



## ***Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes***

### ***Ordinary Meeting***

***2<sup>nd</sup> November 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 (remotely), Edward Fennessy, Brian Fitzgerald, Pdraig Fitzsimons, Joe Fox, Noel French, Michael Gallagher, Deirdre Geraghty-Smith (remotely), Trevor Golden, Wayne Harding, Suzanne Jamal (remotely), Geraldine Keogan (remotely), Nick Killian, Alan Lawes, Paul McCabe, Elaine McGinty, Stephen McKee, Paddy Meade, Ronan Moore (remotely), 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:**

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

**Chief Executive:** Jackie Maguire

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

**Meetings Administrator:** Robert Collins

**Senior Executive Officers:** Larry Whelan, Dara McGowan, Sean Clarke

**Council's Law Agent:** Rory McEntee (remotely)

In advance of the meeting, the Meetings Administrator outlined the various measures in place to protect the health and wellbeing of the meeting participants, which have been implemented in line with the latest public health guidance and the Standard Operating Guidance agreed by the LGMA, AILG and LAMA. As a result, members were informed that the meeting would be of a maximum duration of 1hr 55mins. The meeting commenced at 1.40pm.

### **1 Confirmation of Minutes**

#### **1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020.**



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The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Francis Deane**.

### **1.2 Confirmation of minutes of Special Planning meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020.**

The minutes of the Special Planning meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Paul McCabe**.

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

Following the adoption of the minutes, the following members raised a number of matters: **Councillor Sharon Tolan** wanted the agreed motion on the minimum wage to address the issue of age discrimination; **Councillor Gillian Toole** raised the issue of the service levels of the ESB again and also referred to the Special Planning Meeting and the fact that eleven councillors had raised specific issues at that meeting which were not detailed in the minutes; and **Councillor Elaine McGinty** sought an up-date on the issue of illegal waste collectors, which was provided by Mr. Larry Whelan.

### **2.1 To adopt the revised Standing Orders for Meath County Council, including the new Standing Orders regulating the proceedings of the Council in holding remote meetings.**

The Chief Executive introduced the revised Standing Orders, outlining that the proposed changes fell into two categories. The first were the revisions requested by the Corporate Policy Group (CPG). While the second was a new section to govern the holding of remote meetings, following the signing of the Ministerial Order on October 20<sup>th</sup> to enable participation and voting at remote meetings of the Council. She suggested that they be dealt with separately. The Meetings Administrator gave an overview of the main revisions as follows: Standing Order 5 on Extension to Council Meetings; Standing Order 13 on Notices of Motion; Standing Order 15 on Emergency Motions; and Standing Order 16 on Notices of Question.

There were some questions from the following **Councillors: Nick Killian and Gillian Toole** regarding Standing Orders 13 and 16. Responses were provided on these, while **Councillors Gerry O'Connor, Tommy Reilly and An Cathaoirleach** outlined that all of these revisions were discussed by the CPG and the Protocol Committees previously and were supported by these committees. On a proposal of **Councillor Tommy Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Eugene Cassidy** the proposed revisions were agreed. Councillor Nick Killian indicated that he did not agree.

The new section of the Standing Orders governing the holding of remote meetings was presented briefly. **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** welcomed the inclusion of a review clause and other additions that were discussed at the CPG/Protocol Committee meeting. **Councillors Nick Killian and Brian Fitzgerald** raised the issue of speaking time for the Special Planning Meeting and participation of the press and public, while **Councillors Trevor Golden and Paddy Meade** raised issues regarding the



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technology and connectivity. The Meetings Administrator outlined that the Council had already dealt with the issue of speaking time and the participation of the press/public at its October monthly meeting, when it suspended a number of Standing Orders for the Special Planning Meeting. The new section in the Standing Orders was agreed on a proposal by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor**. Councillor Nick Killian indicated that he did not agree.

