



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Ordinary Meeting

7th March 2022 @ 1.30p.m.

Solstice Theatre, Navan (and online via zoom)

Presiding

Councillor Sean Drew, Cathaoirleach

Councillors Present:

Councillors Mike Bray, Francis Deane, Aisling Dempsey, Edward Fennessy, Brian Fitzgerald, Joe Fox, Noel French, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy, Wayne Harding, Alan Lawes, Elaine McGinty, Paddy Meade, Maria Murphy, Gerry O'Connor, Amanda Smith, Emer Tóibín, Sharon Tolan, Gillian Toole.

Councillors Present via Zoom:

Councillors Yemi Adenuga, Tom Behan, Joe Bonner, Eugene Cassidy, Padraig Fitzsimons, Deirdre Geraghty-Smith, Trevor Golden, Suzanne Jamal, Geraldine Keogan, Nick Killian, Paul McCabe, Stephen McKee, Ronan Moore, Aisling O'Neill, Damien O'Reilly, Sarah Reilly, Tommy Reilly, Niamh Souhan, Conor Tormey.

Apologies:

Councillor Alan Tobin

Officials in attendance:

Chief Executive: Jackie Maguire

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

Meetings Administrator: Robert Collins

Senior Executive Officer: Elaine Daly

An Cathaoirleach made a statement as follows:

Fellow Councillors,

Before we continue with our monthly Council meeting, I wish to make a statement on the tragic events that are unfolding in the Ukraine.

Meath County Council strongly condemns the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, a sovereign and independent country. It is an unprovoked and unjustified attack that has brought death and destruction to Ukraine and to its people.

The invasion has triggered a humanitarian crisis. Over one and a half million people have been forced to flee for their lives as their homes, towns and cities come under heavy bombardment.

The suffering of the people of Ukraine is harrowing and they have shown extraordinary courage and resilience in the face of such hardship. We commend them for their heroic efforts and for their



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bravery. However, innocent civilians, including children and babies, are paying the terrible price of conflict.

As a Council, we call on our Government to do all that it can to support the humanitarian efforts being put in place to deal with the hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing from the conflict. Meath County Council will work with the Government and other agencies where we can to welcome, accommodate and support those in need.

We also call on the Government to use Ireland's place on the UN Security Council to work towards a global consensus on measures to hold the Russian Federation to account, to ensure that human rights are protected and to find the means to bring the conflict to a conclusion and to secure a long-lasting peace.

We call on the Russian Federation to stop targeting civilians in Ukraine, and allow them safe, unfettered passage to destinations in other countries. We ask the Russian Federation to immediately end the invasion, to withdraw its troops from Ukraine and to turn to the path of dialogue and diplomacy, before any more lives are lost in this unnecessary war.

The Ukrainian people are grappling with the humanitarian consequences of a war not of their making. Meath County Council and the people of Meath stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine. To symbolise our solidarity we'll continue to fly the Ukrainian flag at Council headquarters and the municipal buildings and we have illuminated buildings across the county in the colours of the Ukrainian flag.

In the days and weeks to come this solidarity may require more tangible and practical measures. There have already been collections locally of medical and other humanitarian supplies, some assisted by our own staff and Civil Defence, and I am confident that Meath County Council and the people of Meath will not be found wanting in our response moving forward.

Thank You

1 Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 7th February 2022.

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 7th February 2022 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Michael Gallagher** and seconded by **Councillor Noel French**.

2 Matters arising from the Minutes

Councillor Gillian Toole requested an update on the recent meeting between the officials of the Council and the Oireachtas members. The Chief Executive agreed to circulate the Council's presentation to the elected members.



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Councillor Elaine McGinty expressed thanks to the staff of Meath County Council for the support shown during the recent Drogheda Spring Clean event.

3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

Sympathy was extended to:

- Gillian Cluskey, Transportation on the death of her mother, Teresa Goodwin.
- John Fanning, former Councillor on the death of his wife, Mary Fanning.

