



## Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

### Climate Action, Environment and Emergency Services SPC

25<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**Attendees - Councillors:** Cllr. Eugene Cassidy (Chair), Cllr. Tom Behan , Cllr Joe Bonner, Cllr Mike Bray, Cllr David Gilroy, Cllr. Geraldine Keogan Cllr , Cllr Ronan Moore , Cllr. Gillian Toole , Cllr. Sharon Tolan , Cllr Sharon Tolan, Cllr Amanda Smith , Cllr

**Apologies:** : Cllr Francis Deane, Cllr Suzanne Jamal

**Attendees - Sectoral Representatives:** Mr. John Curran , Ms. Kim Reilly, Mr. Noel Maguire  
**Apologies:** Ms. Karen Mahon

**Officials:** Larry Whelan, A/Director of Services, Jarlath Flanagan , Administrative Officer, Caroline Corrigan, Senior Executive Engineer, David Keyes, Senior Executive Officer , Bernadine Carry, Environmental Awareness Officer , Sheila Broderick, Chief Fire Officer, Brian Cosgrave, Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

Item	Discussion / Action
1.	<p><b>Confirmation of Minutes of Climate Action, Environment and Emergency Services SPC meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021.</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting were adopted on the proposal of Cllr Tom Behan and seconded by Cllr David Gilroy</p>
2.	<p><b>To receive a copy of the Chief Executive’s report presented to the March County Council meeting as it relates to Climate Action, Environment and Emergency Services.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The contents of the report was noted by the members</li> </ul>
3.	<p><b>To receive a report from Meath Fire Services – Reducing fires in public amenity areas.</b></p> <p>Brian Cosgrave provided the members with a presentation detailing the various tertiary fire types and focusing on the coastline area. He also provided advice how to reduce fires.</p> <p>All the members acknowledge the excellent services delivered by the Meath Fire Services.</p>



## Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

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4.	<p><b>To receive a report from Climate Action</b></p> <p>Caroline Corrigan provided a comprehensive report on Climate Change &amp; SDG's.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Update on Climate Action Plan 2021</li><li>• CARO website launch <a href="https://www.caro.ie/">https://www.caro.ie/</a></li><li>• Decarbonization Zones</li><li>• Energy Bureau</li></ul> <p>The members noted the extensive program of work been carried out by the Climate Action Team.</p>
5.	<p><b>To receive a report on Environmental activities during COVID-19 restriction period.</b></p> <p>Bernadine Carry provided a comprehensive report on the activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Green Schools – Online</li><li>• Sustainable Gardening course for Tidy Towns</li><li>• ReLove fashion</li><li>• Green KM Scheme</li></ul> <p>The members noted the extensive program of work been carried out and made specific reference to the success of the Green KM scheme. They particularly acknowledged the work by the community wardens.</p>
6.	<p><b>To receive an update in respect of parking proposals at Bettystown Beach</b></p> <p>The Members noted that this item was the subject of a notice of motion at the July 2020 Council meeting and further discussed at the July and September Environment SPC meetings and arising from which, agreement was reached for a continued prohibition of vehicles on the beaches during the Covid pandemic but to consider the matter further at the March SPC meeting.</p> <p>A presentation was made to the meeting setting out the key considerations in respect of this matter including :</p>



### Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The objective contained within the Beach Management Plan February 2019 for the phased removal of cars from Bettystown Beach but subject to the availability of appropriate alternative parking</li> <li>• The closure of the beaches from March 2020 to vehicular traffic on Covid grounds and following consultation with the Gardai – the exception being a dedicated parking area South of Seaview Tce for older people and people with disabilities and also to facilitate a local business. Access will also be facilitated for emergency services.</li> <li>• Subject to a number of risk assessments and consultation with the Gardai, and the HSE, limited Casual Trading may be facilitated in close proximity to the dedicated area.</li> <li>• The receipt of circa 400 unsolicited submissions from members of the public with 93% favoring the retention of car free beaches and having experienced what conditions were like since the closures came into effect.</li> <li>• Main Issues raised in support of car free beaches were – Safety, noise, pollution, ecology, anti-social behavior, litter and waste, aesthetic appearance, scenery, regeneration of the beaches as recreational areas for swimmers, runners, walkers and other forms of group exercises.</li> <li>• Submissions of support received from many different organizations including -An Garda Síochána, Meath Local Sports Partnership and the Beach Management Committee.</li> <li>• The submissions received from those favoring allowing cars on the beach referred mostly referred to facilitation of parking for the elderly, the disabled and families with special needs.</li> <li>• Powers contained within the Meath County Council Foreshore Bye-Laws 2010 as amended to regulate parking.</li> <li>• An outline of the various sites investigated in the area as alternatives to beach parking – a number of sites were discounted following environmental assessment and likely damage to the dunes system as well some owners wishing to retain areas for private use.</li> </ul>



## Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Item	Discussion / Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites available or being progressed –</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Funtasia Car 184 spaces to be opened as a commercial car park during the current pandemic on a temporary basis.</li> <li>2. Colaiste na hInse 120 spaces 120 spaces – route to the beach via Brookside Lane but acknowledged the need for improved signage and promotion.</li> <li>3. Spine Road Development 83 spaces due for completion in July</li> </ol> <p>Ongoing engagement with owners of lands to the rear of Funtasia and which is convenient to the beach in Bettystown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An additional 20 car parking spaces arising from the redevelopment of the car park across from Laytown Train Station and the re-location of the Bottle Banks</li> <li>• Significant parking space available at Seafield.</li> <li>• Following engagement with National Parks and Wildlife (NPWS) proposals are being worked up to regulate car parking in Mornington and which will serve to prevent vehicles driving on to the dunes – circa 40 parking spaces /pull in areas to be created and subject to agreement with NPWS and landowners where relevant.</li> </ul> <p>The Members welcomed the presentation and proposals and noted the very significant level of public engagement with respect to this matter - points made in the discussion that followed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That while the current debate is in respect of proposals to continue to prohibit vehicles on the beach for a further 3 month period on COVID grounds the decision for a permanent prohibition is one that will rest with the full Council</li> <li>• That every effort must be made to expedite the provision of the alternative parking sites and including for short term requirements.</li> <li>• The need for the Council to work with the Gardai in discouraging parking along the Coast Road and illegal parking at other locations.</li> <li>• The need for additional Life Guards in light of the greater usage of different parts of the beaches</li> <li>• That the recommendation from the Beach Management Plan for the use of Shuttle Buses should be pursued.</li> <li>• That parking requirements for Gormanston also need to be addressed</li> <li>• That car should be allowed back on the beach on environmental and safety grounds and respecting the SAC and SPA designations.</li> </ul>



## Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

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	<p>The Members in conclusion agreed with the proposal to maintain the COVID related restrictions for a three month period a, to retain the dedicated car parking spaces for the Disabled /Elderly and those with special needs and for investigations for the alternative sites to progress as quickly as possible.</p>
7.	<p><b>To consider a Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Sharon Tolan in respect of coastal erosion at the March full Council meeting and which by agreement was referred to the SPC for further consideration.</b></p> <p><i>In the wake of another winter and spring of severe weather, high spring tides, coastal storms and instances of man-made damage, to call on Meath County Council to engage immediately with all stakeholders and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications to develop a comprehensive plan to protect our ever diminishing coastline against coastal erosion and environmental damage so that measures can be implemented in advance of the next winter/spring period when the coastline is at its most vulnerable.</i></p> <p>A presentation was made by Larry Whelan in respect of this matter and wherein he outlined a number of ongoing developments in relation to coastal erosion both at National and local level – these included :The completion in 2018 of a report commissioned by Fingal County Council on behalf of the 19 Coastal Counties whose coastlines are under threat from coastal erosion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increasing role for the Regional Climate Action Offices</li> <li>• The establishment of an interdepartmental working group on coastal change management who are to report back to Government within 6 months with initial findings and recommendations</li> <li>• Proposals by Meath County Council to engage consultants to undertake a coastal defense strategy study of the Councils coastline of circa 13k</li> <li>• Projects involving Meath County Council including at Laytown Coast Protection works (Reinforced structure), OPW scheme to protect properties in Laytown and funding to address erosion issues in proximity to a historical landfill</li> <li>• Mornington Dune Protection – discussions ongoing with NPWS to regularize parking and preventing vehicles damaging the dunes system</li> <li>• The examination of possible funding streams from Climate Change, Heritage and Bio-Diversity for use on coastal protection works</li> </ul>



## Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

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	<p>Cllr Tolan proposed the motion and requested that a task force be established to engage with the various stakeholders to address the issue with coastal erosion.</p> <p>The motion was seconded by Cllr Behan</p>
10.	AOB  None