic on Duleek, Julianstown and the N2;
- The progressive increase in tonnage since the parent permission was granted;
- The cumulative impact of this application and the current SID application from Irish Cement needs to be considered;
- A need for a Regional EPA Office in South Drogheda;
- Need to consider the people living in the area and proximity of the site to schools;
- Self-regulation a concern;
- Need to seek 'Best Practice' and not just rely on policy;



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- Need to reduce our waste as a society and strive to a carbon-neutral environment;
- Some members praised the operator in terms of how the facility has blended into the surrounding environment.

It was agreed by the Elected Members to attach the detailed comments as an addendum to the minute of the meeting to be submitted as part of the report to An Bord Pleanála.

### **5.3 Corporate Services**

#### **5.3.1 To approve the Terms of Reference for the Protocol Committee**

The Terms of Reference were approved on a proposal of **Councillor Nick Killian** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor**.

#### **5.3.2 To note the Schedule of Council Meetings for the remainder of the year including the date for the Budget 2021 meetings.**

The schedule of Council Meetings was noted but the following members sought further detail on the order of business and how that business would be conducted at the meeting dealing with the County Development Plan review: **Councillors Nick Killian; Sean Drew; Ronan Moore; and Noel French**. It was agreed that further detail would be provided in advance of the Special Planning Meeting.

### **5.4 Community**

#### **5.4.1 To receive details and approve the allocation under the Knockharley Environmental Community Projects Scheme 2020, as recommended by the Knockharley Community Liaison Committee and endorsed by the Ashbourne Municipal District Councillors on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020.**

Approved on the proposal of **Councillor Wayne Harding** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Bonner**.

#### **5.4.2 To receive details and approve the supplementary allocations under the Community Grants Scheme 2020, as recommended by the Housing, Community & Cultural Development SPC on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020.**

Approved on the proposal of **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**.

#### **5.4.3 To approve the nomination of Pádraicín Bheilbigh, representing Údarás na Gaeltachta as a member of the Meath LCDC and LAG.**



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Approved on the proposal of **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding**.

### **6 Reports**

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

There were a number of interventions from the following **Councillors: Nick Killian; Alan Tobin; Ronan Moore; Mike Bray; Alan Lawes; Sean Drew; Paul McCabe; An Cathaoirleach** and **Gillian Toole**.

These interventions focused on the following matters:

**Housing** – Approved Housing Bodies approach to Councils/Councillors; 2<sup>nd</sup> hand properties; quantity of delivery by AHBs v Local Authorities; Housing Adaptation Grants; Housing and Homelessness – latest monthly figure and year-to-date figures required in the Report

**Corporate** – County Newsletter; continue to focus on key Covid messages; MD Chains of Office

**Environment** – Native woodland species; waste enforcement; illegal signage; septic tanks

**Library and Arts** – County Archivist position; extension of the Artist in the Community approach

**Transport** – Ratoath main street works

**Enterprise** – Start-up grants

Members also expressed appreciation for the work of the Community; Tourism; Climate Action and the Finance Teams. Clarification on 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, September 4<sup>th</sup> to review arrangements for the Council meeting and its draft agenda. The CPG also discussed the key points raised at the Workshop for Elected Members on the LPT held on September 4<sup>th</sup>. The CPG approved reports from the Housing, Community and Cultural Development SPC and the Transportation SPC.

The CPG also considered a number of proposed changes to the Standing Orders. These remain under review and will come before the Council for approval in November.

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

The Meetings Administrator informed the meeting that the Protocol Committee also considered the proposed changes to the Standing Orders. The Committee also discussed how the Council will implement the requirements under Section 141 of the Local Government Acts, which set out requirements for members nominated to Outside Bodies. The Committee also approved



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retrospectively the attendance of members at AILG training events.

