



## ***Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes***

### ***Ashbourne Municipal District***

#### ***Ordinary Meeting***

***10:00 a.m., 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021, Via Zoom***

An Cathaoirleach, **Councillor Suzanne Jamal**, presided.

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

**Officials in Attendance:**

**Director of Service:** Fiona Lawless

**Meetings Administrator:** Claire King

**Executive Engineer:** Mel Cronin

**Staff Officer:** Triona Keating

### **1 Confirmation of Minutes**

#### **1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021.**

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Aisling O'Neill** and seconded by **Councillor Conor Tormey**.

#### **1.2 Confirmation of minutes of Special Finance Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021.**

The minutes of the Special Finance Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Conor Tormey** and seconded by **Councillor Amanda Smith**.

### **2 Matters arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

### **3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations**

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Sympathy was extended to:

- Robert Collins, Corporate Affairs & Governance on the death of his father, Robert (Bob) Collins.

Congratulations were extended to:

- All the community & voluntary groups in towns and villages throughout the municipal district on their Christmas decorations and lighting.

### **4 Statutory Business**

#### **4.1 Planning**

##### **4.1.1 To discuss the implementation of the Ashbourne Public Realm Plan.**

Fiona Lawless referred to the Ashbourne Public Realm - Draft Implementation Action Plan circulated to councillors and proposed that councillors review the document, prioritise actions and discuss further in January or February. The bigger considerations are funding and ownership of land. However, if actions are prioritised, funding opportunities, such as the URDF, can be pursued next year. In the interim, a number of actions that can be delivered quickly will be considered, e.g. street naming and signage, for which capital funding is available.

Matters raised by councillors included:

- Queried whether funding is available for shop fronts – it was confirmed that funding had been made available in the past and it was agreed to get further information on any related scheme.
- Underlined the need to manage expectations in line with available funding.
- Queried the approach to be taken with relevant landowners – councillors can submit any relevant information regarding relevant land ownership to the council and staff will undertake to approach landowners, as appropriate.

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- Suggested that the MD Allocation Scheme could support the provision of street furniture – whilst it was pointed out that a consistent approach would be required, the scheme could be beneficial in providing street furniture at some locations.
- Underlined the need to secure the support of relevant landowners to progress initiatives that will benefit the community and retail sectors.
- Queried if feedback had been received following previous URDF applications – it was pointed out that significant URDF funding had been allocated for roads.
- Suggested that discussions be held with retailers to discuss specific proposals.
- Underlined the importance of improving connectivity between Frederick Street and High Street, the options on how this might be achieved and the stakeholders involved.

It was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Joe Bonner** and seconded by **Councillor Conor Tormey** to proceed as outlined.

### **4.2 Environment**

- 4.2.1 To receive a presentation in respect of the publication of the draft River Basin Management 2022-2027 and the public consultation process for same including the making of submissions or observations.

Larry Whelan, Senior Executive Officer, David Keyes, Senior Executive Engineer and Emmet Conboy, Executive Chemist, Environment Section attended the meeting and a presentation was delivered, which included the River Basin Management Plan, the condition of waters nationally and locally, the main themes of the plan, the main pressures and catchment response in Meath, overview of measures proposed, selected plan measures and how to make a submission and get involved locally.



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Matters raised by councillors included:

- Queried whether remediation measures are included in the plan to deal with misconnections.
- Queried whether local authorities would be adequately resourced to deal with the issues identified – as part of the plan, a national review of local authority resources will be undertaken. Meath has already undertaken catchment investigations but further resources are needed.
- Queried whether landowners had been made aware of rivers being classified as salmonid rivers and the associated impact on water extraction – a new licensing regime will apply to abstractions.
- Referred to drinking water quality from the River Boyne.
- Referred to the need for extensive engagement with the farming community, e.g. in relation to fertiliser usage, slurry spreading and phosphates – a balance between regulation, enforcement and engagement is required.
- Referred to the benefits of increasing public awareness of rivers as amenities.
- Referred to the lead deposits on a former shooting ground and queried whether it was preferable that they be removed or left in situ- whilst lead is a hazardous substance, it is not included in the main monitoring programme - further details on the location referred to were requested so that the issue could be investigated
- Referred to the planting of reed beds to improve water quality – this is part of the direction increasingly being taken, with a greater focus on buffer zones adjacent to rivers, the revision of related schemes and the introduction of incentives.