In accordance with Standing Order 11.5 Congratulations were extended to:

- Meath volunteers (individual and clubs) and Meath Civil Defence for their generous support and efforts in assembling supplies for dispatch to the Ukrainian people.
- All of the boys and girls under 18 years of age, throughout the County, who have been called up to play on Meath underage teams.
- Nina Carberry and Nicholas Roche and their partners as they bring joy and inspire the nation on Sunday evenings.

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 0.01 acres of land at Townparks Estate, 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 17th February 2022, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Francis Deane** and seconded by **Councillor Emer Tóibín**.

4.2 Disposal of 0.036 acres of land at Townparks Estate, 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 17th February 2022, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Emer Tóibín** and seconded by **Councillor Francis Deane**.

4.3 Disposal of 0.009 acres of land at Claremont Estate, 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 17th February 2022, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons** and seconded by **Councillor Edward Fennessy**.

5 Statutory Business



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5.1 Transportation

5.1.1 To receive a presentation from Flexibus on Local Link and Connecting Ireland. An

Cathaoirleach welcomed Ms. Miriam McKenna, CEO Flexibus. Ms. McKenna provided an overview of the Flexibus service around the county including inter alia, the provision of disability services, services for older people and the Meath Community Car. She further outlined the vision for the Flexibus service for the future and requested that the Council provide any information available to assist in assessing and meeting the future needs for the Flexibus service.

Following a request from **An Cathaoirleach** it was agreed to circulate a copy of the presentation to the members.

There were interventions from the following Councillors: **Mike Bray, Paddy Meade; Noel French; Elaine McGinty; Edward Fennessy; Nick Killian; Maria Murphy; Ronan Moore; Paul McCabe; Aisling O'Neill; Gillian Toole; Emer Tóibín; Alan Lawes; Gerry O'Connor; Wayne Harding and An Cathaoirleach.** In general terms, the elected members complemented Ms. McKenna on the excellent service provided and affirmed their continued support for the Flexibus scheme. Responses to the various questions were provided by Ms. McKenna.

5.2 Finance

5.2.1 Report on the Schedule of Uncollected Rates for 2021 - In accordance with Article 26(2) of the Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures) Regulations 2014.

The report was noted by the elected members.

5.3 Corporate Affairs and Governance

5.3.1 To note the establishment of the Meath Women's Caucus and its draft Terms of Reference.

It was noted that this matter was also the subject of Item 9.2 and it was agreed that the two items would be dispensed with consecutively. The establishment of the Meath Women's caucus and the draft terms of reference were noted.

6 Reports

6.1 Chief Executive's Report

There were interventions from the following **Councillors: Nick Killian; Gillian Toole; Michael Gallagher; Sharon Tolan; Ronan Moore; Paul McCabe and Elaine McGinty.** The issues raised included:

- Housing: Rolling call for developer for social housing; retrofitting social housing stock for improved energy efficiency; vacant units; CPO vacant properties;
- Transport: EV charging points; Part 8 pedestrian and cycling scheme Ratoath; road opening licences;
- Planning: Planning enforcement; use of greenspace for community infrastructure
- Water Services: Information to the public on water outages; capital works in Ratoath;
- Finance: Affect of increased costs on the capital works programme;



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Environment: Energy Bureau.

Responses were provided by Mr. Martin Murray; Ms. Fiona Lawless; Mr. Barry Lynch; Mr. Dara McGowan, Mr. Des Foley and the Chief Executive.

6.2 Report from the Corporate Policy Group

The Meetings Administrator reported that the CPG met on Friday 4th March 2022. He noted that the CPG were provided with an update on the recent changes at senior management levels within the Council and that a new organisation structure and staff directory would be circulated to the members in the coming days.

The Meetings Administrator further advised that the CPG had received an update on the Buvinda House project, the development of the new chamber and extension to the office accommodation. The application is due to be lodged to An Bord Pleanála in June this year.

