



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Ratoath Municipal District

Ordinary Meeting

9:30 a.m., 3rd November 2021, Dunshaughlin Civic Offices/Via Zoom

An Cathaoirleach, **Councillor Nick Killian**, presided.

Councillors Present: Deirdre Geraghty-Smith, Brian Fitzgerald, Maria Murphy, Gerry O'Connor, Damien O'Reilly, Gillian Toole.

Officials in Attendance:

Director of Service: Dara McGowan

Meetings Administrator: Claire King

Executive Engineer: Philip Traynor

Staff Officer: Triona Keating

Clerical Officer: Edita Asaciova

1 Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary Meeting held on 6th October 2021.

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 6th October 2021 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Maria Murphy** and seconded by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly**.

2 Matters arising from the Minutes

Councillor Gillian Toole requested an update on the following:

- Queried whether a meeting had been arranged with residents of Moulden Bridge – the engineer had been away and is now back and the meeting would be arranged next week.



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

- Queried whether a letter had issued to the LMETB regarding the opening of the Ratoath Outer Relief Road – the letter had issued and no response has yet been received. Councillor Nick Killian confirmed that this would be raised at the next board meeting.
- Queried whether a response had been received regarding the request for a meeting with the NTA and Bus Éireann – the request for a joint meeting had been submitted to the NTA and they had confirmed that, whilst they do not meet individual municipal districts, they would attend a meeting of the full council to discuss relevant issues. A further request had been made for a meeting between a delegation from the council, to include the Cathaoirleach of the full council and the six municipal district chairs, the NTA and Bus Éireann but this request had been declined. Consideration will also be given to invite Bus Eireann to the same meeting, but this could take too much time in the full council meeting.

3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

Sympathy was extended to:

- Former councillor Eimear Ferguson on the death of her father, Des Ferguson, with tributes paid on his sporting achievements;
- The family of the late John O’Grady, former Meath County Council Secretary.

Best wishes were extended to:

- All the retailers in Dunshaughlin, including Supervalu (Healy’s), Tara News, Haven Pharmacy Kavanagh’s, The Parcel Concierge and Sweet Planet Home Bakery, for enabling Dunshaughlin to reach the final of Ireland’s Friendliest Place Award, with the awards event taking place this month.

4 Statutory Business

4.1 Transportation

- 4.1.1 To receive a Progress Report on works undertaken/planned for Ratoath

Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Municipal District.

The report, which had been circulated in advance, was noted and a further update was provided at the meeting. Councillors were asked to submit feedback on the three year roadworks programme.

Councillors were also requested to submit proposals for the location of the Christmas tree and, following a short discussion, it was agreed that the Christmas tree should be located this year in Dunboyne and that the lights would be switched on Saturday 4th December, It was also agreed that the projector be located at Dunshaughlin Courthouse again this year but that, early next year, a rota for alternative locations be discussed and agreed.

It was requested that a meeting be organised with residents at Swainstown to discuss the Kilsaran facility. It was also requested that the flashing amber lights at Clonalvy N.S., which is now closed, be relocated.

- 4.1.2 To receive an update on the proposed Housing Estate Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws statutory process.

Paul McKown, Executive Engineer, Transportation outlined the documentation circulated in advance and sought approval to present the bye-laws to the December full council meeting. If ratified, the signage will be erected and the bye-laws will take effect in early 2022.

Matters raised by councillors included:

- Queried whether traffic calming measures would also be provided – speed surveys are undertaken in advance of the bye-laws taking effect and the estates are re-surveyed to monitor their impact following their introduction. If speed remains an issue, consideration will then be given to appropriate engineering measures.
- Referred to estates experiencing high traffic volumes at particular times of the day and queried whether there was flexibility to include this as a consideration – traffic volumes are dealt with as part of a different process and if

Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

representations are made in relation to a particular estate, traffic counters can be used to determine the issues.

It was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Maria Murphy** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** to proceed as outlined.

A query was raised as to when the countywide speed limit review would be undertaken as increasing urban traffic congestion is impacting on traffic volumes on local and regional roads – the countywide speed limit review will commence once the housing estate speed limit review is concluded in 2022 and will take some time. Public notifications will issue, seeking submissions, and councillors were requested to submit proposals for the inclusion of specific roads for review.

Reference was made to the R147, formerly the N3, where a default limit of 80km/h now applies following the opening of the M3 and its reclassification as a regional road. It was pointed out that, in Cavan the N3 reverts to 100km/h and also that a 100km/h also applies to sections of the R154 and also the Trim to Navan road. It was pointed out that the relevant ministerial guidelines sets default speed limits but the R147 has been raised previously and it will be included in the review, with councillors invited to submit any relevant comments by email. A query was raised as to whether there was any data available on any increase in incident rates where the speed limit has been increased on regional roads and, if so, that this should be considered as part of the review. The Road Safety Authority does compile such information and this will be considered as part of the review. The adoption of speed limit byelaws is a reserved function.

4.2 Planning

4.2.1 To receive the presentation on Solar Farms.

Frank O'Donnell, Executive Planner and Billy Joe Padden, Senior Executive Planner delivered a presentation which included information on the principles of solar photovoltaic (PV) energy, solar farm components, the solar farm development process, planning policy/guidance/considerations, solar farm applications in Meath and by electoral area and Strategic Infrastructure Developments (SID) applications, including current status.

Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Matters raised by councillors included:

- Queried whether information was available on the hectares/acres of land associated with these solar farm applications/permissions and underlined the need to consider the SDG associated with sustainable food production when considering such applications – this information is available but requires updating but such information is subject to change.
- Referred to the absence of national guidelines and potential for such applications to be granted in the context of the demands on the grid.
- Queried whether energy availability for business, agriculture, etc. is considered as part of the planning process – whilst energy usage is a planning consideration, the end user is not. Eirgrid is responsible for how energy is distributed.
- Referred to the possibility that many of those granted permission may not proceed and queried whether the granting of permission would result in the associated lands being sterilised – planning permission does not incur a right to develop land and does not preclude a separate planning application for the land within that area once the original development has not commenced.
- Referred to the commitment given by government to provide grants to companies setting up solar farms, which had not materialised.
- Referred to the need for adequate screening for solar farms granted permission – the Transportation Department will consider relevant issues, including impact on traffic, glint and glare, etc. Adequate buffer is provided along transport routes.
- Referred to a company which had agreed an annual community fund associated with a solar farm development and suggested that this be added as a planning condition for other developments – whilst a community fund is guided by separate legislation, it is not considered as



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

part of the planning process, where standard development contributions will apply.

- Referred to the need for companies to engage and communicate with councillors and the community in advance of solar farm developments – the onus is on the applicant to prepare a robust planning application and to communicate with local communities.

Councillor Damien O'Reilly referred to an email received from Aoife Flynn, Community Development Regional Manager, Mets (formerly Facebook) regarding actions being taken by the company to benefit the climate and promote sustainability and suggested that she be invited to the December meeting to provide information on these initiatives.

5 Notice of Question

5.1 Submitted by Councillor Damien O'Reilly

"I call on Meath County Council to provide an update and timeline for the competition of the part 8 process for the link road between Dunboyne industrial estate and R157."

Response:

The preparation of the Part 8 has been delayed due to unforeseen delays in the appointment of consultants to oversee the Part 8 process. The deadline for receipt of tenders is the 10th November 2021.

Once appointed we anticipate 5 months to put the Part 8 on display.

The response was noted.

6 Notice of Motion

6.1 Submitted by Councillor Damien O'Reilly



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

“I call on Meath County Council to implement a safety audit of all rural schools in Ratoath Municipal District to review the need for additional safety measures at each location, this will include, road markings, signage, warning lights, speed detector signage and traffic light crossings with raised beds.”

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

The Council has a standard to provide the following measures on public roads outside schools:

- a) *50 km/h per hour speed limit.*
- b) *Signage on either side of the school, in accordance with traffic signs manual*
- c) *Road markings on each side of the school, indicating school ahead, and/or slow down.*

Flashing amber signals are provided to supplement warning signage where it is deemed that prevailing circumstances such as vehicle speeds or road alignment constitute a significant danger to children crossing. Where necessary additional traffic management measures are considered at individual schools on a case-by-case basis.

Meath County Council’s Road Safety Plan 2015/2020 contains further Road Safety actions in relation to schools. The focus of Meath County Council’s Road Safety Plan in relation to schools is mainly aimed at educating all road users in the proper and safe use of roads in order to change user attitudes and behaviour and to stimulate an awareness of the need for improvement. There is a specific sub-target in relation to supporting schools in delivering road safety education and encouragement to young road users throughout the County. The education of young road users is important in establishing road safety attitudes and behaviour. Exposure to road traffic education and training skills at this early age can increase awareness in the safe use of the road environment.

The Road Safety Officer has established strong links with the schools in the County and works with them on an individual basis to implement the measures in the Road Safety Plan and address specific concerns. The Road Safety Officer for Meath County Council, in

Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

conjunction with An Garda Síochána and the Road Safety Authority, continues to roll out Road Safety Education Programmes to all schools in the County and a target of 10,000 recipients is exceeded each year. These programmes include safety at and outside schools.

Where there are specific concerns raised at particular sites these can be assessed on a case by case base to determine what additional measures may be appropriate. Any additional measures required can be prioritised subject to the availability of resources.

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Gillian Toole**, was agreed.

6.2 Submitted by Councillor Damien O'Reilly

"I call on Meath County Council to work with the estate developers of Cnoc Tiarnach, Dunshaughlin and Millerstown, Kilcock to open the completed playgrounds within these estates immediately."

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

The developer has the duration of planning permission to complete the development. There is no remit for the local authority to instruct the developer as to what area must be completed first.

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Maria Murphy**, was agreed.

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

7.1 To note the Corporate Policy Group Meeting Minutes of 1st October 2021.

The minutes were noted.

7.2 To note the report from the Planning Economic Development, Enterprise and European Affairs SPC of 8th October 2021.



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

The report was noted.

- 7.3 To note the report from Climate Action, Environment & Emergency Services SPC of 18th October 2021.

The report was noted.

- 7.4 To note the report from the Transportation SPC of 19th October 2021.

The report was noted.

- 7.5 To note the report from the Housing, Community & Cultural Development SPC of 20th October 2021.

The report was noted.

8 Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

9 Any Other Business

- 9.1 Dara McGowan raised the following issues:

9.1.1 Confirmed that the official opening of the Dunshaughlin Enterprise Hub is provisionally scheduled for next Monday with details to be confirmed. Councillor Gerry O'Connor raised some concerns over confidentiality and the ability to overhear conversations within the foyer but was assured that works are to be done in that regard.

9.1.2 Referred to festive lighting allocations and, following a discussion, it was agreed to allocate the available funding as follows:

- Ratoath €1,500
- Dunboyne €1,000



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

- Dunshaughlin €1,000
- Kilmessan €500
- Clonee €500
- Kiltale €500
- Kilcloon €500
- Batterstown €500

9.2 Councillor Gerry O'Connor raised the following issue:

9.2.1 Queried whether a watermain traversing land, which is currently for sale, is still live – it was agreed to refer this to Water Services.

9.3 Councillor Maria Murphy raised the following issue:

9.3.1 Referred to ongoing water issues in Batterstown and the lack of adequate notification to residents.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:

Cathaoirleach