



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Kells Municipal District

Ordinary Meeting

4.00pm, 17th May 2021, via Zoom

An Cathaoirleach, **Councillor Paul McCabe**, presided.

Councillors Present: Mike Bray, Eugene Cassidy, Seán Drew, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy and Sarah Reilly.

Officials in Attendance:

Director of Service: Martin Murray

Meetings Administrator: Claire King

Executive Engineer: Aaron Smith

Staff Officer: Triona Keating

1 Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary Meeting held on 19th April 2021.

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 19th April 2021 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Eugene Cassidy** and seconded by **Councillor David Gilroy**.

2 Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

There were no expressions of sympathy or congratulations.

4 Disposal of Land pursuant to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001



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- 4.1 This was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Seán Drew** and seconded by **Councillor Michael Gallagher**.
- 4.2 This was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Sarah Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Seán Drew**.
- 4.3 This was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Seán Drew** and seconded by **Councillor Sarah Reilly**.

5 Statutory Business

5.1 Transportation

- 5.1.1 To receive a Progress Report on works undertaken/planned for Kells Municipal District.

The report, which had been circulated in advance, was noted.

- 5.1.2 To receive a presentation on potential options for bus stop / turning facilities at Church View Street, Athboy in advance of commencing a non-statutory public consultation as part of a process to identify an emerging preferred option to progress to the design stage.

Paul McKown, Executive Engineer, Transportation referred to the information circulated and introduced Ronan Murtagh and Eamon Leavy, Tobin Engineering Consultants who provided a presentation on the options identified. Approval is being sought to proceed to commence an online non-statutory public consultation.

The presentation included information on the preliminary series of design considerations, the study area and the options, including associated facilities and impacts.

Matters raised by councillors included:

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- Welcomed the project as a significant development for Athboy, which will address outstanding issues and present an opportunity to future proof the town, and commended the level of engagement that had taken place to date.
- Queried whether discussions had taken place with the landowners who may be affected by some of the options being considered – whilst some of the options do not involve the need to acquire land, initial discussions had taken place with the landowners possibly affected and these had been reasonably positive.
- Queried the possible funding sources for the proposed works – RRDF funding had been secured for the design and statutory approval process. The public consultation will be followed by the planning permission process and, as the stages progress, applications will be made for further funding.
- Queries were raised in relation to aspects of the specific options presented and responses were provided.
- Queried whether drainage works are planned for Church View Street and, if so, that consideration be given to undertaking these for the length of the street to mitigate against flooding issues – the drainage in the area would be reviewed in the context of the extent of the scheme and how this ties in with the overall area.
- Queried whether the options presented were ranked in order of preference – these are not ranked and will be considered in terms of feedback received and the standard assessment criteria.
- Queried the possible impact of relevant options on the designated green area within a development- any related issues would be raised with the Planning Department and considered as part of the overall option selection process.

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- Requested that the option selected be adequate to deal with the number of buses using the facility whilst minimising the loss of car parking spaces.

It was unanimously agreed, on the proposal of **Councillor David Gilroy** and seconded by **Councillor Sarah Reilly**, to proceed to the non-statutory public consultation phase.

It was confirmed that, following this approval, the online consultation portal would be available from tomorrow, 18th May, until 18th June with advertisements to be placed in the Meath Chronicle.

5.2 Planning

- 5.2.1 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.

- Moy Park, Kells.

Following clarification provided on the amendments to the published maps, this was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Seán Drew** and seconded by **Councillor Sarah Reilly**.

5.3 Community

- 5.3.1 To receive an update on applications made under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme for footpaths in Kells Municipal District.

Fiona Fallon, Senior Executive Officer, Community Department referred to the Notice of Motion discussed at the April meeting, which had called for the provision of footpaths at various locations and updates were provided as follows:

- Balrath Road, Kells – a funding application for a section of the footpath has been submitted under the 2021 Clár Scheme with the Part 8 application also nearing completion;



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- Drumbaragh – a previous funding application made under the ORIS for a walkway from the pitch to the top of Bolies Lane had not been successful and the scheme has since been amended, requiring applications to include the connection of amenities.
- Drumconrath – local groups were urged to submit an application which would include linking the village to the GAA pitch.