6.3 Report from the Protocol Committee

The Meetings Administrator reported that the Protocol Committee met on 7th March 2022. He noted that the Committee were updated with the measures being taken by the Council to show solidarity with the people of Ukraine including flying the Ukrainian flag and the illumination of civic buildings throughout the County.

The Committee was advised of the initial preparations for the local Ceremony of Remembrance and Reflection as outlined in the correspondence at Item 7.3 of the agenda.

The Meetings Administrator further reported that the Committee approved five training events the details of which would circulate to the members.

7 Correspondence

7.1 Circular: WP02.22 – Department of Environment, Climate and Communications re. Waste Management (Prohibition of Waste Disposal by Burning) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 (SI No. 51 of 2022).

Noted by the Elected Members.

7.2 Circular Letter: NRUP 01/2022 – Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage re. Launch of the Town Centre First Policy.

Councillor Nick Killian advised the meeting that the AILG had some concerns regarding the implementation of the Town Centre First Policy and that the AILG had sought a meeting with Minister Heather Humphreys in this regard.

Noted by the Elected Members.

7.3 Correspondence from Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media re. Local Ceremony of Remembrance and Reflection.



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Noted by the Elected Members.

7.4 Correspondence from Meath Comhairle na nÓg re. goals for 2022.

Noted by the Elected Members.

7.5 Correspondence from Mr. Joe O'Brien T.D., Minister of State for Community Development and Charities in response to Notice of Motion 10.3 adopted at the February 2022 meeting of the full Council re. small community-based groups and the Charities Governance Code.

Noted by the Elected Members.

7.6 Correspondence from Mr. Joe O'Brien T.D., Minister of State for Community Development and Charities in response to Notice of Motion 10.4 adopted at the February 2022 meeting of the full Council re. request for a greater input from and consultation with voluntary community-based organisations when preparing strategies such as the National Volunteering Strategy.

Noted by the Elected Members

7.7 Correspondence from Mr. Joe O'Brien T.D., Minister of State for Community Development and Charities in response to Notice of Motion 10.5 adopted at the February 2022 meeting of the full Council re. insurance costs for community groups.

Noted by the Elected Members.

An Cathaoirleach requested that the responses in Items 7.5, 7.6 and 7.7 be circulated to the members of the Housing SPC.

8 Notice of Question

8.1 Submitted by Councillor Sarah Reilly

"To ask Meath County Council to provide a breakdown of (a) the number of houses it owns in private housing estates in the county and (b) the number of housing estates across which these houses are located?"

Response

Ascertaining the information requested in precise detail would require a comprehensive examination of the Council's fixed asset register. However, a high level analysis of the Council's iHouse system will give a reasonable indication of the numbers involved. Properties have been acquired through a number of sources including Part V, new turnkeys and second hand acquisitions. When these categories are aggregated the council has circa 940 acquired properties spread over 361 locations. Many of these locations are in different phases of private housing estates.



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Noted by the Elected Members

8.2 Submitted by Councillor Noel French

“How many fines were issued in 2021 for littering and how many of these were paid? How many fines were issued for dog fouling and how many of these were paid? How much in total is Meath County Council planning to spend on litter and dumping prevention and remediation in 2022?”

Response

The Council issued 52 Litter Fines in 2021 and of which 31 were paid – a total of 18 were written off or waived following appeals or advice’s from the Councils Legal Advisors and 3 further cases are the subject of legal proceedings. The reduction in fines from previous years is due to a number of factors including the initiation of education and awareness campaigns relating to dumping at the Councils bottle banks and a successful campaign targeting the erection of unauthorised commercial advertising signs throughout the County.

The Councils Green Kilometre Scheme which commits individuals or groups to maintaining a kilometre or longer stretch of local road free of litter over the course of a year, proved to be hugely successful in the fight against litter with over 230 individuals/ groups participating. Incentives of some native trees, litter pickers, bags and gloves were provided to all participating individuals/groups.

