



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

### ***Navan Municipal District***

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

***10:00 a.m., 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021, Via Zoom***

An Meára, **Councillor Pádraig Fitzsimons**, presided.

**Councillors Present:** Yemi Adenuga, Francis Deane, Edward Fennessy, Alan Lawes, Tommy Reilly and Emer Tóibín.

**Officials in Attendance:**

**Director of Service:** Martin Murray

**Meetings Administrator:** Claire King

**Executive Engineer:** Shane Durcan

**Staff Officer:** Triona Keating

### **1 Confirmation of Minutes**

#### **1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021.**

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Tommy Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Francis Deane**.

#### **1.2 Confirmation of minutes of Special Finance Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021.**

The minutes of the Special Finance Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Emer Tóibín** and seconded by **Councillor Edward Fennessy**.

### **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:

- The family of the late Alan Murtagh, Abbeygrove;
- The family of the late Pat O'Malley, Meadstown, Dunderry;
- The family of the late Amby Carroll, Johnstown;
- The family of the late Frank Poole, Athlumney Abbey;
- The family of the late Margaret Sheridan, Robinstown, who recently turned 100 years of age.

### **4 Statutory Business**

#### **4.1 Environment**

- 4.1.1 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 and David Keyes, Senior Executive Engineer, 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.

Matters raised by councillors included:

- Underlined the importance of carrying out physical surveys to accurately identify issues of concern.
- Queried who undertook channelisations and suggested that they be removed and let the rivers and streams take their natural course –

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farmers undertake drainage, which does not require planning permission. A high percentage of these in Meath are maintained by the OPW, with an increased emphasis on environmentally friendly techniques. Farm advisory services liaise with farmers regarding the proper way to approach this issue. A number of trials are ongoing in relation to the removal of barriers, with the results being examined by the OPW.

- Referred to the need for improved grant schemes to encourage home owners to replace outdated systems and requested information on the inspection programme – the current grant scheme is being reviewed. The inspection locations are set out by the EPA and are focused on areas most vulnerable to pollution. It is hoped that the review will result in increased resources to allow the inspection programme to be increased.
- Requested an update on the reasons for wells drying up in Robinstown – the reasons for this is not yet known, with interaction taking place with both Irish Water and Tara Mines. The ground water levels have declined over a number of years, resulting in an increase in well grant applications.
- Queried the assistance or incentives being given to farmers to reduce fertiliser usage – schemes such as REPS provide assistance around environmentally friendly practices. The council provides advice, as do Teagasc's specialist agricultural advisors.
- Requested further information on the slurry spreading licensing system, particularly for slurry which originates in other counties – a thorough licensing process is in place, which includes the requirement for Nutrient Management Plans. Biosolids Spread is only permitted on suitable lands and in suitable weather conditions. Applications are monitored and inspected, following national guidelines and regulations
- Expressed concerns at the chemicals used in the drinking water supply.
- Referred to the need to address the increase in the dairy herd over a number of years.

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- Referred to the regular overflows from the pumping station in Blackcastle – the council has been notified of overflows and is in contact with Irish Water. An upgrade to this Pumping Station may be needed, requiring its inclusion in the Irish Water capital investment programme. Overflows usually occur during weather events such as heavy rainfall and this dilutes the discharges, minimising the impact.
- Referred to the need to engage with farmers to increase awareness of the damage resulting from cattle accessing rivers – the council meets with farmers and inspects access points. Farmers are encourage to fence off such access points and install drinking troughs. Whilst no incentives currently exist, it is hoped that relevant schemes will be introduced.
- Queried whether the targets for 2027 can be met – all efforts must be made to comply with this deadline.

Councillors were reminded that, as part of the public consultation process, they can make submissions, as can the Environment SPC, where the Draft Plan will also be discussed.

### **4.2 Transportation**

- 4.2.1 To receive a Progress Report on works undertaken/planned for Navan Municipal District.

The report had been circulated in advance and a further update was provided at the meeting.

Matters raised by councillors included:

- Queried the timeframe for the commencement of footpath works in Silverlawns – it is hoped that works will commence in Q1 2022.
- Thanked Shane for works carried out in Balreask Village and Blackcastle estates and also for clearing the path at the rear of St. Oliver's.