### 2.2 Update on Special Planning Meeting to consider the draft County Development Plan – revised schedule of meetings.

The Chief Executive presented a provisional schedule of statutory meetings, which set out the monthly Municipal District meetings, the General Municipal Allocations meetings; the Special Planning Meeting and the Annual Budget meeting. She set out the rationale and how the proposed schedule followed-up on the motion passed by the Council when it adjourned the Special Planning meeting on October 19<sup>th</sup> under the following terms:

*"in the interests of public health and the health and wellbeing of Council staff and elected members until the appropriate legislation providing for the Council to hold remote meetings comes into effect and being not less than three days after the commencement of such legislation. The Elected Members of Meath County Council request clarity from the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage with regard to the impact on statutory time lines, seek additional time, if required, for the process to ensure compliance with statutory obligations and further propose that a new date for the Special Planning Meeting will be considered at the monthly Council Meeting on November 2nd, 2020, if not already fixed prior to that date."*

She outlined that the appropriate legislation to hold remote meetings had now come into effect. She also outlined that some changes were made to the schedule following the meeting of the CPG and Protocol Committee on October 30<sup>th</sup>.

There was a lengthy discussion on the proposed schedule and in particular on how the Special Planning Meeting would be conducted. The following members contributed to the debate: **Councillors: Brian Fitzgerald; Damien O'Reilly; Noel French; Joe Fox; Gerry O'Connor; Eugene Cassidy; Gillian Toole; Joe Bonner; Maria Murphy; Nick Killian; Paddy Meade; Michael Gallagher; Alan Tobin; Emer Tóibín; Sarah Reilly; Aisling O'Neill; Paul McCabe; Deirdre Geraghty-Smith; and Sharon Tolan.** A number of points were made as follows:

Concerns about have the meetings online, with support for meetings being face-to-face or a hybrid; questions on the overall timetable for adopting the County Development Plan; possibility of seeking a derogation from the Minister regarding the timeframes; the options of weekend and evening meetings; issues to do with the technology and problems with connectivity/broadband coverage; need to accommodate people that have jobs in the schedule; the need to make online meetings work as these may be required for a longer time than the current lockdown; the fact that the review of the County Development Plan is a quasi-judicial process and problems with online voting could open the Council to legal challenge (Councillor Fox); highlighting the consultative nature of the



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process and cannot be rushed; and concerns about the cleanliness and ventilation in the meeting room.

The Chief Executive responded to a number of points and suggestions made. Mr Sean Clarke clarified the points raised on the timetable and Mr. Rory McEntee provided advice on issues to do with the voting and on the questions of extending the timeframes for the adoption of the County Development Plan. He did underline that the Council should engage in the process without delay and be seen to be doing so. Following the discussion, An Cathaoirleach summarised the following points, which were agreed:

- The Special Planning Meeting (SPM) would commence on Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, as scheduled;
- This meeting and all meetings of the SPM would be hybrid, face-to-face with the option of participating remotely;
- Meetings would be of 1hr 55mins duration, resulting in one meeting per day;
- Technical and meeting location options would be explored to facilitate members' participation, where required;
- The Council would write to the Minister seeking a derogation to the timeframes.

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

Sympathy was extended to:

- Frank Murray, Unity Centre, Community Section on the death of his brother Patrick (Patsy) Murray.
- Liz Dowdall, Corporate Services on the death of her brother, Dennis (Dinch) Gibney.
- Mary Montague, Human Resources on the death of her mother, Alice (Eileen) Montague.
- Paul Cully, G.O. Navan on the death of his mother Phil Cully.
- Chris Dunne (Civil Defence) and Pat Dunne, former employee on the death of their mother/daughter Susannah (Susie) Dunne, Active Civil Defence Member.
- James Murney, General Operative, Navan Civic Office on the death of his wife, Shirley Murney.