### **7 Correspondence**

- 7.1 Correspondence from Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport in response to Notice of Motion 9 adopted at the July 2020 meeting of the full Council re. M3 Parkway to Clonsilla service.**

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.2 Correspondence from the National Roads Authority in response to Notice of Motion 9 adopted at the July 2020 meeting of the full Council re. M3 Parkway to Clonsilla service.**

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.3 Correspondence from Irish Rail in response to Notice of Motion 9 adopted at the July 2020 meeting of the full Council re. M3 Parkway to Clonsilla service.**

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.4 Correspondence from the Valuation Office in response to Notice of Motion 9.4 adopted at the July 2020 meeting of the full Council re. review in the formula for calculating rates, in particular, to the Licencing Trade.**

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.5 Correspondence from Minister for Education in response to Notice of Motion 9.13 adopted at the July 2020 meeting of the full Council re. review, in light of the Black Lives Matter movement, of all literature on the school curriculum and how the curriculum is delivered in our schools.**

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.6 Circular Fin 12/2020 – Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government re. Provisional Local Property Tax Allocations 2021 – Meath County Council**

Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.7 Correspondence from Derry City and Strabane District Council.**

**Councillor Nick Killian** suggested that the proposal from the District Council should be given due consideration and **Councillor Gillian Toole** agreed to bring it to the Regional Health Forum when it meets later in the month. Noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.8 LG 04-2020 – Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government re. Elected Members' Annual Expenses Allowance.**





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Noted by the Elected Members.

### **8 Notice of Question**

#### **8.1 Submitted by Councillor Sarah Reilly**

*“To ask the Chief Executive (a) how many public lights are there in the County (b) how many of them are LED Lights (c) how many are we converting to LED on a weekly basis?”*

#### **Response**

- (a) Meath County Council has 18,419 public lights.
- (b) 3,477 of these are LED lights.
- (c) The Council is currently upgrading between 800 and 900 to LED, per annum.

Meath County Council is currently engaging with the Roads Management Office who are procuring contractors on a regional basis for a National Retrofit Scheme for LED lights. It is expected that the Eastern Region, which Meath is included in, will be going to tender either towards the end of 2020, or early 2021.

The objective of the Scheme is to retrofit as many of the existing lights as possible, with energy efficient LED lights.

Noted by the Elected Members.

#### **8.2 Submitted by Councillor Edward Fennessy**

*“To ask the Chief Executive the financial position of the Council with regard to the Covid 19 crisis and if the CEO will state: the amount of revenue lost to the Council due to the crisis, the additional expenditure incurred and the central Government additional funding received to date?”*

#### **Response**

The full financial position with regard to Covid 19 is not possible to assess at this point in time. The Rates for Meath County Council were budgeted at €43.9 million and the biggest issues here are the level of collection at the end of the year and level of vacancies. The rates waiver scheme covers 6 months from March to September which is very significant, however the ability of rate payers to pay the balance of rates and the level of vacancies will not become apparent until the end of the year. The Acute Financial Matters report number 2 identified that in excess of €25 million of the rate base would be impacted by Covid 19.



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The Acute Financial Matters Report 3 analysed the impact of Covid 19 on goods and services. The analysis showed that €2.2 million out of a total budget of €33.7 million was at risk. A business case has been submitted to the Department for the recoupment of any lost income under this category.

Circular Fin 07/2020, issued on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020, recognises that expenditure costs are being incurred by Local Authorities in relation to Covid-19. Local Authorities were requested to separately identify and capture these costs. Meath County Council set up new job codes within each service division to capture and report on these costs. To date the full costs incurred by Meath County Council in relation to Covid are in excess of €1 million. A business case has been submitted to the Department in relation to these costs.

The Council has been advised that the Department is to meet the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on 3<sup>rd</sup> September and as part of its discussions it will be raising the Goods and Services expenditure shortfall and the additional Covid emergency spend to the table for the sector.

Noted by the Elected Members.

### **8.3 Submitted by Councillor Nick Killian**

*"Can the Chief Executive please give an outline as to the implementation of "The Flemish Decree on Land and Real Estate Policy is contrary to EU law", by the Court of Justice of the European Union,[case no C-197/11 and C-203/11 with regards to one-off Planning in County Meath. This decree was issued on the 8th May 2013. In addition what is the current view of the Department of Housing in relation to this decree?"*

#### **Response**

The implication of the Flemish Decree Judgement was the subject of a Notice of Motion at the November 2019 Council meeting and following referral of the matter, the attached response was received from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. The matter was also the subject of Dáil Questions in May 2019, December 2019 and March 2020 and with the following response issued by the Minister in respect of the March question:

"Following engagement between the European Commission and my Department regarding the European Court of Justice ruling in the "Flemish Decree" case, a working group was established to review and, where necessary, recommend changes to the 2005 Planning Guidelines on Sustainable Rural Housing, issued under section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The working group comprises senior officials from the Planning Division of my Department and senior officials from the Planning Divisions of local authorities, nominated by the local government sector.

