



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Ordinary Meeting

1st November 2021 @ 1.00p.m.

Solstice Theatre, Navan (and online via zoom)

Presiding

Councillor Sean Drew, Cathaoirleach

Councillors Present (Solstice Theatre):

Councillors: Joe Bonner; Mike Bray; Francis Deane; Brian Fitzgerald; Joe Fox; Noel French; Michael Gallagher; Wayne Harding; Nick Killian; Paul McCabe; Elaine McGinty; Stephen McKee; Paddy Meade; Maria Murphy; Gerry O'Connor; Damien O'Reilly; Tommy Reilly; Amanda Smith; Sharon Tolan; Gillian Toole.

Councillors Present (online):

Councillors: Yemi Adenuga; Eugene Cassidy; Aisling Dempsey; Pdraig Fitzsimons; Deirdre Geraghty-Smith; David Gilroy; Trevor Golden; Suzanne Jamal; Geraldine Keogan; Ronan Moore; Aisling O'Neill; Sarah Reilly; Alan Tobin; Emer Tóibín; Conor Tormey.

Apologies: Councillor Tom Behan; Edward Fennessy; Alan Lawes; Niamh Souhan.

Officials in attendance:

Chief Executive: Jackie Maguire

Directors of Service: Des Foley, Fiona Lawless, Barry Lynch, Dara McGowan, Martin Murray

Meetings Administrator: Robert Collins

Senior Executive Officers: Ger Murphy, Larry Whelan, Sean Clarke

1 Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 4th October 2021.

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 4th October 2021 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Tommy Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**.

2 Matters arising from the Minutes

Councillor Gillian Toole acknowledged the amendment to the minutes of the previous meeting's minutes.

3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

Sympathy was extended to:

- Alan Rogers, Planning Department on the death of his mother, Eileen Rogers.



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- Mary Caffrey, I.T. Department on the death of her father, Terry Caffrey.
- Niamh Balfe, Finance Department and Barry Balfe, Retained Fire Fighter on the death of their mother/mother-in-law, Alice Higgins.
- Cormac McCann, Community Department on the death of his father-in-law, George Curran.
- Michael Connell, Water Services Department and Ann Ennis, Environment Department on the death of their father, John Connell.
- The family of the late John O'Grady, former employee.
- Mary Curran, former employee on the death of her father, Joseph (Joe) Curran.
- The Family of Dr Thomas Ryan of Ashbourne, the former president of the Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA)

Congratulations were extended to:

- All those involved in organising the Laytown Races;
- Meath County Council Fire Services for its work during the Halloween holiday;
- Ratoath 2nd team on winning the County Championship;
- The organisers of the recent rally to Save Navan Hospital.

4 Disposal of Land in accordance with Statutory Notices circulated pursuant to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001

4.1 Disposal of 0.0535 Ha of Land at Kells Business Park, Kells, Co Meath, in accordance with Section 211 of Planning & Development Act 2000 and subject to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

The disposal, in accordance with the statutory notice issued on October 15, 2021, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Mike Bray**.

4.2 Disposal of 2.4593 Ha of Land by way of a lease at Limekilnhill, Navan, Co Meath, in accordance with Section 211 of Planning & Development Act 2000 and subject to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

The disposal, in accordance with the statutory notice issued on October 15, 2021, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Tommy Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Francis Deane**.

4.3 Disposal of 0.01 Ha of Land at St. Mary's Villas, Donore, Co Meath, in accordance with Section 211 of Planning & Development Act 2000 and subject to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

The disposal, in accordance with the statutory notice issued on October 15, 2021, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Amanda Smith** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**.

4.4 Disposal of 0.08 Ha of Land at O'Cearbhallain, Carlanstown, Kells, Co Meath, in accordance



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with Section 211 of Planning & Development Act 2000 and subject to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

The disposal, in accordance with the statutory notice issued on October 15, 2021, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Mike Bray**.

5 Statutory Business

5.1 Corporate Services

5.1.1 To adopt the revised Standing Orders regulating the proceedings of the Council.

An Cathaoirleach informed the meeting that following the meeting of the Corporate Policy Group and a meeting of the group whips it was proposed to defer this item to the next meeting when an amended revision of the Standing Orders would be presented to members. This was agreed by the elected members.