Congratulations were extended to:

- Aileen O'Suillivan of Gerrardstown, Navan on winning the Clonmel Handicap Chase

### **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 Planning**



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- 5.1.1 Having considered the Planning Report in relation to planning application RA201017: the development of a two storey 8 classroom Primary school building in Dunshaughlin (Roll Number 20521Q) including a two classroom SEN Base. The design also includes a general purpose hall, support teaching spaces and ancillary accommodation external junior play areas, secure SEN hard and soft play area, sensory garden and outside classroom area. The proposed project also incorporates associated car parking and bicycle parking, access road, pedestrian access, bicycle lane, boundary treatment, construction of 2No. external ball courts, landscaping, connection to public services, ESB sub-station and all associated siteworks at Dublin Road, Dunshaughlin, Co Meath, to resolve to make or refuse a material contravention of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019, as varied, under section 34 (6) of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 – 2019 as amended. The site of the proposed development is zoned 'E2 – General Enterprise and Employment' in the Dunshaughlin Local Area Plan, 2009 to 2015, as varied and as such, the development would contravene materially the following objective of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 to 2019, as varied: E2 – General Enterprise & Employment: To provide for the creation of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for employment through industrial, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing and other general employment / enterprise uses in a good quality physical environment. (already circulated on September 22<sup>nd</sup>)

**Please Note: Section 34(6) Planning and Development Act 2000** - provides that a development may materially contravene the Development Plan subject to certain procedures being complied with. A decision to grant planning permission requires the vote of not less than three quarters of the members of the Council in favour.

A presentation on the proposed material contravention was made by Mr. Frank O'Donnell, Executive Planner, which outlined the proposed development, the site and location for the development, its assessment in terms of planning policy and the reasons it constituted a material contravention.

A roll-call vote was undertaken on the material contravention as follows:

	For	Against	Absent
<b>ADENUGA, Yemi</b>	X		
<b>BEHAN, Tom</b>	X		
<b>BONNER, Joseph</b>	X		
<b>BRAY, Mike</b>	X		
<b>CASSIDY, Eugene</b>	X		
<b>DEANE, Francis</b>	X		
<b>DEMPSEY, Aisling</b>	X		
<b>DREW, Sean</b>			X
<b>FENNESSY, Eddie</b>	X		
<b>FITZGERALD, Brian</b>	X		
<b>FITZSIMONS, Pdraig</b>	X		
<b>FOX, Joe</b>	X		
<b>FRENCH, Noel</b>	X		
<b>GALLAGHER, Michael</b>	X		
<b>GERAGHTY-SMITH, Deirdre</b>			X
<b>GILROY, David</b>	X		



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GOLDEN, Trevor			X
HARDING, Wayne	X		
JAMAL, Suzanne	X		
KEOGAN, Geraldine	X		
KILLIAN, Nick	X		
LAWES, Alan	X		
MC CABE, Paul	X		
MC GINTY, Elaine	X		
MC KEE, Stephen	X		
MEADE, Paddy	X		
MOORE, Ronan	X		
MURPHY, Maria	X		
O'CONNOR, Gerry	X		
O'NEILL, Aisling	X		
O'REILLY, Damien	X		
REILLY, Sarah	X		
REILLY, Tommy	X		
SMITH, Amanda	X		
SOUHAN, Niamh	X		
TOBIN, Alan	X		
TÓIBÍN, Emer	X		
TOLAN, Sharon	X		
TOOLE, Gillian	X		
TORMEY, Conor	X		

In agreement = 37 members, Against = 0, Absent = 3. In accordance with this decision, the recommendation on the material contravention was agreed.

### 5.2 Corporate Services

5.2.1 To consider nominations for the appointment of three Councillors to the Members' Forum of the Dublin – Belfast Economic Corridor.

On a proposal of **Councillor Tom Behan** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** this matter was referred to the Protocol Committee. **Councillors Alan Lawes, Elaine McGinty** and **Wayne Harding** commented on the role of the Protocol Committee on such matters.

### 5.3 Community

5.3.1 To consider Arts Grant recommendations 2020 (Schools Musical Instrument Purchase Scheme).



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The recommendations were approved on a proposal by **Councillor Maria Murphy** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**.