"My Department is reviewing the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities, to update guidance in light of both legislative changes and the introduction of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies. In line with the NPF objective 37,



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my Department is also working on guidance on preparation of Housing Need Demand Assessments, which will inform housing strategies and associated land use zoning policies.

“In addition to reviewing the Development Plan Guidelines, my Department is reviewing whether to update the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities or whether the update would be more appropriately reflected in new guidance on Sustainable Settlements. Such guidance would incorporate both the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005) and the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009), which encompasses towns and villages, to more appropriately reflect the range of areas and influences and the objectives of the NPF.”

The Council awaits developments in this regard but in the interim is proceeding with the policies set out in the draft Development Plan 2021 -2027 which are aligned with the provisions of the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies. It is noted that no issues were raised in submissions from the Department, the Eastern Midlands Regional Authority or the Office of the Planning Regulator on the Draft Rural Housing Policy regarding the judgement.

**Councillor Nick Killian** suggested that legal opinion be sought on this issue. He suggested, and it was agreed, to write to the Department seeking its position on this.

Noted by the Elected Members.

### 8.4 Submitted by Councillor Elaine McGinty

*“To ask the Chief Executive to provide a full list of all parks and the size of parks across the County of Meath.”*

#### **Response**

NAVAN MD		
Managed by	Location	Acres
MCC	Blackwater Park, Navan	71.0
	Andy Breanan Park, Navan	1.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>72.0</b>
TRIM MD		
Managed by	Location	Acres
MCC	Trim Porchfields	84.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>84.4</b>
ASHBOURNE MD		
Managed by	Location	Acres
MCC	Linear Park, Ashbourne	3.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.0</b>



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RATOATH MD		
Managed by	Location	Acres
MCC	Dunshaughlin Park	9.5
	Dunboyne Park	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>13.5</b>

LAYTOWN BETTYSTOWN MD		
Managed by	Location	Acres
Others	Laytown Seafields	32
<b>Total</b>		<b>32</b>

KELLS MD		
Managed by	Location	Acres
MCC	People's Park Lloyd	4.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>4.5</b>

Noted by the Elected Members.

#### 8.5 Submitted by Councillor Damien O'Reilly

*"To request Meath County to provide the development levies received per municipal district in tabular format for the last 5 years."*

#### Response

Below are collection figures for Development Contributions for last 5 years on a County Wide Basis (please note these are net of Irish Water contributions)

	Collections 2019	Collections 2018	Collections 2017	Collections 2016	Collections 2015
Total	10,078,128	11,545,294	8,249,170	7,177,012	4,860,380

**Note:** The financial management system used to record development contributions does not distinguish what Municipal District or townland development contributions are collected for. It is only possible to report on county wide collections per annum.

Noted by the Elected Members.

#### 8.6 Submitted by Councillor Francis Deane



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*“What strategies or incentives have Meath County Council adopted in relation to attracting consumers into our main county towns (Trim, Navan and Kells) for the 4th quarter of 2020 in an effort to exploit the stay local/shop local theme and will the issue of discounting paid parking/allowing grace periods, be included in the plan? Local retailers and business owners deserve and require our best support if they are to survive in the present stagnant economic climate?”*

### **Response**

The Council has been involved in various initiatives designed to attract and retain customers and providing primary supports for retailers in the current challenging trading environment – such initiatives include:

**MI-Meath card** – Meath County Council’s Economic Development Team have committed to financially support the MI Meath Card which is a new shop local initiative being managed and promoted by the County Meath Chamber to support business in Meath by encouraging consumers to spend in the County and keep money circulating locally. The card encourages consumers to purchase the Card for their own use as well as a gift card. The more you spend with Meath retailers the more you save, with many benefits for the consumer and the retail industry within Meath.

**Direct Contacts** – meetings have taken place with some retailers to discuss ways in which the Council can provide assistance. The Council’s Economic Development Team is always open to discussion and contact from local retailers in terms of ways in which supports can be provided to them. This can be facilitated via zoom, phone or face to face meetings once they are carried out with respect to the current guidelines and restrictions.