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- Queried whether the review will allow those who did not register septic tanks to apply for grants to upgrade these – the grants scheme was revised approximately a year ago and is targeted to areas of highest risk but a submission can be made on that specific request
- Queried whether there were plans to identify areas with combined drainage systems – the issue tends to be the network rather than the plants, which are subject to compliance requirements of the licence conditions. A review is to be undertaken and, where pressures are identified, this will result in an increase in priority in the Irish Water capital investment programme.
- Queried the consequences if water quality improvements targets are not met by 2027 – if compliance does not improve, Ireland could be found to be in breach of the EU Directive and referred to the European Court of Justice, where significant fines can be imposed.

### **4.3 Transportation**

- 4.3.1 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:

- Thanked Mel and his team for all the works undertaken throughout the municipal district during the year.
- Commended the works undertaken on the R125, R135 and the R152.
- Commended the flood alleviation works undertaken, including the reinstatement works carried out by the OPW, and acknowledged the benefits to those in the affected area – an update on the scheme was provided, including confirmation that over 85% of the construction works



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were now completed with all heavy civil engineering works due to be completed by mid-May and garden restoration works by mid-July, with some to be completed by end of February. Councillors and residents will be advised of any delays to this timeframe.

- Requested an update on the telecommunications pole at the top of Racehill – the undergrounding of the connection is due to be undertaken by Eircom with no date yet available. Whilst expected in January, councillors and residents will be informed of the exact date when known.
- Queried whether signage and rumble strips can be provided at Donaghmore Church – the location will be reviewed and signage improved. However, the church is located on a bend and, to improve sightlines, realignment would be required, involving the construction of a new bridge or land acquisition.
- Requested an update on the signs for Kilbreck – the signs have been received and will be erected before Christmas. A drainage issue on the approach to Stamullen is also being dealt with.
- Queried the timeframe for the footpath at Redwood and whether funding will still be available if it commences in 2022 – funding is in place, a topographical survey has been carried out and the design and tender will be completed early in the new year. An update will then be provided regarding the appointment of a contractor.
- Queried whether full road reinstatement works will be carried out following the new pipeline works- temporary reinstatement works have been undertaken and, once testing has been carried out on the pipeline, full permanent reinstatement works will follow.
- Queried whether the pump had arrived for Kilbreck pumping station – this is subject to delays in parts arriving from France.
- Referred to ongoing speeding issues on the Swords Road into Ashbourne and requested the provision of slow signs.



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- Requested an update on the provision of green space for Tudor Close, Heights and Grove and the possible linkage with the green space in Racehill Manor, following the enactment of the County Development Plan – it was agreed to refer this to Planning.

### **5 Notice of Question**

#### **5.1 Submitted by Councillor Joe Bonner**

“Can Meath County Council Transport Section provide an update and further investigate the traffic safety issues at Millbourne Avenue/ school Roundabout and suggest possible solutions to making this area safe for children and their guardians up to and including the need to provide a traffic warden during school times?”

**Response:**

*Following recent discussions between the Residents and staff of MCC, a number of safety measures are being investigated at this location.*

*It has been agreed that a pedestrian crossing will be installed in front of the school as part of the ongoing work on the road acquisition by MCC. In addition to this, once the road has been taken in charge between the start of the green and the roundabout, an additional pedestrian crossing will be installed.*

*Meath County Council’s policy is that where some form of control is required to facilitate school children crossing the road, the provision of road engineering measures in conjunction with the School Safety Education Programme is to be progressed as an alternative to the provision of a School Warden.*

The response was noted.

### **6 Notice of Motion**

#### **6.1 Submitted by Councillor Joe Bonner**



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"That the Transport Department of Meath County Council carry out a safety audit at the following locations: Skryne School, Rathfeigh School and Oberstown Cross and recommend a design to improve the safety at Oberstown Cross (Swan's Cross). A design similar to the very successful traffic calming measures constructed at Swan's Cross, Curragha might be a solution. The construction of a safe crossing at Oberstown is a matter of urgency as the number of accidents and near misses is increasing weekly."

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

*Meath County Council Transport Department are carrying out an in-house review of these sites with a view to improving the safety for each site. The review will include gathering speed data for the three sites and examining road collision records. As outlined at the November Ashbourne Municipal District Meeting, the installation of speed ramps requires a public light within 5m of any proposed ramp. Currently there is no public light on the North/South direction of Oberstown Cross or at Rathfeigh school. Meath County Council have carried out some interim safety improvement works including renewal of linemarking, new STOP and Junction Ahead signs installed, lower approach speed activation of Vehicle Activated Signs, trimming of hedges with more significant clearance to be carried out by suitably qualified tree surgeon. The Members will be updated on review findings and any planned works that may arise.*

The supporting information and motion was proposed by **Councillor Joe Bonner** and seconded by **Councillor Aisling O'Neill**.