### **5.4 Housing**

5.4.1 To Adopt Draft Policy on the Inspection of Private Emergency Accommodation as recommended by the Housing, Community and Cultural Development SPC and agreed by the CPG.

Approved on the proposal of **Councillor Maria Murphy** and seconded by **Councillor Edward Fennessy**.

**At 3.35pm, the meeting was adjourned in line with the Standard Operating Guidance until Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**



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### ***Resumption on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020, Solstice Theatre @ 1.30p.m.***

#### **Presiding**

Councillor David Gilroy, Cathaoirleach

#### **Councillors Present:**

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

**Apologies:** Councillors Eugene Cassidy, Edward Fennessy, Pdraig Fitzsimons, Stephen McKee, Aisling O'Neill,

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

**Chief Executive:** Jackie Maguire

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

**Meetings Administrator:** Robert Collins

**Senior Executive Officers:** Larry Whelan, Sean Clarke

In advance of the resumption of the meeting, the Meetings Administrator outlined the various measures in place to protect the health and wellbeing of the meeting participants, which have been implemented in line with the latest public health guidance and the Standard Operating Guidance. As a result, members were informed that the meeting would be of a maximum duration of 1hr 55mins. The meeting commenced at 1.35pm.

## **6 Reports**

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

Members were requested to forward any comments in advance to the Meetings Administrator, who confirmed that he had not received any. The following sought clarification on a number of points: **Councillors Nick Killian; Sharon Tolan; Gillian Toole; Paul McCabe; Sean Drew; Tom Behan; and Maria Murphy.** The following points were raised:

- Housing - purchase of 2 bed accommodation; the purchase of land for social housing; the rate of housing delivery and delays in connections by Irish Water; re-occupation of void dwellings;





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- Economic Development - the shop front scheme – could it be expanded; could the shop front scheme support businesses that are promoting local businesses; lack of concessions on car parking provisions;
- Oireachtas Members meeting – nature of issues raised, in particular on rents and social housing issues and associated problems;
- Finance – acknowledgement of the work in paying the Restart Grant and Rates Rebates; annual breakdown of Rebuilding Ireland homeloans;
- Library Services – need to continue the click and collect service in any future lockdowns.

Mr. Barry Lynch, Larry Whelan and Des Foley provided clarifications on points raised. Mr Whelan also informed members of an An Bord Pleanála oral hearing planned for November 23<sup>rd</sup> on the proposed development at Knockharley, County Meath.

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

The Meetings Administrator provided a brief report on the most recent CPG meeting.

- 6.2.1 Update on parking at beaches following referral of Notice of Motion from the July 2020 Full Council meeting, as recommended by the Climate Action, Environment & Emergency Services SPC and as agreed by the CPG

The Meetings Administrator informed the members about a recommendation from the Climate Action, Environment & Emergency Services SPC, which was endorsed by the CPG, regarding car parking on the beaches. There was a discussion on this proposal with both **Councillors Paddy Meade and Tom Behan** speaking against it, while other Councillors such as **Councillor Sharon Tolan; Alan Tobin, Amanda Smith, Gerry O'Connor, Elaine McGinty and Joe Bonner** speaking in favour of the recommendation and the restriction on cars on the beach more specifically. **Councillor Nick Killian** considered that this was a decision that needed to be taken at Council level as it's of county-wide importance, while **Councillor Gillian Toole** sought an update on the process of securing alternative car parking facilities. The proposed recommendation was accepted on a vote of 20 for, 8 against.

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

- 6.3.1 Recommendation on Webcasting of Council Meetings following the referral of Notice of Motion from the September 2019 Full Council meeting, as recommended by the Protocol Committee and as agreed by the CPG.

The Meetings Administrator provided a brief report on the most recent CPG meeting, including a recommendation on webcasting of Council Meetings. Following an intervention by **Councillor Noel French**, this recommendation was agreed. **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** sought clarification on the



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status of a decision at a GMA meeting vis-à-vis its impact on the adoption of the annual budget. This matter was clarified by the Chief Executive.