5.1.2 To endorse the official twinning between the Trim Municipal District (the Boyne Valley) and Boyne City (Michigan)

This proposal was agreed on a proposal of **Councillor Noel French** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Fox**.

5.2 Community

5.2.1 To consider Arts, Bursaries & Awards Autumn 2021 recommendations.

The recommendation was agreed on a proposal of **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Bonner**.

5.3 Planning

5.3.1 Update on Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Chief Executive informed the meeting that the Council had received a copy of a letter from the Office of the Planning Regulator to the Minister for Planning and Local Government, which included a draft Direction on the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. She anticipated that the Direction would be issued by the Minister in the coming days.

Mr Des Foley, Director of Services, made a presentation on the key dates of when the Plan takes effect, the period when a Judicial Challenge could be taken and the periods that apply if a Ministerial Direction is issued. He also outlined the process that will be followed should a Direction issue. There were clarifications sought by the following: **Councillors Nick Killian; Aisling O'Neill; Brian Fitzgerald and Gillian Toole**. Responses on these were provided by Mr Des Foley and Mr. Sean Clarke.

6 Reports

6.1 Chief Executive's Report

There were comments and clarifications sought by **Councillors Gillian Toole, Nick Killian, Joe Bonner, Paul McCabe, Alan Tobin, and Damien O'Reilly** focusing on:

Housing: construction of houses at Lagore – completion date; Part V funding; Cluid Housing in Ashbourne; Part V – delivery of playgrounds;



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Transport:	sustainable transport measures – Harlockstown development; Ratoath cycle network, the outdoor dining infrastructure scheme
Planning:	planning enforcement;
Community:	Pride of Place awards events; Pride of Place – national final;
Corporate:	Mí Meath card;
Environment	Climate action – water fountains in schools; work of the Environment Department; distribution of tree saplings; community recycling days; Green Kilometre scheme;
Finance:	Homeloans – expired applications;
Water Services	Lack of water for Batterstown residents;
Fire Services	Halloween fires and incidents.

Responses were provided by Mr. Dara McGowan, Ms. Fiona Lawless; Mr Des Foley, Martin Murray and Mr Barry Lynch, Directors of Services. **An Cathaoirleach** considered that the Chief Executive Report is a very informative document and encouraged the elected members to use it to inform the public of the work that the Council is undertaking.

6.2 Report from the Corporate Policy Group

The Meetings Administrator provided a report from the meeting of the CPG held on Friday, October 29, which was noted by the Elected Members.

6.3 Report from the Protocol Committee

The Meetings Administrator provided a report from the meeting of the Protocol Committee which met on Monday, November 1. The Committee had received a presentation updating it on the Decade of Centenaries programme in Meath. It also received and noted arrangements that the Council is implementing to ensure compliance with section 141 of the Local Government Act on elected members' membership of outside bodies. The Committee also approved a number of training events for elected members that would be circulated.

Councillor Nick Killian outlined his frustration with the number of reports and returns that elected members had to submit, under the Local Government Act, which he felt was time-consuming and placing pressure on elected members and Council staff. He considered that the new vouched expenses regime will also bring further administrative burdens on members and staff.

7 Correspondence

7.1 Circular LG 03/2021 – Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage re. Elected Members Expenses and Public Registers.

Noted by the Elected Members.

7.2 Correspondence from Peter Burke T.D., Minister for Local Government and Planning in response to Notice of Motion adopted at the May 2021 meeting of the full Council re. 80% attendance of meetings rule.



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Noted by the Elected Members.

7.3 Correspondence from Catherine Martin T.D., Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media in response to Notice of Motion agreed under AoB at the July 2021 meeting of the full Council re. vaccination certification.

Noted by the Elected Members.

7.4 Correspondence from the NTA in response to Notice of Motion 9.9 adopted at the October meeting of the full Council re. 109A bus service timetable.