Reference was also made to the €100,000 funding secured under the 2020 Town & Village Renewal Scheme for the removal of parking outside the Credit Union, Kells to create an open space/pedestrian area with disabled access to the Credit Union building, which is a protected structure, and the creation of a link to the garden opposite. The Board of the Credit Union had indicated their agreement and the Part 8 drawings are being prepared, with feedback from councillors to be considered, prior to proceeding to public consultation.

It was also pointed out that the Town & Village Renewal Scheme has been changed significantly with no funding being allocated this year for footpaths or cycle routes. The scheme now focuses on bringing derelict or vacant units back into use and/or the creation of remote working hubs. Footpaths and cycle routes are eligible for NTA funding under the Rural Active Travel Investment Programme.

Matters raised by councillors included:

- Expressed disappointment that the Town & Village Renewal Scheme will no longer provide funding for footpaths.
- Referred to the opposition now being expressed by the Board of the Credit Union, Kells to the loss of car parking spaces and the proposal made to provide the disabled access to the side of the building rather than the front and queried how the Part 8 could be progressed if the main stakeholder was opposing these elements of the proposed scheme – it was agreed that, in light of such opposition, the full scheme and funding allocation may be affected. Some elements of the work could still proceed, e.g. improved linkages and the garden, whilst leaving the area in front of the building as is, with the possibility that the current



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statue may need to be relocated by 2-3 metres to accommodate the pedestrian crossing. It was suggested however that the Part 8 process continue, allowing for public consultation to be undertaken.

- Requested that the proposed sculpture to mark St. Colmcille 1500 be progressed along with the pedestrian crossing and garden upgrade.
- Referred to plans to restore the old wall in Drumconrath and queried if this could be joined with the footpath to secure ORIS funding – further information was requested and, once received, this will be considered.
- Queried whether derelict sites would be eligible for consideration under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme – the owner of the site would need to be in agreement and any related planning issues addressed.
- Queried whether a footpath linking the school to the football pitch in Drumbaragh would be considered eligible under the ORIS – if an expression of interest is submitted, this would be considered and reviewed in the context of previous applications made.
- Referred to the success of the Kells Bypass walkway and queried whether its extension along the N52 could be progressed – discussions are ongoing with the Planning Department to identify the best way forward. ORIS now allows for funding for the planning and design stages and the first step would be a planning application to An Bord Pleanála.
- Queried the type of amenities that could be linked for applications submitted under ORIS – amenities which provide a community hub with activities such as remote working, training, a garden, etc. will be considered, as will areas with tourism potential.

It was agreed that, whilst consensus by key stakeholders was preferable in advance, the Part 8 process in relation to the area outside the Credit Union, Kells should be progressed, allowing for the views of the public to be taken into account, and, when brought before the municipal district, councillors can accept, amend or reject it.

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The Cathaoirleach and councillors thanked Fiona for the detailed information provided and commended the Community Department on funding secured for Kells Municipal District.

5.4 Housing

5.4.1 To receive an update on social housing provision in Kells Municipal District.

David Jones, Senior Executive Officer, Housing Department provided an overview of the housing demand, including housing types, in Kells Municipal District. Of the gross housing demand of 541 units, 378 relate to HAP tenancies leaving a net housing demand of 163. In relation to capital delivery, 102 direct construction units have been provided with a further 98 approved units in the pipeline. This represents an investment of €46.2 million. Support is also being provided for a further 7 Approved Housing Bodies projects, representing 136 units. The delivery of social housing provision in Kells Municipal District represents 35% of the overall housing programme, reflecting the limited private development, and associated Part V, and Approval Housing Body provision. However, the activity of the Approved Housing Bodies is increasing, with a number of indicative proposals having been made.

Updates were provided on the approved projects in the pipeline, including:

- Archdeaconry, Kells – Following the Part 8 public consultation in February, the scheme was referred to An Bord Pleanála by a member of the public for environmental assessment and a determination is due in June. If no issue arises, the Part 8 process can recommence.
- Kildalkey Road, Athboy – a project team has been appointed for this predominantly age friendly scheme. Once Stage 2 approval is received, the Part 8 process can commence.
- Carrick Street, Kells – the design is being finalised for this flagship project of 43 units, following which Stage 2 approval will be sought. This has been selected as a pilot project by the department regarding the implementation of universal design standards, whereby the costs will be compared with that of standard units.