The Cathaoirleach also suggested that the new provisional schedule of Council Meetings, including the Special Planning Meeting could be addressed under this item. The Meetings Administrator and the Chief Executive outlined the schedule and the correspondence sent to the Department and the response received on seeking a derogation to the timeframes for the review of the County Development Plan. There were interventions from the following **Councillors: Damien O'Reilly; Nick Killian and Michael Gallagher**. The proposed schedule of meetings, including the schedule for the Special Planning Meeting was agreed.

### **7 Correspondence**

7.1 Correspondence from Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection in response to Notice of Motion 9.9 adopted at the October 2020 meeting of the full council re. increasing the Minimum Wage to a Living Wage.

**Councillor Alan Lawes** indicated that he was disappointed with the response while Councillor Sharon Tolan underlined the need for a breakdown by age group. Noted by the Councillors

7.2 Correspondence from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in response to Notice of Motion 9.8 adopted at the October 2020 meeting of the full council re. introduction of a remunerated DUMP [dispose of unwanted medicines properly] scheme.

**Councillor Gillian Toole** highlighted a discrepancy between the responses (7.2 and 7.3) in terms of an Inter-Departmental Consultative Committee. Noted by the Councillors

7.3 Correspondence from the Department of Environment, Climate & Communications in response to Notice of Motion 9.8 adopted at the October 2020 meeting of the full council re. introduction of a remunerated DUMP [dispose of unwanted medicines properly] scheme.

Noted by the Councillors

7.4 Correspondence from Senator Robbie Gallagher re. closure of the Restart Grants Scheme.

Noted by the Councillors

7.5 Correspondence from Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage re. Civil Law and Criminal Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020 (Section 29) (Local Authorities) (Designation) Order 2020 (S.I. No. 445 of 2020).



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Noted by the Councillors

- 7.6 Circular Letter PL 09/2020 – Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage re. Operation of Planning System during Covid-19 Level 5 Restrictions.

Noted by the Councillors

- 7.7 Housing Circular 30/2020 – Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage re. Level 5 – Termination of Local Authority Tenancies.

Noted by the Councillors

- 7.8 LG 07-2020 – Guidelines for supplementary Standing Orders regulating the proceedings in relation to remote meetings of the Council.

Noted by the Councillors

- 7.9 Correspondence from Department of Health in response to Notice of Motion 9.7 adopted at the October 2020 meeting of the full council re. details of confirmed Covid 19 cases on a townland basis.

Noted by the Councillors

### 8 Notice of Question

#### 8.1 Submitted by Councillor Francis Deane

*“How many horses and ponies have been seized by the local authority in 2019 and until now in 2020?”*

#### Response

	2019	2020
Number of horses and ponies seized by the local authority	20	1

Noted by the Councillors



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### 8.2 Submitted by Councillor Paul McCabe

*“To ask the Executive to outline the number of dogs which were; Impounded; Reclaimed; Euthanized; and Rehomed by the local authority Dog Pounds in the years 2017, 2018, 2019 and so far in 2020 and to also outline the number of dog licences which were issued for the same period.”*

#### Response

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Stray	267	213	230	81*
Surrendered	33	95	114	29*
Seized	5	0	0	0*
Reclaimed	98	76	71	28*
Euthanized	2 (0.66%)	2 (0.64%)	4 (1.16%)	0* (0%)
Rehomed	205	230	268	77*
Number of Dog Licences Issued	2806	3660	3736	3837**

\*Figures relate to January to June 2020

\*\*Figures relate to January to October 2020

**Councillor Paul McCabe** sought clarification on the dogs surrendered to charities. Noted by the Councillors

### 8.3 Submitted by Councillor Yemi Adenuga

*“Can Meath County council please provide a list of specifically designated cycle lanes in major towns in Meath (existing and planned) and highlight what plans are in place, including deadlines, to deliver the cycle lanes that are currently just in the plan?”*

#### Response

The following is a breakdown of the length of cycle lanes and tracks in County Meath, as submitted to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in 2019. These measurements are county wide and the Council does not record this information on a town by town basis.