An amendment, as follows, was proposed by **Councillor Suzanne Jamal** and seconded by **Councillor Conor Tormey**:

"That the Transport Department of Meath County Council carry out a safety audit at the following locations: Skryne School, Rathfeigh School, Lismullen School, Kentstown School, Ardcah School and Oberstown Cross and recommend a design to improve the safety at Oberstown Cross (Swan's Cross). A design similar to the very successful traffic calming measures constructed at Swan's Cross, Curragha might be a solution. The construction of a safe crossing at Oberstown is a matter of urgency as the number of accidents and near misses is increasing weekly."





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Following a discussion, the motion was amended further, as follows, and was agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Joe Bonner** and seconded by **Councillor Aisling O'Neill**:

"That the Transport Department of Meath County Council carry out a safety audit at the following locations: Skryne School, Rathfeigh School, Oberstown Cross, to be prioritised initially, followed by the following locations: Lismullen School, Kentstown School and Ardcath School, and that a design be recommended to improve the safety at Oberstown Cross (Swan's Cross). A design similar to the very successful traffic calming measures constructed at Swan's Cross, Curragha might be a solution. The construction of a safe crossing at Oberstown is a matter of urgency as the number of accidents and near misses is increasing weekly."

### **6.2 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin**

"To ask the Planning and Transportation Departments to look at the feasibility of bringing a larger entrance/exit point on the R135 across from the Ballybin Road junction to facilitate the continuously expanding Ashbourne Business Park. This could be facilitated during planned upgrade works to take place over the next 11-18 months and levies could be applied as planning conditions to pay for works and land acquisition."

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

*A detailed design of this junction has been developed in line with the part 8 that was approved for the development along the R135 (former N2) within Ashbourne (P8/13010 ). These works have been tendered as part of the larger construction project along the R135 between Dunnes Stores and the Pillo Hotel and the Council intend to award the construction contract to the successful tenderer in the coming weeks. The proposed introduction of an additional arm would be a significant change to the R135 / Ballybin Road junction which would require separate survey and traffic analysis, planning approval, land, detailed design and a change order to the pending construction contract. It is not advisable to make changes to the construction contract once awarded as this would have financial and programme implications for the Council. Given the imminent award of the construction contract and the likely timescales to investigate this proposed change it is not possible to accommodate an additional arm to the junction as part of the current scheme.*



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The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Conor Tormey**, was agreed.

### **6.3 Submitted by Councillor Aisling O’Neill**

“In light of recent accidents this year on Millbourne Avenue, I am requesting a lit pedestrian crossing at the end of Millbourne Avenue to ensure safe crossing to the accompanying schools.”

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

*Following recent discussions between the residents and staff of Meath County Council, it has been agreed that a pedestrian crossing will be installed in front of the school as part of the ongoing work on the road acquisition by the council.*

*In addition to this, once the road has been taken in charge between the start of the green and the roundabout, an additional pedestrian crossing will be installed.*

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

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

- 7.1 To note the Corporate Policy Group Meeting Minutes of 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

The minutes were noted.

- 7.2 To note the Corporate Policy Group & Group Whip Meeting Minutes of 18th November 2021.

The minutes were noted.

- 7.3 To note the report from Housing, Community and Cultural Development SPC of 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021.



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The report was noted.

### **8 Correspondence**

There was no correspondence.

### **9 Any Other Business**

9.1 Councillor Alan Robin raised the following issues:

9.1.1 Expressed disappointment that no response had been received from the LMETB.

9.1.2 Expressed disappointment that no response had been received from the TII in relation to the Nine Mile Stone roundabout as incidents are still occurring at this location.

9.1.3 Requested an update on Zone 3 of the Linear Park – it was pointed out that additional funding had been provided over the original budget to progress the skatepark, the design for which will be brought to the municipal district in Q1 2022, and that nothing further will be done until additional funding is available.

9.2 Councillor Suzanne Jamal raised the following issue:

9.2.1 Referred to the public lighting column provided in Kentstown but the light has yet to be switched on.

The Cathaoirleach concluded the meeting by thanking her councillor colleagues, Fiona, Mel and his team, and the meeting administration team for their work throughout the year and wished everyone a very happy Christmas. Fiona thanked the Cathaoirleach and returned the best wishes to all on behalf of the executive.

This concluded the business of the meeting.



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**Signed:**

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**Cathaoirleach**