A number of members expressed their disappointment with the response from the NTA, including **Councillors Mike Bray; Paul McCabe; Nick Killian; Gillian Toole; Gerry O'Connor; Aisling O'Neill; Damien O'Reilly** and **Michael Gallagher**. On a proposal by **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian** it was agreed to invite the Chief Executive of the NTA to a meeting of the council to discuss this and other related matters.

Noted by the Elected Members.

7.5 Local Authority Waters Programme re. Public Consultation on the Draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027.

Noted by the Elected Members.

7.6 Correspondence from Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage re. Targeted Quarter 4 Rates Waiver for Hospitality and Tourism Sectors.

Councillor Wayne Harding underlined the contribution that the hospitality sector makes to the local economy across the county and hoped that further restrictions would not be implemented in response to rising case numbers. He recognised the various business supports that the Government has put in place since the onset of the pandemic, which were very welcome.

Noted by the Elected Members.

8 Notice of Question

8.1 Submitted by Councillor Sharon Tolan

“What progress has been made in relation to the motion adopted at the meeting of Meath County Council last May, calling on Meath County Council to immediately begin water quality testing and publishing of results at every beach in Meath, so that the public can make informed decisions regarding their health and safety before swimming?”

Response

In response to the Notice of Motion in May, the Council made reference to following ‘consideration of all the various factors involved including resource implications it is not proposed to engage in routine water quality testing at other locations’. The Council does acknowledge that the Members requested that the current testing regime be extended, however the Council is committed to meeting its statutory testing requirements in the county first and as there was no additional capacity



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in the available resources to extend a testing regime beyond this, testing at every beach in Meath was not implemented in 2021.

Councillor Sharon Tolan expressed her disappointment with the response and suggested that there should be weekly testing of water quality at the main coastal bathing areas during the winter months, especially at times of heavy rainfall and potential for storm overflows.

Noted by the Elected Members.

9 Notice of Motion

9.1 Submitted by Councillor Sharon Tolan

“In light of the overwhelming success of car free beaches in Meath, from both a public and an environmental perspective, calling on Meath County Council to make this ban of vehicles from the beaches permanent, with the exception of the disability and age friendly parking provision already made.”

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

The above Notice of Motion was considered by the Climate Action, Environment and Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee at its meeting held on Monday 18th October when the Members supported the motion and recommended that it be included on the agenda for November for approval by the full Council.

Councillor Sharon Tolan introduced her motion by highlighting the success and very positive feedback received following the vehicle ban in March 2020. Since then she outlined that 500 additional new car parking spaces had been made available to beach users at a low fee and that additional free spaces were available during the summer months. She asked that the Council not go back but that it make permanent the measures that came into force in 2020. There were supporting inputs from the following **Councillors Wayne Harding; Eugene Cassidy; Elaine McGinty; Alan Tobin; Amanda Smith** and **Nick Killian**.

Both **Councillors Paddy Meade** and **Stephen McKee** spoke in opposition to the motion indicating that it undermined the beach management plan, that it was premature as alternative parking was not in place, that there were legal and planning implications not being considered, that the current parking arrangements on the beach for accessibility impaired users are not suitable or managed and that the motion was badly worded.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
ADENUGA, Yemi	X			
BEHAN, Tom				X
BONNER, Joseph				X
BRAY, Mike				X



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CASSIDY, Eugene	X			
DEANE, Francis			X	
DEMPSEY, Aisling	X			
DREW, Sean	X			
FENNESSY, Eddie				X
FITZGERALD, Brian		X		
FITZSIMONS, Pdraig	X			
FOX, Joe	X			
FRENCH, Noel	X			
GALLAGHER, Michael	X			
GERAGHTY-SMITH, Deirdre	X			
GILROY, David	X			
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			

Votes For = 27 members, Against = 3, Abstain = 2, Absent = 8. In accordance with this decision, the motion proposed by **Councillor Sharon Tolan** and seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding** was adopted.

9.2 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin

“In light of the increased use by criminal gangs for scams and extortion here and abroad, to ask the minister responsible for communications and COMREG to legislate for the proper registration of all phone SIM cards carrying Irish mobile phone numbers.”