**Shop Front Scheme** - Meath County Council recognises the huge pressure and continued hardship that the Covid 19 restrictions have put on our retailers due to the restrictions on face to face interactions. In response to this the Council’s Economic Development Team have established the Shop Front Improvement Scheme open to applicants who were affected by the Covid 19 restrictions. The aim of this scheme is to support the improvement of the overall appearance of commercial properties that front onto public streets within our towns. The appearance of shop fronts and the buildings in which they reside have a considerable impact and influence on the character of a place. They are an essential element not only of the buildings in which they are set, but also of the wider streetscape. The shop front improvement scheme will support business owners who contribute to the local environment and raise the image of town centres in centres within Meath which in turn leads to increased local and visitor footfall. The Council sees this measure as a direct financial support to retailers within Meath. The scheme is due to go live at the end of September and will be advertised widely on Social Media Platforms and via our Website.

Meath retailers can also of course participate in programmes being managed by Local Enterprise Office, as follows:



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**Trading on Line Vouchers** – Trading Online Voucher Scheme is designed to assist small businesses with up to 10 employees to trade more online, boost sales and reach new markets. Participating in this scheme can make the process of trading online much easier for retailers.

**Mentoring Advice** – This service is free of charge to all registered micro-enterprises operating within the County and trading more than 6 months. Each mentoring assignment will consist of three consultations at times and dates agreed.

**COVID-19 Business Loans** – MicroFinance Ireland works very closely with the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), providing loans to small businesses. If a micro-enterprise which is impacted by COVID-19 resulting in a reduction of 15% or more in actual or projected turnover or profit, and is having difficulty in accessing finance from commercial lending providers, the MFI COVID-19 Business Loan up to €50,000 may be able to support the business. Discounted interest rate of 4.5% APR is available if your loan application is submitted through the Local Enterprise Office.

**Car Parking** - Meath County Council currently has a parking incentive in operation in Navan, Trim and Kells. There are currently no proposals to end these incentives and these incentives are used by the business community as part of the offer, to attract customers into the towns at this time.

**Commercial Rates Waiver** - At present a 6 month Commercial Rates Waiver is being applied to all commercial rates customers, the vast majority of whom are small to medium size businesses. This could amount to over €12 million. The Restart Grant Scheme and its successor the Restart Grant Plus Scheme is available to businesses subject to certain criteria. The closing date for applications is 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, applications can be made on line at <https://consult.meath.ie/en/applications>. To date, 1,237 businesses have been paid just over €4.73m under the Restart Grant Scheme. This is not including the new applications and additional payments these businesses will receive under Restart Grant Plus Scheme.

Noted by the Elected Members.

### **8.7 Submitted by Councillor Mike Bray**

*“To provide in tabular form the number of pothole complaints received by Meath County Council for each Municipal District in 2017, 2018, 2019 and to date in 2020.”*

#### **Response**

The Transportation Department has compiled the figures for pothole complaints for the years 2017 – 2020 from both the Council’s CRM system and pothole registers maintained in some Municipal Districts. Some complaints came in centrally and therefore could not easily be divided among the MDs. It is important to note that while the table below provides details of the number of complaints received and recorded, some complaints may refer to the same location/pothole.



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### NUMBER OF POTHOLE COMPLAINTS

	2017	2017 %	2018	2018 %	2019	2019 %	To date 2020	2020 %
Kells	159	33%	417	38%	113	21%	161	37%
Navan	53	11%	81	7%	54	10%	39	9%
Ratoath	105	22%	115	10%	85	16%	32	7%
L'town/B'town	38	8%	50	5%	65	12%	43	10%
Trim	73	15%	289	26%	107	20%	120	28%
Ashbourne	48	10%	128	12%	108	20%	37	9%
Central	6	1%	16	1%	5	1%	1	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1096</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

Included below is the length of Local Roads in each Municipal District. The percentage of pothole complaints for each Municipal District expressed as a percentage of the total number of complaints each year respectively compares broadly with the percentage of Local Road length in each Municipal District.

	Local Road length (km)	% of Total Local Roads	Total pothole complaints 2017-2020	% of total complaints
Navan MD	216,285	8%	227	9%
Ashbourne MD	408,629	14%	321	13%
Ratoath MD	331,825	12%	337	13%
Trim MD	501,574	18%	589	23%
Laytown Bettystown MD	406,851	14%	196	8%
Kells MD	955,026	34%	850	33%

**Councillor Mike Bray sought a clarification on the figures presented.**

Noted by the Elected Members.