Greenway/ Cycleway (off road)	Segregated on road)	Carriageway (on road)	Total
M	M	M	M
23,782	29,446	6,013	59,241



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Meath County Council is currently developing a number of projects in conjunction with various Government Departments. These projects are spread across the county and are located in Navan, Dunboyne, Ashbourne, Ratoath, Trim, Kells and East Meath. Each of these projects are at different stages of the design process, some at feasibility stage, some at planning stage and others at detailed design stage. It is difficult to provide deadlines for the delivery of these projects as these are generally not funded from the Council's own resources and there are various third party approval steps to pass through during the delivery process. In addition to this, funding is normally only provided for specific stages and until milestones in the design process are met, there is no guarantee that funding for the next stage will be forthcoming.

Noted by the Councillors

### 8.4 Submitted by Councillor Gerry O'Connor

*"Can the executive provide in tabular form the actual spend on winter gritting in each Municipal District for each year from 2014 to 2019?"*

#### Response

The Winter Gritting programme is managed centrally, with 10 routes spanning the 6 Municipal Districts. Costs are not recorded on a Municipal District basis. Below is a summary of the costs from the 2014/2015 Season to the 2019/2020 Season, as requested.

Winter Season	No. of Callouts	No. of additional Standby nights	TOTALS
Gritting Season 2014/2015	91	44	<b>€814,516.66</b>
Gritting Season 2015/2016	62	40	<b>€560,136.20</b>
Gritting Season 2016/2017	55	46	<b>€502,341.74</b>
Gritting Season 2017/2018	103	50	<b>€922,027.90</b>
Gritting Season 2018/2019	35	43	<b>€326,781.92</b>
Gritting Season 2019/2020	53	62	<b>€493,228.18</b>

In addition to these costs, three town routes: Navan, Trim & Kells are treated at a local level via the relevant MD and linked to the main network. Gritting is also carried out by the other MDs, as required, for example in times of severe weather events.

The costs incurred for these works are charged to the MDs own maintenance budget, and do not receive a separate allocation.

There is an allocation in the current 3 year Capital Plan to commence the provision of small gritting machines for each of the other MDs, to allow for the treatment of the major urban centres under their responsibility.



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Noted by the Councillors

### **8.5 Submitted by Councillor Alan Lawes**

*“Can Meath County Council through our Community Response initiative provide nourishing food and drink parcels for rough sleepers in the County during the level 5 lockdown?”*

#### **Response**

The Community Response Forum was established at the start of the Covid -19 emergency with the Local Authority co-ordinating the Community Call response at local level. There are a large number of agencies working together to ensure that appropriate services are in place for those who need it. As part of its co-ordinating role, the Forum can link those who identify a need in the community with agencies who can assist in providing or addressing that need.

**Councillor Alan Lawes** sought clarification on the provision of assistance by the Community Forum. Noted by the Councillors.

## **9 Notice of Motion**

### **9.1 Submitted by Councillor Sarah Reilly**

*"That Meath County Council conduct a survey with the 40 refugee families who were placed in Meath under the Department Resettlement Programme to determine if they received appropriate or sufficient support from the external body who were commissioned to perform this task, thereby enabling us to learn from any mistakes made and adapt for the refugees we will be welcoming under Phase 2 of the Resettlement Programme."*

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

Meath County Council's Resettlement Programme forms part of the national commitment to contribute to addressing the humanitarian crisis that is the Syrian refugee emergency across Europe. Meath County Council committed to resettling 160 refugees over a two year period (Phase 1), commencing in January 2018. Phase 1 of the Resettlement Programme successfully resettled 167 persons (40 families) to Co. Meath.

Central to the Programme was the establishment of an interagency working group, led by Meath County Council's Housing Department, and comprised of such agencies as the HSE, Social Protection, Louth Meath Education Training Board, Childcare Committee, Tusla, and the Department of Justice. In addition to the provision of housing by Meath County Council, health and welfare supports had to be co-ordinated, as well as school placements and English language classes.