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The motion was proposed by **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Sharon Tolan** and introduced by Councillor Tobin. Following an intervention by **Councillor Trevor Golden**, it was proposed by Councillor Tobin to withdraw the motion so that it could be modified and re-tabled at a subsequent meeting of the Council. This was agreed by the Elected Members.

9.3 Submitted by Councillor Damien O'Reilly

"That Meath County Council writes to the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport and the National Transport Authority requesting they allocate 6 double decker buses to operate fare free from Navan every 15 minutes during peak times, via Dunshaughlin to M3 Parkway train station and evening return journey as an interim measure until the rail extension to Navan is fully operational and serviced."

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** who underlined the need to utilise to the maximum the infrastructure that the county currently has, to provide more immediate solutions to the difficulties that commuters currently face. There was supporting interventions from **Councillors Gillian Toole, Joe Fox, Nick Killian, Emer Tóibín; Maria Murphy; Brian Fitzgerald; Gerry O'Connor; and Alan Tobin**, who criticised the lack of joined-up thinking by the NTA and the transport operators. While supportive of the motion, **Councillor Ronan Moore** questioned the value-for-money aspects of the proposal.

The motion proposed by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Gillian Toole** was adopted.

9.4 Submitted by Councillor Gillian Toole

"The Members of Meath County Council request the Members of Dáil Éireann to begin drafting, without delay, a Well-being of Future Generations [Ireland] Act. This Act will enshrine the rights of future generations; requiring Irish Government Ministers & the organisations they oversee, to firmly fix this commitment into everything they do."

Councillor Gillian Toole introduced her motion by outlining what was intended – to place on a statutory footing that future generations will be considered in the decision-making process. She outlined the experience in Wales and provided some examples of decision-making where the Future Generations Act would usefully apply. There were supporting interventions from **Councillors Elaine McGinty; David Gilroy; Gerry O'Connor and An Cathaoirleach**. There was also an input from Director of Services, Mr Dara McGowan on the Sustainable Development Goals.

The motion proposed by **Councillor Gillian Toole** and seconded by **Councillor Elaine McGinty** was adopted.



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In response to a question from An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Toole clarified that the motion should be forwarded to the Ceann Comhairle, the Taoiseach; the Tánaiste and Minister Eamonn Ryan.

9.5 Submitted by Councillor Michael Gallagher

“That Meath County Council writes to the HSE and the Minister for Health, to inform them that Meath County Council is opposed to the closure of the A&E and downgrade or removal of any of the services at Navan Hospital.”

Councillor Michael Gallagher introduced his motion by highlighting that there have been a number of occasions when the HSE has indicated the scaling back of services in Navan Hospital. He suggested that services at the hospital are vital to a county with a growing population. A number of other elected members spoke in favour of the motion and made a number of supplementary points, including **Councillors Paddy Meade, Emer Toibín, Brian Fitzgerald; Elaine McGinty; Aisling O’Neill; Damien O’Reilly; Nick Killian; Gillian Toole; Gerry O’Connor; Pdraig Fitzsimons; Wayne Harding; and Noel French**. Other issues raised included: the need for an A&E Department within the county; the need to move away from the centralisation of services; the need for local representatives to have an input into policy as with the Regional Health Boards; the need for more public hospital beds; the concern about the ambulance service coverage; and the need for a plan-led approach.

The motion proposed by **Councillor Michael Gallagher** and seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade** was adopted.

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 Elected Members.

11 Any Other Business

Councillor Gillian Toole wished to clarify that following the discussion on the Health Boards that currently five elected members sit on the Regional Health Forum (RHF) but that unlike the Health Boards, the RHF has no input into policy. Recent meetings of the RHF or Health Committee had not rebutted the reduction of services at Navan Hospital.

Councillor Nick Killian highlighted a planning circular (PL 10/2021) that had issued regarding the replacement of the Strategic Housing Development process, which would further water-down the role of elected members. He called for elected members to advocate against such a move. In response, Director of Services, Mr Des Foley, informed the elected members that the circular had been withdrawn by the Department shortly after it was issued.



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The Meetings Administrator reminded members of the Civic Reception taking place that evening and confirmed the arrangements for same.