



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Ashbourne Municipal District

Ordinary Meeting

10:00 a.m., 8th December 2020, Ashbourne Civic Offices

Councillor Alan Tobin, presided.

Councillors Present: Joe Bonner, Aisling O'Neill, Amanda Smith and Conor Tormey.

Apologies: Councillor Suzanne Jamal

Officials in Attendance:

Director of Service: Fiona Lawless

Meetings Administrator: Claire King

Executive Engineer: Mel Cronin

Staff Officer: Triona Keating

It was agreed that Councillor Alan Tobin would chair the meeting as the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Conor Tormey, was attending via Zoom.

1 Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary Meeting held on 3rd November 2020.

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 3rd November 2020 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Amanda Smith** and seconded by **Councillor Aisling O'Neill**.

1.2 Confirmation of minutes of Special Finance Meeting held on 12th November 2020.

The minutes of the Special Finance Meeting held on 12th November 2020 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Amanda Smith** and seconded by **Councillor Aisling O'Neill**.



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2 Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

Sympathy was extended to:

- Councillor Suzanne Jamal on the death of her twin sister, Máire;
- The family of the late Con Nugent, who recently died tragically in a car accident in Ashbourne.

It was acknowledged that the roll-out of the vaccine for COVID-19 had commenced in UK and Northern Ireland and hopes were expressed that this represents the start of the process in returning to normality.

4 Statutory Business

4.1 Planning

- 4.1.1 To consider taking in charge of the following and the making of a declaration that the roads within the developments shall be public roads in accordance with Section 11 Roads Act 1993 and the Planning & Development Acts 2000-2020.

- Archerstown Wood, Ashbourne.

Seán Clarke, Senior Executive Officer and Neville Carolan, Planning Department outlined the outstanding issues that have since been resolved, including remedial works to footpaths and walls, remediation and reinstatement works resulting from pooling outside a residence and the progress made in respect of securing a contribution towards the art feature for Archerstown Wood and Demesne.

Matters raised by councillors included:



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- The area zoned for community infrastructure that was to facilitate a creche as part of the original planning permission – the planning permission for the creche has since expired and the area to be taken in charge excludes this area. A new planning application will be required for any development on this site. The decision around the zoning that applies to this site can be dealt with as part of the County Development Plan process. It was pointed out that the taking in charge and county development plan processes are entirely separate and the longer the estate is left, the more issues will arise. The taking in charge of the estate will not impact on the future of the site in question.
- Referred to the condition of the timber boundary fencing, which has been subject to some recent repairs, and queried whether this was adequate – the original planning permission included timber post and rail fencing and this has recently been stabilised. Given its age, it is in reasonably good condition and has been signed off by the Building Control Officer as being in compliance with the planning permission.

It was agreed to defer this matter to January.

4.1.2 To receive information on the Vacant Site Levy process.

Seán Clarke, Senior Executive Officer, Planning outlined the background to the vacant sites levy, which had been introduced for the higher tier settlements as part of Variation No. 4 of the current County Development Plan. All 80 sites on the register must be zoned residential and serviced. There are currently 2 sites in Ashbourne on the register – Killegland and Churchfields. The levy in the new County Development Plan will apply across the entire county, for any site zoned residential and not commenced. The aim of the levy, currently 7% of the market value, is to encourage development, rather than generate income. The register, which is updated regularly, is available online at meath.ie. The process for adding sites to the register was outlined. Once added to the register, a site is valued and an invoice issued after one year. The decision to add a site to the register can be appealed to An Bord Pleanála.

Matters and queries raised by councillors included:



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- If a commencement notice is submitted within the year, is the site removed from the register – if an invoice has not issued and the development commences, no invoice is subsequently issued.
- If a commencement notice is submitted and limited works are commenced, does the levy still apply – if the development is commenced within the statutory timeframe, an inspection will be carried out and, if invalid, the site remains on the register. The planning permission must be commenced within 5 years and completed after one year. An extension will only apply if the development is 80% complete.
- Queried whether this applies to derelict houses – separate legislation, under Environment, applies to derelict houses.
- If the zoning changes as a result of the new County Development Plan, will the levy still apply to an existing vacant site – if an invoice has issued, the debt remains. If the zoning is changed, the levy will no longer apply.

4.2 Transportation

- 4.2.1 To receive a Progress Report on works undertaken/planned for Ashbourne Municipal District.

The report had been circulated in advance and a further update was provided at the meeting.

Matters raised by councillors included:

- Commended the excellent work carried out by council crews in the municipal district.
- Requested that agreement be reached as to how to progress the renaming of Zone 4 of the Linear Park “Frederick Bourne Park” and the provision of a suitable information – it was agreed to refer this to the Community Section with a view to organising a suitable event when it is safe to do so.

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- Queried whether the council crew could undertake grass cutting rather than contracting out this service – it was pointed out that such operational decisions are a matter for the district engineer and that such a move would impact adversely on other services and activities.
- Referred to the wall in the park where a local artist was completing a mural to deter vandalism and graffiti and queried whether a similar initiative could be undertaken for utility boxes – it was suggested that this might be looked at on a countywide basis.

5 Notice of Question

5.1 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin

“Is there an update on the commencement of works at St. Declan's cemetery to improve public parking and the safety of visitors to the area? Currently, there is no access to the over 50 parking spaces and the public are forced to park on a national route(N2).”