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From a logistically point of view, it will not be possible to survey all families that were resettled to the County, however, the Housing Department is committed to reviewing the implementation of Phase one, with all the participating stakeholders, including end users, with a view to applying any learning that may be identified to Phase 2.

In introducing her motion **Councillor Sarah Reilly** outlined the good record that Meath had in welcoming refugees and the benefits that a wrap-around support service, provided to refugee families in Kells, can offer. Despite this, improvements could be made and on the basis of what gets measured get done, the motion sought to identify learnings for future policy application. The supporting information and the motion, proposed by **Councillor Sarah Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor**, was agreed.

### **9.2 Submitted by Councillor Gillian Toole**

*"Meath County Council [Executive & Elected Members] recognises the benefits of greener alternatives to traditional transportation, specifically e-bikes & e-scooters, and will examine the need for urban design & built environment modifications [like docking stations & dedicated lanes]. It also calls for Government to implement policy changes mandating helmets & education initiatives."*

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

The examination of urban design issues is carried out at national level so that there is consistency throughout the country with any necessary changes being incorporated into the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and the Traffic Signs Manual. This Notice of Motion will be forwarded to the Department of Transport for consideration with future reviews of relevant design guidance.

In introducing her motion **Councillor Gillian Toole** outlined some examples of where improvements were required and informed the meeting that legislation on some aspects was pending, which would better ensure public safety. The supporting information and the motion, proposed by **Councillor Gillian Toole** and seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade**, was noted.

### **9.3 Submitted by Councillor Yemi Adenuga**

*"Call on Meath County Council to introduce fast-track procedures for the implementation of COVID-19 mobility measures in Meath."*

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

The fast tracking of mobility measures is not something that Meath County Council has pursued. There are limited opportunities to implement schemes that would have the impact as requested in this Notice of Motion, because the current infrastructure is of a scale that makes doing stretches in isolation difficult. Following the lockdown earlier in 2020, Meath County Council looked at various options for improving pedestrian or cycling facilities in town centres using temporary measures,



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however these considerations usually resulted in providing an incomplete cycling service with limited connectivity or a reduction in on-street parking.

Instead of temporary measures, Meath County Council has focused its resources to continue and develop permanent schemes in line with a proposal being considered at national level to construct a significant programme of infrastructure which will feed into a five year programme of sustainable pedestrian and cycling schemes.

Meath County Council are currently working with the NTA seeking grant approvals for numerous cycling schemes throughout the county, as well as enhancing the town bus service in Navan.

**Councillor Yemi Adenuga** introduced her motion by calling on the Council to become more proactive in introducing mobility measures. These would be important during the pandemic but also have potential longer-term benefits. The supporting information and the motion, proposed by **Councillor Yemi Adenuga** and seconded by **Councillor Sharon Tolan** was noted.

### **9.4 Submitted by Councillor Gillian Toole**

*"Meath County Council will examine and establish a small business/retailer grant scheme [similar to the Indaver and Knockharley community grant schemes] with a percentage of the levies and commercial rates generated by Amazon Data at Donore Road, Drogheda, County Meath."*

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

The Indaver and Knockharley community grant schemes arose as part of the planning conditions and relating to the particular nature of the industries involved. Development levies are capital in nature and have to be applied in accordance with the development levy contribution scheme which would not include a small grant scheme. Commercial rates are used to fund the total expenditure of Meath County Council across all service divisions. All grant schemes funded by Meath County Council are approved as part of the overall budget process and can only be linked to the total Rates income of the Council.

In introducing her motion **Councillor Gillian Toole** noted the response provided and indicated that she would raise the matter again at Budget time. She also considered that there was an opportunity lost for the local community to benefit from a district heating initiative, as delivered in other administrative areas from such data centres. The supporting information and the motion, proposed by **Councillor Gillian Toole** and seconded by **Councillor Elaine McGinty**, was noted.