No dog fouling fines were issued in 2021 for as previously advised there are a number of difficulties associated with enforcement of the provisions of the Litter Pollution Act 1997 which provides the legal basis for such fines and specifically that based on the levels of proofs required the Dog Warden must witness an incident and the dog must be connected to a person at the time - members of the public do report dog fouling incidences but are often reluctant to give evidence where the case goes to Court.

The Council engage in regular social media campaigns promoting responsible dog ownership including in respect of dog fouling as well as distributing / erecting signage highlighting the obligations in this area.

The Council’s adopted budget for 2022 provides for expenditure on litter associated measures as follows.

Heading	2022
Provision of Waste to Collection Services	253,144
Litter Management	592,837
Total	845,981

Noted by the Elected Members



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8.3 Submitted by Councillor Aisling O'Neill

"A couple that are on the housing waiting list for a one bed apartment for 10 years with Meath County Council and with such accommodation in short supply, can such people on the list for long periods for one bed apartments be offered a two-bed apartment if it arises."

Response

This matter was previously discussed at Strategic Policy Committee level. In order to try and bring parity with the length of waiting time between waiting lists, the Housing Dept. have committed to allocate 2(Two) bedroom units to the 1 (one) bedroom list in areas where there is significant delivery of two-bedroom units. The ability to do this will vary across the county in line with the delivery pipeline.

Noted by the Elected Members

8.4 Submitted by Councillor Ronan Moore

"What are the avenues available for youth participation in the council presently?"

Response

Comhairle na nÓg are child and youth councils in the 31 local authorities of the country, which give children and young people the opportunity to be involved in the development of local services and policies. Following a tender process, Youth work Ireland Meath have been contracted to deliver Comhairle na nÓg in Meath. They meet regularly with their AGM scheduled to take place in October. The young people are regularly consulted on issues that arise including the preparation of the county development plan and local economy community plan.

Comhairle na nÓg are also represented on the Meath Joint Policing Committee. The young people have also received dementia training as part of the Meath Age Friendly programme. Meath Age Friendly frequently deliver intergenerational projects and seek the involvement and input from young people from Comhairle and also Transitional Year students from schools.

Cruinniú na nÓg is Ireland's national day of creativity for children and young people – a chance for everyone under 18 to unleash their creativity and participate in a wide range of events and activities. With hundreds of free events, workshops, exhibitions and performances, and a special focus on starter workshops to encourage young people to try something new.

Cruinniú na nÓg is an opportunity for children and young people to fulfil a secret creative ambition or showcase their inner creative hero. The programme of events in every county is decided on locally and delivered by the Culture and Creativity team in each local authority. This year *Cruinniú na nÓg* will be hosted by Meath County Council in Ashbourne on the 11th of June. *Cruinniú* is all about things for



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young people to do – but young people also get to help decide what creative things young people in Meath can get to do each year. Online consultation via a Chat link enables young people to get involved in the decision-making process.

Noted by the Elected Members

8.5 Submitted by Councillor Damien O'Reilly

“Has Meath County Council received any infrastructural funding for the development of the 50 rural nodes in Meath from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage?”

Response

Meath County Council has not received any funding in relation to the provision of infrastructure for the rural nodes. Whilst there is a Government fund called the “Serviced Sites Fund”, this fund seeks to enable the delivery of affordable housing in urban areas and does not relate to the provision of infrastructure on sites in the rural area. The Serviced Sites Fund has been replaced recently by the Affordable Housing Fund which is for settlements with a population greater than 1,500 people.

National Policy Objective 18b notes that it is intended that Government will, *“Develop a programme for ‘new homes in small towns and villages’ with local authorities, public infrastructure agencies such as Irish Water and local communities to provide serviced sites with appropriate infrastructure to attract people to build their own homes and live in small towns and villages.”*

It is expected that there will be further details provided on this in the form of updated Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines and/or this will be addressed as part of the expansion of a new Croí Cónaithe fund. To date the Croí Cónaithe fund is focused on the delivery of apartments in cities but it is expected that this will be expanded upon. As such, Meath County Council is awaiting announcements from Government in relation to new funding and new Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines.