Response:

There are no proposals for any works relating to parking at St Declan's cemetery and, while the existing entrance is currently locked to vehicles, the gates are opened by arrangement with the Council's designated person for funerals and grave digging. It is pointed out that pedestrian gate remains open.

The response was noted. It was acknowledged that security issues prevent the gates being left open unsupervised. The issues relating to those visiting the cemetery were outlined and a number of suggestions made including automatic gates, CCTV and/or the removal of the grass verge to allow additional parking along the roadside. It was pointed out that no funding was available for such capital or maintenance costs and that such additional parking would not comply with a road safety audit. It was also suggested that consideration be given to seeking volunteers from the community to oversee designated opening for periods at weekends as a short-term solution. It was agreed to refer this to the Environment Department for consideration.

6 Notice of Motion

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6.1 Submitted by Councillor Aisling O'Neill

“I propose that we address the issue of HGVs going through the town by bringing in byelaws to ban same. Photographic and video evidence sent by residents have exposed the danger that these vehicles pose. The whole point of the bypass is to make the town a more pleasant place to live. The town of Kells achieved a ban in 2016 and the Town of Ashbourne should follow.”

Supporting information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered:

The Prohibited Number of Axles Sign, RUS 046, indicates that vehicles designed for goods, or other non-passenger vehicles, with a number of axles equal to or exceeding that indicated are prohibited, **except for access to premises within the restricted area.** This sign is generally used for traffic management reasons, for example to prohibit large vehicles from a town centre and can be erected without the need for a bye-law.



**RUS 046:
PROHIBITED NUMBER OF AXLES
(For Goods and Other Non-
Passenger Vehicles)**

It is necessary to consult with the Gardai before installing any regulatory sign or marking. Introduction of an axle ban in Ashbourne would be a significant undertaking and it should be noted that it is not currently in the work programme or budget of the Transportation Department. In 2021 the Transportation Department's focus is on tendering and beginning construction on improving pedestrian and cycling facilities along the R135. It is recommended that in advance of further consideration of an HGV ban traffic surveys be carried out to ascertain the extent of HGV traffic which is bound for the town and which is 'passing through' and could use an alternative route. Consideration should also be given to undertaking a non-statutory consultation process to gauge local opinion on the matter.



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The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Aisling O'Neill** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin**, was agreed.

6.2 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin

“I call on Meath County Council, the Council’s Road Safety Officer, the Road Safety Joint Policing Subcommittee, An Garda Síochána, the Chief Fire Officer, who attended the recent accident, and the TII to assess and review the safety, road signage and shrubbery on the approaches to the Nine Mile Stone roundabout, in particular the approach from the M2. Following this review, I ask that a presentation on proposals for additional safety measures is then presented to Ashbourne Municipal District.”

Supporting information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered:

In relation to fatal road traffic accidents the LA16 Form is completed jointly by a Garda and a Local Authority Engineer following each fatal collision. The purpose of this form is to record factual information pertaining to such collisions and quickly to establish if there are road factors which may have contributed to the collision and which need to be remedied. When completed these LA16 forms are sent to the TII for analysis. Photographs are also taken of the collision location and these can prove to be helpful to the TII in subsequent analysis.

Where an obvious deficiency is observed at the collision scene this can be remedied by the road authority; other deficiencies may be less obvious and may require more analysis or may take more time to rectify. It remains to be seen whether, in this case, there are any deficiencies. Note that the Nine Mile Stone roundabout is maintained by the TII’s Motorway Maintenance and Renewals Contractor.

Reference was made to the need for improved signage approaching the roundabout from the motorway and also the need to remove the shrubbery, etc. from the roundabout to facilitate access by emergency services, if required.

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Bonner**, was noted.

6.3 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin



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“Following a small bin fire in the underground car parking complex at Killegland apartments on Halloween night, I request our Chief Fire Officer to periodically check the communal waste areas that are supposed to be in a fire retention area. I also request that our fire service do a drill on the site, in conjunction with residents if required, and with the Management Company to ensure that an underground fire is contained and extinguished. In modern EV and Hybrid vehicles, Lithium batteries pose an additional high risk.”

Supporting information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered:

A Fire Prevention Officer from Meath County Council Fire Service will arrange for inspection of the common areas and car park at Ashbourne Town Development - Killegland Hall and bring any issues of concern the attention of the Management Company for their resolution and follow up on same.

The fire service routinely carries out Pre-Incident Planning visits to premises to compile information about the premises so that in the event of an emergency incident occurring, information on the contents & layout of the buildings are immediately available for the responding fire brigade crews. Killegland will be included in the Pre Incident Planning programme for 2021 and a visit will be arranged to the site to familiarise the local fire crew with the site layout, occupancy/evacuation procedures and potential hazards etc.

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Aisling O’Neill**, was agreed.

7 Correspondence

- 7.1 Correspondence received from St. Mary’s NS Parent’s Association.

The correspondence was noted. It was agreed that the district engineer would review the location and revert with proposal, which will be expedited.

8 Any Other Business

- 8.1 Fiona Lawless raised the following issue:



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8.1.1 Referred to the balance remaining in the 2020 Arts, Festivals, Festive Lighting & MD Renewal budget and the proposal made by Councillor Alan Tobin that a contribution of €2,000 be made to Alderbrook Resident's Association for the painting of railings – this was agreed.

8.2 Councillor Joe Bonner raised the following issue:

8.2.1 Requested that contact be made with the OPW with regard to the need to reinstate landscaping, including flower beds, following works on Milltown Road.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:

Cathaoirleach