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- Requested that consideration be given to removing the canopy at Metges Lane to deter anti-social behaviour – it is intended to remove the sheeting and gutters after Christmas, leaving only the steel structure. This may also be considered as part of the Navan 2030 scheme.
- Requested that road markings at Athlumney Wood be renewed – this is on the list for the next road marking programme.
- Queried whether works are planned at The Grove, Athlumney to deal with surface water – further details were requested.
- Queried whether there were plans to provide traffic calming measures at Balreask Village – whilst resurfacing will take place in the interim, it will need to be assessed in terms of the most appropriate measures.
- Referred to a pothole at the entrance to Mercy Convent on Brews Hill – this has been forwarded for attention and councillors were asked to submit details of any other locations requiring attention.

## **5 Notice of Question**

### **5.1 Submitted by Councillor Edward Fennessy**

"To ask the Executive what level of pesticides and herbicides have been used in Navan over the past two years and to outline what steps are being taken by Meath County Council to reduce and eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicides in the county."

#### **Response:**

*Up to now, as is the case for many other local authorities around the country, the primary method of weed control used on hard surfaces is by spray application of a herbicidal product. In recent years, the method of application used by Meath County Council was changed to a targeted application method, rather than a spray method, which aimed to reduce the volume of herbicide being used and deliver a more efficient and less environmentally hazardous approach. The product used, Nomix dual, also reduced health & safety risks to operatives by eliminating the risks associated with diluting the product*



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*before application. Other herbicide products are also used in the Navan MD for specific treatments like Japanese Knotweed.*

*The manual removal of weeds using scuffle and brush techniques has also been used by the Transportation Section in many areas of the MD, in particular in areas where residents have expressed a wish that herbicide not be used, e.g. Johnstown Green Kilometre, or in small-scale areas requiring weed control. This is an effective technique, although it is labour intensive, and regrowth of weeds does occur sooner than treatment using herbicide. Navan MD is currently assessing quotations for a mechanical weed scuffle for footpaths to remove weeds and moss.*

*Further to requests for the investigation of alternative methods of weed control, MCC participated in a trial of weed control measures using alternatives to glyphosate-based products – hot water and hot foam products. The hot foam method requires a number of applications, and was therefore deemed to be too expensive in terms of water and energy use to be considered as a feasible alternative approach to weed control on a large scale on roads and streets in the county, but could be beneficial in smaller settings.*

*In addition, the Navan MD Parks Section is in the process of reducing the use of herbicides on open spaces and is piloting alternative landscape maintenance regimes at a number of sites throughout the MD Area this year. The intention is to support the reduction and ultimate elimination of the use of herbicides in Parks and open spaces, while supporting the National Bee Pollinator Plan<sup>12</sup> in promoting bee friendly habitats. Wild Flower areas were planted in various locations and with the help of our Councillors, bee hives were located in strategic locations.*

The response was noted.

### **5.2 Submitted by Councillor Francis Deane**

“How many names are currently on the social housing list in Navan Municipal District and how many people have availed of HAP in the NMD over the past three years?”

**Response:**



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*There are currently 1,448 applicants on the social housing waiting list in the Navan Municipal District.*

*The number of applicants that availed of HAP in the Municipal District since 2019 are as follows:*

- *2019 – 175 tenancies*
- *2020 – 223 tenancies*
- *2021 to date – 182 tenancies.*

The response was noted. Clarification was sought on the difference in the number of applicants on the social housing waiting list, compared to the figure provided in September.

### **5.3 Submitted by Councillor Yemi Adenuga**

“Can Meath county council kindly confirm:

- Who owns the two side hills on Bothar Sion road coming from the bridge towards Athlumney and Buvinda?
- Who has the right to authorize a biodiversity project work to be carried out on the spaces?
- Who currently ensures any grass cutting or tidy-up work done on both spaces?”

#### **Response:**

*The areas in question are under ownership of Meath County Council.*

*Currently the grass and area are not cut or maintained as it left as a bio-diversity area due to its sloping elevation and access issues etc. Johnstown Tidy Towns have kept the footpath/cycle path free of weeds without the use of sprays.*



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*If Council staff are working on the areas referred to they are covered under the Council's insurances. If third parties are carrying out any works then they would need to have their own insurances in place and also, would require the authorisation of the Council to undertake any works there. Johnstown Tidy Towns Committee, for example, worked on this area in 2021 as part of the Green Kilometre, with prior consent.*

*It is important to note that the area has numerous drainage pipes as part of the Sion Rd development, and that there have been issues with soil conditions in the area.*

The response was noted.

### **5.4 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín**

“Why, considering the huge wealth of historical and heritage sites across and adjacent to the town of Navan Meath County Council does not have its own County Architect?”