There are other funding initiatives that are administered through other Government Departments, which address infrastructural needs in towns and villages.

Noted by the Elected Members

9 Notice of Motion

9.1 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín (Deferred from February Meeting)

“That Meath County Council phases out the lease back of housing from vulture funds and seeks the necessary funding to buy or build new housing directly.”



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

Under section 2.2 of Housing for All the Government committed to the phasing-out of long-term leasing as a means to the provision of social housing. The targets set for Meath County Council indicate that there will be no new delivery of leased units after 2023. A leasing delivery target of 153 units has been set for 2022/2023 out of a total delivery of 1,525 over the first five years of the action plan.

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Emer Tóibín**. There were a number of interventions by elected members in support of the motion including **Councillors Elaine McGinity; Ronan Moore; Gillian Toole** and **David Gilroy**. The motion, and supporting information, proposed by **Councillor Emer Tóibín** and seconded by **Councillor Elaine McGinty** was agreed.

9.2 Submitted by Councillor Maria Murphy

"That Meath County Council formally recognises the local Women's Caucus. This organisation is a group of women Elected Councillors, whose membership is committed to ensuring that women members are supported in the Local Government system."

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Maria Murphy** who outlined the barriers to women's participation in politics and the purpose of the women's caucus. There were interventions and questions from **Councillors Aisling Dempsey; Noel French; Yemi Adenuga and Gerry O'Connor**, responses were provided by the Chief Executive.

The motion proposed by **Councillor Maria Murphy** and seconded by **Councillor Aisling Dempsey** was agreed.

9.3 Submitted by the Technical Group

"Meath County Council declares that the National Planning Framework is now a failed entity due to: the ever-increasing housing shortage; the constant stressors families are dealing with; and the economic impact it has on the state. We the members now call on the Government to immediately initiate a review of the National Planning Framework by the relevant committee of the Oireachtas."

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald**. There were a number of interventions by elected members in support of the motion including **Councillors Nick Killian; Gerry O'Connor; Michael Gallagher; Damien O'Reilly; Gillian Toole** and **Elaine McGinty**. The motion was proposed by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald**, seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian** and agreed.



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9.4 Submitted by Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons

“That Meath County Council writes to the Minister of Agriculture requesting a specific fund for County Councils / Municipal Districts to deal with the replacement, felling and pruning of trees and address an ever-increasing problem, particularly in urban areas, where trees have become dominant thereby preventing growth, restricting light and pushing up pavements etc.”

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons**. There were a number of interventions from **Councillors Joe Fox; Mike Bray; Paddy Meade; Brian Fitzgerald; Maria Murphy; Ronan Moore; Wayne Harding; Yemi Adenuga** and **Trevor Golden**. **Councillor Joe Fox** proposed an amendment, which was seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade** and agreed as follows:

“That Meath County Council writes to the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage requesting a specific fund for County Councils / Municipal Districts to deal with the replacement, felling and pruning of trees and address an ever-increasing problem, particularly in urban areas, where trees have become dominant thereby preventing growth, restricting light and pushing up pavements etc.”

The motion as amended, was proposed by **Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons**, seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade** and agreed.

9.5 Submitted by Councillor Damien O’Reilly

“That Meath County Council forms a working group to actively promote Bremore as the new optimal location for Dublin Port.”

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

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 supports and recognises the potential economic benefits of the development of a deepwater port at Gormanston or proximate to Gormanston.

ED OBJ 23 contained in Chapter 4 supports the relocation of Drogheda Port in Meath subject to a feasibility study and appropriate coastal zone management.

This objective in the Meath County Development Plan demonstrates that the County Council actively promotes Gormanston/Bremore as the optimal location for Dublin Port and potential location for the relocation of Drogheda Port. Establishing a working group for a proposal at such a preliminary stage would be seen as premature at this point. However, Meath County Council will continue to actively promote the development of a port facility along the east coast and will closely monitor any further developments with regard to this proposal.