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

*"Call on Meath County Council to capitalise any unspent Elected Members training budget allocated in budget 2020, to be available for expenditure in 2021"*

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





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Circular LG 04/2019 sets out the allowances for expenses incurred by elected members of local authorities. This includes allowance for expenses for attendance at training events (Part V).

This provides for elected members' attendance at training events provided by the Association of Irish Local Government (AILG), seminars of the Local Authority Members Association (LAMA), and events of national representative bodies for function for which local authorities have responsibilities (such as the IPI and RIAI) and participation in programmes of individual education and learning.

The Circular also requires that a local authority shall ensure that any events, to which Part IV and Part V of the Circular apply avoid any unnecessary or excessive cost in respect of travelling or subsistence expenses allowance. The members' allowances are standard revenue expense and there is no provision to carry forward to another financial year.

This Motion was withdrawn.

### **9.6 Submitted by Councillor Sarah Reilly**

*"That Meath County Council requests the Department of Housing to amend the income eligibility criteria for the Housing Adaptation Grant to allow for a higher household income for applications relating to adaptations to cater for appropriate care of a child."*

In introducing her motion **Councillor Sarah Reilly** highlighted the good work done by Council staff in delivering the Housing Adaptation Grants but also outlined the case for changing the eligibility criteria. The motion, proposed by **Councillor Sarah Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Michael Gallagher**, was agreed.

### **9.7 Submitted by Councillor Paul McCabe**

*"That Meath County Council write to the Minister for Justice and Equality calling on her Department to tackle anti-social behaviour in communities by ensuring a more visible An Garda Síochána presence on our streets in Meath and to seek an update on the establishment of an expert forum which will consider the effectiveness of the existing legislation to counteract and prevent anti-social behaviour, as is contained in the Programme for Government and that the Government sets up a specific strategy to combat the illegal importation, sale and use of fireworks."*

In introducing his motion **Councillor Paul McCabe** touched on a number of points including the problem of anti-social behaviour, the ease of access to fireworks and the establishment of an expert forum to consider the effectiveness of current legislation. A number of other contributions were made by the following **Councillors: Tom Behan; Gerry O'Connor; Gillian Toole; Elaine McGinty; Nick Killian; Michael Gallagher; Emer Tóibín; Noel French; and Alan Tobin**. There was general agreement for the motion but some reservations about portraying the issue as a Meath-only problem; the role of the JPC and potential duplication of function, the work of the family resource centres; Garda



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resources in the county; the related issue of drug abuse and availability; the use of alternative and soft-measures by An Garda Síochána.

In concluding the discussion, An Cathaoirleach proposed that the letter be issued to the Minister; that the response be sent to the JPC for consideration and that the JPC will report back to the Council on the matter. The proposal of An Cathaoirleach and the motion, proposed by **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Tom Behan**, was agreed.

### **9.8 Submitted by Councillor Alan Lawes**

*"Meath County Council calls on the HSE and Minister Donnelly to re-open more test centres in Co Meath particularly in Navan."*

In introducing his motion **Councillor Alan Lawes** outlined the reason for tabling it stemmed from a number of people, who do not have private transport, informing him that they were advised by the HSE to take the public bus to the test centre in Slane. He considered that this was not good practice in terms of protecting public health. There was a discussion on this, with the following contributors, **Councillors: Michael Gallagher; Noel French; Sharon Tolan; Paddy Meade; Gillian Toole; and Gerry O'Connor**, all expressing general support for the motion. **Councillor Maria Murphy** proposed an amendment, seconded by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor**, as follows:

*"Meath County Council calls on the HSE and Minister Donnelly to re-open more test centres in County Meath particularly in Navan and to put in place appropriate arrangements for people who do not have a private means of transport to get to test centres"*

The amended motion, proposed by **Councillor Alan Lawes** and seconded by **Councillor Tommy Reilly**, 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 Councillors

### **11 Any Other Business**

None