#### **Response:**

*The human resource requirement for Meath County Council is driven by a workforce planning process so to ensure appropriate staffing to deliver services. The process also ensures that the Council utilises the staffing complement and associated skill-sets available to the greatest extent.*

*The appointment of an architect has not been included in the workforce planning process to date due to the availability of skilled and experienced staff resources in related fields including Heritage Officer, Architectural Conservation Officer, Planners and Civil Engineers. The Council also utilises an architectural framework which is drawn from for a range of capital projects and housing requirements.*

*Staffing approval requirements remain in place across the local government sector for the creation of new positions and the Council must adhere to this as well as overall budgetary implications. Arising from this the Council does not propose to appoint an architect at this time.*

The response was noted.



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### 6 Notice of Motion

#### 6.1 Submitted by Councillor Edward Fennessy

"To ask the Executive to consider donating a parcel of land to the people of Navan to be used as a community allotment. Taking into consideration the shortage of available land in the town, I suggest, if it is feasible, that a section of land from the council's landbank in Liscarton be offered. If Liscarton is not possible, I ask the Executive to commission a survey of existing lands in the town to find a suitable site. The survey should be completed, and the results published within six months."

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

*The assignment by way of licence or lease of any public land including 'lands for allotments' will, in the first instance, require a formal application from an organisation who have the management and administration structure to organise the lands under the conditions of a licence/lease. If a formal application by a registered community/organisation is received, the application will be assessed and, if suitable lands are identified, a licence/lease can be advanced.*

It was agreed that the interested parties would be approached with a view to forming a management committee and submit a formal request.

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Edward Fennessy** and seconded by **Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons**, was agreed.

#### 6.2 Submitted by Councillor Edward Fennessy

"To ask the Executive to agree to the following works on the St. Mary's Park Estate:

- The installation of a chicane at the Slane Road entrance to the estate;
- The installation of a parking inlet on the green area opposite Nos. 24 & 26;
- Resurfacing and drainage works on the existing parking inlets;

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- Repair and maintenance of footpaths on the estate.”

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

*Meath County Council proposes to carry out a survey to ascertain the extent of speeding and assess driver behaviour in the area. Any traffic management measures deemed necessary by the Transportation Section will be put forward for consideration in a future programme of works.*

*An assessment of the extra parking bays request will commence in the new year, as well as a full survey of the drainage and resurfacing works required on the existing parking bays.*

*The footpaths will be added to the list of Estates for footpath rehabilitation works which are ongoing at present around the Navan Municipal District.*

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Edward Fennessy** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Lawes**, was agreed.

### **6.3 Submitted by Councillor Francis Deane**

“I propose that Meath County Council will consider naming two approach roads to the Old Johnstown Village as follows: Metges Road to Old Johnstown Village be named Kilcarn Road, Village to Kilcarn cemetery be named Oldtown Road.”

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

*Transportation have no objection to the motion.*

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Francis Deane** and seconded by **Councillor Emer Tóibín**, was agreed.

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### **6.4 Submitted by Councillor Francis Deane**

“That Meath County Council’s Water Services Department engage with Irish Water on behalf of residents in the Gainstown/Robinstown area who have serious issues with wells going dry. They suspect explorations at Tara Mines Ltd are the cause of their low water levels. To date, Irish Water have not been able to address the problems for the private home owners and farming community.”

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

*The Council have been engaged with local residents and various statutory agencies in respect of the difficulties arising from wells in the Shambo/Robinstown going dry and are currently carrying out assessments to determine if it is technically and economically feasible for the provision of a mains water supply as part of under the Multi -Annual Rural Water Programme 2022-2024.*

*Details of the application process for the new 3 year programme are expected to be announced shortly and will involve engagement with Irish Water whose agreement will be required in terms of connection to their network.*

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Francis Deane** and seconded by **Councillor Emer Tóibín**, was agreed.

### **6.5 Submitted by Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons**

“Taking into account the ever increasing volumes of traffic on the Kells Road, can we look at placing a sound barrier along Dean Cogan Estate to reduce the high levels of noise effecting the residents from very early morning to late evenings.”

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

*Sound barriers are very large and robust structures, mostly seen along motorways to deflect the traffic noise away from rural houses. The openings required for the main entrance and the pedestrian entrance at this proposed location at Dean Cogan would null*

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*the effect of any such barrier. The views would also be obstructed and the cost would be quite high for a structural barrier of this type.*

*The planned LDR4 - R147 Kells Rd to Ratholdren Rd Project will relieve a lot of the traffic on this section of the N51.*

*If there is a particular noise, e.g. a manhole lid that is a disturbance, that can be assessed.*

Councillor Padraig Fitzsimons requested that consideration be given to providing hedging along the boundary of the estate.