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The motion was introduced by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly**. There were a number of interventions by elected members in support of the motion including **Councillors Paddy Meade; Ronan Moore; Gillian Toole; Gerry O'Connor; Brian Fitzgerald; Sharon Tolan and An Cathaoirleach**. The motion was proposed by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly**, seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade** and agreed.

9.6 Submitted by the Fianna Fáil Councillors

“Calls on Meath County Council to act upon the objective that the Fianna Fail group successfully had included in the County Development Plan which states: “To support the installation of appropriate traffic management measures on a case-by-case basis on the approach roads to all schools throughout the county in the interest of road safety.” (MOV OBJ 35)”

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

Since the inclusion of this objective in the County Development Plan, Meath County Council has been liaising with An Taisce on the Safe Routes to School Programme. 6 No. schools were selected for the first tranche and the Council's Active Travel Officer has been working with An Taisce and the schools to identify and agree the treatments appropriate in each case.

Under the scheme funding will be made available to the participating schools to support cycling and walking to school, improve safety and reduce congestion. The Council will work closely with An Taisce and the schools to deliver the agreed works to make safer routes to school. Funding will be provided from the NTA to support any measures identified through the programme. This is an ongoing programme and it is anticipated that An Taisce will select further schools in due course for inclusion in this scheme. Further information can be found at the following link <https://greenschoolsireland.org/saferoutestoschool/>

In addition, a specific allocation of €450,000 of the Council's own resources has been made available for traffic management measures at schools across the county over 2022-2023. The Transportation section has drawn up a proposed schedule of works at specific schools which will be presented to each MD at the March 2022 Meetings.

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Aisling Dempsey**. There were a number of interventions by elected members in support of the motion including **Councillors Mike Bray; Paddy Meade; Paul McCabe; Emer Tóibín; Damien O'Reilly and Gillian Toole**. Mr. Martin Murray responded to the issues raised. The motion, including supporting information, was proposed by **Councillor Aisling Dempsey**, seconded by **Councillor Mike Bray** and agreed.



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9.7 Submitted by Councillor Joe Fox

“In light of the damage caused by fallen trees during recent storms which is a Health and Safety issue, the elected members call on Meath County Council to be more proactive in encouraging landowners in removing dangerous and overhanging trees from our roadsides.”

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

Meath County Council regularly publishes general advertisement informing landowners and occupiers of their duty pursuant to Section 70 of the Roads Act and to maintain trees, shrubs or other vegetation outside of the bird nesting season. A copy of the text of the advertisement is shown below.

REMINDER - IMPORTANT NOTICE TO LANDOWNERS AND OCCUPIERS OF LAND ADJACENT TO PUBLIC ROADS

Meath County Council would like to remind all landowners and occupiers of property adjacent to public roads of the importance of maintaining trees and hedges.

- It is the legal responsibility of the owner or occupier of lands to take all reasonable steps to ensure that trees, hedges and other structures are not a hazard or potential hazard to persons using public roads. They also must not obstruct or interfere with the safe use or maintenance of public roads.

For example overgrown hedges and trees

- can encroach on a roadway making it dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles,
 - can shade a road leaving it wet and liable to ice,
 - overhanging branches can fall on a road and hit road users.
- Dead and unsafe trees should be removed and hedges should be cut and trimmed. It is recommended that professional advice on the condition of road side trees should be obtained from time to time. When landowners are maintaining hedges or trees all reasonable care should be taken to ensure the safety of road users while this work is being carried out.
 - Hedge/Tree cutting should only be carried out during the period from **1st September to end of February** as it is an offence, under Section 40 of the Wildlife Act 1976, to cut or destroy any vegetation growing in land not then cultivated, or vegetation growing in any hedge or ditch during the period 1st March to 31st August.
 - No material (including muck & dirt) should be left on the public road arising from any works that may, in the opinion of the Local Authority, be a hazard or potential hazard to persons using a public road or obstruct or interfere with the safe use of a public road or the maintenance of a public road.