#### 8.8 Submitted by Councillor Alan Lawes

“How many council tenants were on the transfer list in County Meath in 2018, 2019 and 2020 and how many tenants actually completed a transfer in those years?”



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### **Response**

There are currently 288 tenants on Meath County Council's Transfer List, compared to 235 and 193 in 2018 and 2019 respectively, as recorded at the annual Summary of Social Housing Assessment.

A total of 149 tenants have had their transfer request facilitated since January 2018.

Noted by the Elected Members.

### **9 Notice of Motion**

#### **9.1 Submitted by Councillor Elaine McGinty**

*"That Meath County Council engages with Facebook about the proliferation of bogus waste collectors advertising on the platform, with a view to ensuring that such advertisements must in future contain a permit number, be reportable by members of the public and should be removed by Facebook where illegal services are being offered. The Council commends on-going efforts by legitimate waste collectors and members of the public to address this issue and will continue to support and complement these efforts, where possible. Further, given the nationwide impact of this issue, that Meath County Council shares this campaign with all other local authorities, as appropriate."*

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

Each year, the National Waste Enforcement Committee sets out waste enforcement priorities for the following year. In recent years, a key aspect of this for Local Authorities and other statutory agencies is tackling significant illegal waste activity by operators including Man-in-the-Van type operators who use social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter etc to advertise waste collection services at knockdown prices.

In the vast majority of such cases these type of operators do not have the required waste collection permit and the waste collected from households etc is often dumped around the County, particularly in high amenity areas such as bogs, forests, dunes, resulting in the Council and other bodies such as Coilte incurring significant clean-up costs. Over the last three years over 20 sites in the County, which were subject to continual dumping over long periods, were cleaned up using funding provided under a National Anti-Dumping Initiative.

The waste enforcement priorities of the Local Authorities are co-ordinated by the Waste Enforcement Area Regional Offices (WEARLAs) and this Council has actively participated in a number of education and awareness campaigns designed to discourage households etc from giving their waste to operators without the necessary collection permit and in response to advertisements spotted on such social media platforms. In such campaigns the Council do, in addition to its own





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web-site, use such Social Media platforms to warn **households** of the dangers and risks associated with giving their waste to such illegal operators.

Efforts at both local and regional level, to dissuade Facebook from publishing such advertisements have not proved successful to date and it is suggested this matter may require intervention at Central Government level.

There were interventions from **Councillors: Elaine McGinty, Paul McCabe; Paddy Meade; Alan Tobin and Alan Lawes**. Mr. Larry Whelan informed the members of the new waste plan recently announced by Government which may assist with the objective of the motion. The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Elaine McGinty** and seconded by **Councillor Paul McCabe**, was noted.

### **9.2 Submitted by Councillor Ronan Moore**

*"That Meath County Council – recognising the role that the Comhairle na nÓg plays in our local authority, giving children and young people the opportunity to be involved in the development of local services and policies – extends an invitation out to the Comhairle to present to this chamber at the February County Council meeting; and that a standing order be created to invite the Comhairle to speak to the council at the first full County Council meeting of each calendar year going forward."*

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

It was practice that Meath Comhairle na nÓg make a presentation to the Council on an annual basis but this has not happened since 2017. While it was intended to arrange a presentation earlier this year Covid restrictions resulted in reduced opportunities to do this. However, it is understood that Meath Comhairle na nÓg would be willing to accept the invitation of the Full Council and look forward to presenting at Council Meeting on an annual basis. If this is agreed, this can be facilitated without amending the Standing Orders.

There were interventions from **Councillors: Ronan Moore; Mike Bray and Paul McCabe**. An Cathaoirleach proposed an amendment to the motion, which was seconded by Councillor Moore and agreed, as follows:

*"That Meath County Council – recognising the role that the Comhairle na nÓg plays in our local authority, giving children and young people the opportunity to be involved in the development of local services and policies – extends an invitation out to the Comhairle to present to this chamber at the February County Council meeting; and to invite the Comhairle to speak to the council at the first full County Council meeting of each calendar year going forward."*

The supporting information and the amended motion, proposed by **Councillor Ronan Moore** and seconded by **Councillor Mike Bray**, was agreed.