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Padraig Fitzsimons** and seconded by **Councillor Yemi Adenuga**, was agreed.

### **6.6 Submitted by Councillor Padraig Fitzsimons**

“I propose the motion to install traffic calming measures on Swan Lane, specifically in the area from the Balreask school to the entrance to Old Balreask Woods/Oakleigh so as to increase safety for pedestrians.”

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

*Meath County Council proposes to carry out a survey to ascertain the extent of speeding and assess driver behaviour in the area. Following the survey, any traffic management measures deemed necessary by the Transportation Section will be put forward for consideration in a future programme of works.*

*Due to the large number of requests at present, it will likely be well into the new year when this survey takes place.*

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Padraig Fitzsimons** and seconded by **Councillor Yemi Adenuga**, was agreed.

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### **6.7 Submitted by Councillor Alan Lawes**

“I am calling on Meath County Council to carry out a road safety survey at Caseys Cross on the Kentstown Road due to safety concerns raised with me by local residents.”

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

*Meath County Council had conducted a traffic count and survey of the R-153 near to the location of Casey’s Cross in 2019. A new request has been sent to the Transportation Technical Team to arrange a full road safety audit for Casey’s Cross, to be completed when the counters and staff are available.*

*Due to the large number of requests at present, we cannot currently confirm when this will be carried out, but it will likely be some stage in Quarter 1 of the new year.*

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Alan Lawes** and seconded by **Councillor Francis Deane**, was agreed.

### **6.8 Submitted by Councillor Yemi Adenuga**

“I call on Meath County Council to look into the restoration of the exterior of Morton Hall, a listed building on Brews Hill, Navan that currently looks like a derelict site and is slowly but surely going into further state of disrepair.”

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

*This occupied building was recently inspected and, while the exterior paintwork could preferably do with a refresh, it is not a building which is classified as derelict as outlined by definition within the Act as below;*

*(a) the existence on the land in question of structures which are in a ruinous, derelict or dangerous condition, or*

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*(b) the neglected, unsightly or objectionable condition of the land or any structures on the land in question, or*

*(c) the presence, deposit or collection on the land in question of any litter, rubbish, debris or waste, except where the presence, deposit or collection of such litter, rubbish, debris or waste results from the exercise of a right conferred by statute or by common law.*

Following a short discussion, it was agreed that the council would liaise with the owners and highlight the issues raised.

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Yemi Adenuga** and seconded by **Councillor Tommy Reilly**, was noted.

### **6.9 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín**

“To call on Meath County Council to ask NBI to give a full account to Navan town councillors of the delays of fibre broadband rollout across this electoral area as 1000s of constituents although only a few hundred metres away from fibre broadband infrastructure are facing between 2 and 4 years before connection is facilitated to their house/premises.”

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

*It was agreed at the October Full Council Meeting that NBI would be invited in to present to the Full Council on their plans and progress. Due to the heavy workload, this has not been possible to date but it remains the intention of the Council to invite NBI in to meet the Full Council as soon as reasonably practicable.*

It was suggested that NBI be invited to be available in advance of the full council meeting to meet with councillors individually if required.

The supporting information and motion, proposed by **Councillor Emer Tóibín** and seconded by **Councillor Tommy Reilly**, was noted.

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



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- 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.

The report was noted.

### **8 Correspondence**

- 8.1 Correspondence received from the Office of the Minister for Health.

The correspondence was noted.

### **9 Any Other Business**

- 9.1 Councillor Emer Tóibín raised the following issue:

9.1.1 Queried why the spring near the library/Solstice had dried up.

- 9.2 Councillor Edward Fennessy raised the following issue:

9.2.1 Referred to issues for businesses as a result of parking in Metges Lane and queried whether control measures can be introduced.

- 9.3 Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons raised the following issues:

9.3.1 Requested that councillors receive a presentation on the new Choice Based Letting Scheme in January.



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- 9.3.2 Requested that consideration be given to addressing the safety issues at the junction at the top of the Borallion separate to Masterplan 7 – it was agreed to look at the junction to see what can be done in the short-term.
  
- 9.3.3 Referred to speeding on the Boyne Road, particularly at the bridge approaching the cemetery and requested that a survey be carried out at this location.

The Mayor concluded the meeting by thanking the executive, the municipal district staff, the meeting administration team and the media and wished everyone a very happy Christmas.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**Signed:**

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**An Meára**