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- Pitcher Lane & Church Street, Kells - following a CPO of derelict sites, funding is in place for the provision of a small number of units.
- Athboy – turnkey units will also be delivered in Q1 2022.

It was pointed out that, of the 40 new high quality units provided at Riverside, Kells, 19 refusals had been received, 17 of which were not considered feasible.

Matters raised by councillors included:

- Queried whether planning consent has been obtained for the 7 Approved Housing Bodies projects – some have planning permission in place, whilst others are in the early stages.
- Queried the number of Part V units due to be delivered in the municipal district – 7 units from 1 development will be delivered in 2021.
- Queried the time taken to re-let vacant/void units in Kells Municipal District – between 8 and 10 units in Kells Municipal District are currently vacant, with works ongoing. The length of time it takes to bring such units back on stream will depend on a variety of factors, including their condition and the contractors used, but the turnaround time has improved in recent months.
- Queried whether unnecessary works are being undertaken on units that are vacated in good condition – only works that are required are undertaken. The voids programme had been used as a means of undertaking preventative maintenance works but there is a shift at national level towards a planned maintenance programme.
- Underlined the need for 1 and 2 bed units – this is reflected across the county and nationwide. Of the units being delivered as part of the pipeline projects, 74% are 1 or 2 bed units. Approved Housing Bodies are also focusing on this area of demand.

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- Welcomed the provision of age friendly homes and homes in rural locations, e.g. Athboy.
- Queried where those who are represented in the net housing demand are currently residing – the annual social housing assessment would indicate that many are still in receipt of the previous rent supplement, are in private rented accommodation or living with family.
- Queried the plans to acquire additional land in Kells Municipal District for housing, with reference to council owned land in Drumconrath – lands have been acquired in Oldcastle for future use and the council is open to the acquisition of further lands. There are a number of issues relating to the site in Drumconrath and it is not currently being considered for social housing.
- Referred to the benefits of offering 1 and 2 bed units as a means of freeing up larger units – the Tenant Liaison Team will actively approach suitable tenants who may be interested in right-sizing but their consent is needed and the provision of high quality units in the right location will make this option more attractive.
- Queried whether the figures referenced include those who have requested transfers – these are included in the gross housing demand figure. There are between 250-300 transfer applicants across the county.
- Queried the difference in cost of delivering a 2 bed unit over a 1 bed unit, bearing in mind that those living in such units may require assistance and accommodation for a carer, for example – it was agreed to raise this with the Age Friendly Office to obtain their views on good practice in this regard.
- Referred to the housing development that had been proposed for Nobber but for which the Part 8 had been rejected due to the proposed access and whether a smaller number of units could be considered which may make the plan more feasible – the challenges associated with the site were acknowledged and a smaller number of units would not



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represent value for money due to the overall cost. An acquisition programme may be feasible to meet the local housing demand.

The Cathaoirleach and councillors thanked David for the detailed information provided and commended the Housing Department on its work and progress made, particularly in Kells Municipal District.

5.5 Corporate Services

- 5.5.1 To note Municipal District Allocations submitted by Councillors on behalf of Kells Municipal District.

The list of allocations, circulated in advance, was noted.

It was agreed, on the proposal of **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor David Gilroy**, to extend the meeting by fifteen minutes.

6 Notice of Question

There were no Notices of Question.

7 Notice of Motion

7.1 Submitted by Councillor Sarah Reilly

“That public toilets be provided at Lloyd as a matter of priority.”

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

There is currently no funding available for the provision of public toilets at Lloyd.

It is worth noting, that if funding was to become available in the future, the proposal would have to be fully investigated to identify:



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- a) *a suitable method of disposal, as there is no wastewater infrastructure in the general area*

- b) *sufficient resources to maintain the facility*

- c) *a suitable design, considering its location adjacent to the tower and within the curtilage of a protected structure.*

A discussion followed with councillors referring to the need to provide facilities for visitors and allotment users. It was acknowledged that this issue affects locations across the county. It was agreed that, prior to a related motion being referred to the SPC, the issue would first be considered in the context of the capital and maintenance costs and possible eco solutions that would be suitable for a sensitive site such as Lloyd. This was agreed.

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Sarah Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Seán Drew**, was noted.

7.2 Submitted by Councillor Sarah Reilly

“That a review of the public parking provision at Lloyd, particularly at weekends and bank holidays, be conducted to determine if extra accommodation is needed.”