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### **9.3 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín**

*“To call on Meath County Council to change the agenda order of full council meetings forthwith, to allow motions to be addressed earlier in the meeting when attendance is higher and more time can be allotted to allow for measured unhurried discussion and decision-taking.”*

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

The business of Council Meetings and how they are administered is provided for by the Local Government Act 2001, Departmental Guidance and the Council’s own Standing Orders, which were adopted by the Council in October 2019. At present, the order of business at Council Meetings is prescribed by Standing Order 12.

These Standing Orders have been developed on the basis of guidance issued by the Department, which recommends that the order of business at Council Meeting shall prioritise the *“consideration of Reports and Recommendations; and the Business prescribed by Statute, Standing Orders or Resolutions of the Council for transaction at such meeting”* over other business such as Notice of Motions.

In light of the on-going review of the Standing Orders, this Motion was withdrawn.

### **9.4 Submitted by Councillor Ronan Moore**

*“That Meath County Council – recognising the long-term importance both culturally, socially and economically of the evening and night-time economy, and in light of the acute challenges that it is currently facing – agrees to implement a role of Nightlife Mayor as soon as is feasible to promote, stimulate and add value to this industry.”*

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

The Council recognises the importance of the night-time economy and the challenges that it currently faces, not least the current public health restrictions but also structural constraint issues such as regulation, licencing laws, transport, and the diversity of the night-time offering. The Council has worked with the sector in the past and will continue to do so, as with other business sectors, in supporting it to survive, re-open, broaden its offering, attract customers and to thrive in our towns and villages. For example, over the last 3-4 years The Council has lead on and worked with the County Chamber to achieve the Purple Flag for Navan, which is a designation that recognises the quality and diversity that the night-time economy offers in towns across the UK and Ireland.

The Council notes the commitment in the Programme for Government to support the night-time economy and to develop innovative approaches to enable it to function and to create a vibrant, diverse, and sustainable night-time economy. On July 30, 2020, Minister Catherine Martin T.D. announced the establishment of a new Night-Time Economy Taskforce, chaired by the Department



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of Media, Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht. It is expected to deliver a report with policy recommendations to the Minister within six months of its first meeting.

The Council awaits the work of the Taskforce and will respond, where relevant and appropriate, to the recommendations made.

There were interventions from **Councillors: Ronan Moore, Trevor Golden, Padraig Fitzsimons; Paul McCabe and An Cathaoirleach**. The Chief Executive provided some clarifications and highlighted the role of the County Chamber, while Councillor Moore responded to some of the questions from members. An Cathaoirleach proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Moore and agreed as follows:

*“That Meath County Council – recognising the long-term importance both culturally, socially and economically of the evening and night-time economy, and in light of the acute challenges that it is currently facing – agrees to explore a role of Nightlife Mayor as soon as is feasible to promote, stimulate and add value to this industry.”*

The supporting information and the amended motion, proposed by **Councillor Ronan Moore** and seconded by **Councillor Edward Fennessy**, was noted.

### **9.5 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin**

*“Call on Meath County Council’s Environment Section to insist that ton bags sold in retail outlets like service stations, supermarkets and hardware stores are fully paid for and not sold for a fraction of the actual collection cost. This has led to a large increase in the dumping of bags in hedgerows, beaches and laneways.”*

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

The Council is aware of issues arising from the sale of such bags by retail outlets and particularly failures to have the bags collected by the waste collection company, resulting in the waste material often being illegally dumped in high amenity areas.

All waste collection companies must operate in accordance with the terms and conditions of their Waste Collection Permit which is issued by the National Waste Collection Permit Office. There are standard conditions contained within all such permits, requiring skips and skip bags to be marked on both sides showing the permit holders name or their waste permit collection number – there are also standard conditions requiring the Company /Waste Collection Permit holder to remove skips and skip bags within a specified period and generally within 3 days if no skip bylaws are in place.

While the Council has enforcement powers against waste collection companies in respect of non-compliance with these conditions, there are no legislative provisions allowing for intervention with regard to charges being applied for the sale of the skip bags.



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There were interventions from **Councillors: Alan Tobin, Gerry O'Connor; Trevor Golden, Nick Killian and Elaine McGinty**. Both the Chief Executive and Mr. Larry Whelan clarified the role of the Council and the limitations of the current legislation.

It was agreed that the motion, proposed by **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Maria Murphy**, be referred to the Climate Action and Environment SPC for further consideration.

### **9.6 Submitted by Councillor Aisling Dempsey**

*“To call on Meath County Council to commence investigating potential areas suitable for casual trading across the county, particularly in areas of heavy footfall and near tourist attractions. Casual trading licences should be first and foremost available to our town's and village's existing traders who wish to diversify and respond to Covid-19 by taking their trade outdoors.”*

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

The Council recognises the numerous challenges that Covid 19 has created for retailers and businesses throughout the County and every effort is being made to support such businesses in reopening and in line with Government Guidelines. The need for such businesses to diversify and respond to the pandemic is also recognised and including the use of outdoor space to service the needs of their customers and maintaining social distancing.

While the Council is open to considering requests for revised trading arrangements in spaces outside their premises on a case by case basis and subject to compliance with other statutory requirements. It is not considered necessary to utilise the provisions of the Casual Trading legislation for this purpose as designation of casual trading areas involves an extensive preparation and consultation process.

In any event in January of this year, the Council was advised that the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation was undertaking a review of the fitness for purpose of the provisions of the Casual Trading Act 1995 and specifically its fitness for purpose having regard to possible conflicts with various directives issued since the original legislation was enacted and including the EU Services Directive which promotes free trade and movement.

There were interventions from **Councillors: Aisling Dempsey; Pdraig Fitzsimons; Noel French; Ronan Moore, Paddy Meade; Trevor Golden; Alan Lawes; Alan Tobin; and Eugene Cassidy**. The Chief Executive outlined that the Council is currently taking a positive approach to facilitate existing business use footpaths/streets, subject to access being maintained, and that consultation is required with the Chamber in terms of the view of existing rate-payers. The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Aisling Dempsey** and seconded by **Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons**, was noted.

### **9.7 Submitted by Councillor Aisling O'Neill**



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*"In the interest of transparency and fairness, that Meath County Council's housing allocation policy, when re-constituted, will adopt a numbered system. This system should be applied to all particular categories i.e.: Disability, health need, family unit types etc."*

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

Meath County Council's current Allocation Scheme was adopted by full Council in December 2016, following the consideration by, and recommendation of, the Housing, Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee. The Allocation Scheme is based on length of time on the social housing waiting list, while provision is made for priority to be afforded to specified categories on a case by case basis, if deemed necessary.

The Allocation Scheme is to be reviewed during the current Council term, and the consideration of a numbered system in respect to the Social Housing Waiting list will take place as part of such a review by the Housing, Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee.

There were interventions from **Councillors: Aisling O'Neill, Noel French, Gillian Toole Nick Killian and Alan Lawes**. Mr. Barry Lynch informed the meeting that the issue was on the work programme of the Housing SPC, which would review the scheme in the round. It was agreed that the motion, proposed by **Councillor Aisling O'Neill** and seconded by **Councillor Edward Fennessy**, would be referred to the Housing, Community and Cultural Development SPC for consideration.

On a proposal from <b>Councillor Gerry O'Connor</b> and seconded by <b>Councillor Alan Tobin</b> , it was agreed to extend the meeting to 6.15pm.
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### **9.8 Submitted by Councillor Alan Lawes**

*"That Meath County Council sets up a special emergency covid-19 cross-party committee. The main focus of this committee will be to explore all avenues and work in partnership with all state agencies on ensuring that County Meath is not the next county to lock down."*

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

The Council's response to the Covid-19 emergency has been informed by the public health guidance issued by the Government and NPHE. This approach will continue to apply, with the Council working through the established structures in place. In March, the Council established the Community Support Forum, which brought together a broad range of key stakeholders in the county, including statutory, non-statutory and voluntary bodies. An Cathaoirleach is a member and other elected members have an input into the Forum and its sub-groups. The Forum was essential to the community response efforts during the lockdown earlier this year and stands ready to be deployed for future such situations.

In parallel, the Council has also coordinated the county's readiness within the well-established North East Region Major Emergency Management (NERMEM) Group. This is the regional structure for



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dealing with major emergencies and brings together the key statutory bodies, including: the Health Service Executive, the four Local Authorities (including Fire Services and Civil Defence units) and An Garda Síochána, supplemented by the Education and Training Boards and Defence Forces representatives. Given its nature, the HSE acts as the lead agency on the Covid-19 situation. The NERMEM met on frequent occasions during the height of the emergency (March to June) to share information, report issues that needed to be addressed and to improve readiness and capacity in the region, as the situation required.