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

A request has been made to carry out a traffic count of the existing car park in order to ascertain if an extension is warranted.

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Sarah Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Michael Gallagher**, was agreed.

7.3 Submitted by Councillor Mike Bray

“As we continue the easing with Covid-19 restrictions in the coming weeks and we prepare for an "Outdoor Summer" that Meath County Council ensures adequate services



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are in place for this Municipal District's public areas and parks to address littering, bin emptying and other matters that may arise due to this new way we will operate as a society this summer.”

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

Meath County Council will monitor the existing bins in the District to determine if specific problems occur following the opening of society/hospitality sector in the coming weeks/months. If required, consideration can then be given to the possible adjustment of the schedule of cleaning /emptying within the available resource.

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Mike Bray** and seconded by **Councillor Seán Drew**, was agreed.

It was agreed, on the proposal of **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Mike Bray**, to extend the meeting by fifteen minutes.

7.4 Submitted by Councillor Sean Drew

“That this Council, with a view to increased road safety, agrees to urgently undertake a study and prepare a report into the various alternatives/options for traffic calming measures that may be suitable to be installed:

1. On the approach roads into Kells town and
2. Safer pedestrian crossing points within Kells town centre.”

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

A previous report by Burrows will be reviewed to determine what recommended measures have been implemented since the opening of the M3, and what recommendations remain outstanding. There are also reports by MDM Ltd. that were compiled in relation to the proposed one-way system, including town centre junction improvement recommendations and a review of the one-way trial that was carried out in 2016. In



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addition, a reduced one-way system proposal was presented at the January 2021 meeting. All of these will be reviewed, in conjunction with the existing Kells Development Plan and these will inform the next Kells Development Plan.

A short discussion followed, where it was pointed out that, whilst Gardaí are responsible for the enforcement of speeding, the local authority also has a role to play in providing measures that reduce speed, particularly within the 50kmph speed limit zones, and with a number of locations highlighted. It was also urged that available funding be sought to make the town more pedestrian friendly as soon as possible rather than wait for the next Kells Development Plan. It was suggested that the Public Realm Plan be advanced to maximise the funding opportunities available. A report on pedestrian safety was requested, including the locations where pedestrian crossings are needed.

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Seán Drew** and seconded by **Councillor Sarah Reilly**, was agreed.

8 Strategic Policy Committee & Corporate Policy Group Reports – For Information Purposes

8.1 To note the Corporate Policy Group Meeting Minutes of 9th April 2021.

The minutes were noted.

9 Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

10 Any Other Business

10.1 Councillor Sarah Reilly raised the following issues:

10.1.1 Referred to various concerns expressed by residents in Headfort Woods, including planning enforcement and child safety – reference was made to the extensive engagements that have taken place between the stakeholders and correspondence that has issued to the residents from the council in relation to the issues raised.



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10.1.2 Referred to ongoing safety issues arising from vehicles accessing and exiting the petrol station and other units on Bective Street and the need to clearly demarcate the road from the footpath and erect suitable signage. A query was raised as to how many parking tickets have been issued for illegal parking at this location – it was pointed out that there was no easy solution and the area is not in the council's charge, whilst many of the issues arise from poor driver behaviour with the one way system in place not being observed. It was agreed to reline the footpath so it is clearly identifiable. The traffic warden had been requested to enforce the parking byelaws at the location. It was agreed to consider additional measures that might be considered.

10.2 Councillor Mike Bray raised the following issue:

10.2.1 Referred to the decision taken not to install new public lighting in Kells Municipal District or elsewhere, despite the list of requests made and the budget allocation and queried why this decision had been taken – the operation and maintenance of the existing network will continue. The capital investment programme will involve the extension of the existing programme with a national tendering process imminent for the upgrade to LED. It was agreed to clarify any related decisions made at the Transportation SPC.

10.3 Martin Murray raised the following issue:

10.3.1 Sought the views of councillors in returning to face-to-face meetings, from the June Annual Meeting, in County Hall, Navan – a number of requests were made, including having a hybrid approach or having meetings continue remotely, so as to avoid the time restriction. As remote participation cannot be facilitated if meetings are held in County Hall, it was agreed to proceed with the June meetings in County Hall.

Councillor Paul McCabe expressed his gratitude to his councillor colleagues and the executive for their support and assistance during his term as Cathaoirleach.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:



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Cathaoirleach