In recent weeks, the NERMEM has reconvened to prepare an inter-agency response for a potential local or regional lockdown in the North East region. The work of the NERMEM is being informed by the experiences of the recent local lockdowns in Kildare, Offaly and Laois. In this regard, representatives of the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Justice and the Health and Safety Authority will be involved in the inter-agency preparation and response in the North East region.

The Council is cooperating and working with all the relevant agencies to ensure that Meath and the wider region is not required to enter a stricter regime of public health restrictions. The key objective now is that the public health advice is observed by all individuals, workplaces and other settings in order to ensure that the number of confirmed Covid-19 cases remains low.

There were interventions from **Councillors: Alan Lawes; Damien O'Reilly; Ronan Moore; Paddy Meade; Nick Killian; Gerry O'Connor; Alan Tobin; Aisling O'Neill; Edward Fennessy; Eugene Cassidy; Trevor Golden and Yemi Adenuga.** The Chief Executive outlined the inter-agency structures already in place at regional and local levels and An Cathaoirleach spoke about the work of the Community Forum in coordinating the response of various agencies and groups in the county. While all members stressed the need to prevent a local lockdown in County Meath it was agreed that elected members use the existing avenues open for highlighting issues/raising questions and that these could be addressed to the appropriate existing structures such as the Regional Health Forum, the Community Response Forum and NERMEM.

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

On a proposal from **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Lawes**, it was agreed to extend the meeting to 6.30pm.

### 9.9 Submitted by Councillor Gillian Toole

*"That Meath County Council seeks "Garda vetting for one [organisation], Garda vetting for all" with a two-year review, as a way to ensure the continuation and participation of community volunteers in improving the quality of life of Meath residents."*

This item was deferred.



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### **9.10 Submitted by Councillor Sarah Reilly**

*"That Meath County Council calls on the Minister for Health to meet with Mary Bartley Meehan and to authorise an Independent Enquiry in to the circumstances leading to the death of her husband Ultan Meehan."*

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Sarah Reilly**. The motion, proposed by **Councillor Sarah Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Emer Tóibín**, was agreed.

### **9.11 Submitted by Councillor Joe Fox**

*"That Meath County Council calls on the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to provide additional resources to enable the establishment of a stock management unit in each local authority area to manage their housing properties and better support their tenants."*

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Joe Fox**. The motion, proposed by **Councillor Joe Fox** and seconded by **Councillor Noel French**, was agreed.

### **9.12 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin**

*"Meath County Council requests that the Minister for Agriculture, Food & Marine review food labelling to make it easier for consumers to make informed decisions regarding environmental impact including resources used, carbon footprint and distance from source to Ireland. This will allow consumers to make more informed decisions that will have a positive impact on the environment and buying or sourcing local produce."*

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Alan Tobin**, with interventions by **Councillors: Ronan Moore; Paddy Meade; Trevor Golden; Joe Fox** and **Eugene Cassidy**. The motion, proposed by **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Fox**, was agreed.

### **9.13 Submitted by Councillor Gerry O'Connor**

*"That Meath County Council calls on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to conclude the baseline review of local authority funding models and include the findings as part of his Department's submission to the 2021 Budget discussions soon to commence."*

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor**. Councillor Ronan Moore proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Gerry O'Connor and agreed, as follows:





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*"That Meath County Council calls on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to conclude the baseline review of local authority funding models and act on its recommendation and include the findings as part of his Department's submission to the 2021 Budget discussions soon to commence."*

The amended motion, proposed by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin**, was agreed. It was also agreed to circulate this to other local authorities.

### **9.14 Submitted by Councillor Gerry O'Connor**

*"That Meath County Councillors call on the Minister for Finance, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, to immediately fund the LPT Equalisation Fund from the Central Exchequer and leave the 20% that is currently withheld from Local Authorities in the areas where the LPT is generated."*

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor**, with an intervention by **Councillor Ronan Moore**. The motion, proposed by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin**, was agreed. It was also agreed to circulate this to other local authorities.

## **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

## **11 Any Other Business**