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- The Council wishes to acknowledge the co-operation of those landowners and occupiers of land who are and have been complying with their responsibilities down through the years. If you have any questions or require any advice or information on any of these matters, please contact your local Municipal District Civic Office or the Transportation Department at Meath County Council. Contact Numbers and email addresses are available on www.meath.ie
- In cases where landowners fail to comply with their obligations the Council will take whatever action is necessary to ensure compliance and seek to recoup costs from landowners.

Meath County Council also issue a Notice pursuant to Section 70 of the Roads Act where there is a specific problem or issue. In each of these cases the following information is required;

- Landowner/Occupier details
- The specific nature of the hazard (the LA would need to have reasonable grounds for considering that a hedge tree etc., was a hazard and in the case of a trees specialist advice may be required if the notice were to be challenged in the District Court)
- The provisions of Section 70 of the Roads Act specify that the road authority may carry out the work itself where the landowner fails to do so and recover the costs from the landowner.

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Joe Fox**. There were a number of interventions by elected members in support of the motion including **Councillors Paddy Meade; Michael Gallagher** and **Elaine McGinty**. Mr. Martin Murray and Ms. Fiona Lawless responded to the issues raised. The motion was proposed by **Councillor Joe Fox**, seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade** and agreed. **An Cathaoirleach** paid tribute to the outdoor staff and the Fire Service in Meath County Council on their ongoing work particularly during stormy periods.

9.8 Submitted by Councillor Ronan Moore

"That Meath County Council introduces a 'Story Trail' - similar to that at Ardgillan Castle - at a suitable location or locations within the county."

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

Meath County Council Library service has allocated funding to the development of a 'Scéal Trail /Story Trail' in 2022. The proposal involves the creation of a free, self-guided outdoor reading experience for families with young children, combining literacy, and exercise in a fun and interactive manner. The Scéal Trail/Story Trail is essentially a picture-book mounted on individual lecterns on a short walking loop in a public park. The Library Service is currently working with the necessary authors and publishers to develop the proposal. The 'Scéal Trail' will be developed to complement the work of the Library Service's 'Right to Read' programme and other national programmes such as Healthy Ireland.



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A Digital Story Trail is currently being created for the Porchfields in Trim. These stories will enrich and expand upon the newly designed panels due for installation before the summer to complete the Destination Towns Project in the Porchfields in Trim. The Digital Stories will be accessible via www.discoverboynevalley.ie.

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Ronan Moore**, seconded by **Councillor Edward Fennessy** and agreed.

9.9 Submitted by Councillor Aisling O'Neill

“Given that emergency accommodation is being used for periods far longer than anticipated in what is accepted as a housing crisis, the Elected Members ask that Meath County Council ensures that all emergency accommodation has cooking and laundry facilities so that the people accessing emergency accommodation do not have to use their limited resources on eating out and using launderettes.”

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

A Homeless Crisis is widely acknowledged and documented in both recent statistics and the Housing For All Strategy which was launched in late 2021. The Strategy sets out the Government’s mission to tackle the Homeless Crisis which will include, looking after the most vulnerable in our society by preventing homelessness, protecting tenants and supporting social inclusion with a view to increase the levels of new housing stock and a goal of ending homelessness by 2030.

As outlined in the Meath County Council Statement on Standards for Emergency Accommodation Supplied by the Private Sector (adopted November 2020) the Council endeavours to ensure a sufficient provision of quality emergency accommodation across the various models of provision, which will include facilities provided by both Non-Government Organisations & the Private Sector. While ideally all Emergency Accommodation providers should have such facilities, this is simply not possible given the crisis and levels of homelessness which the country is currently experiencing and the consequent reliance on Bed and Breakfast type properties. However, provision in the context of Family Hubs, Own Front Door Emergency Accommodation, Housing First, Shared Accommodation, Licence Agreements etc. recognises the priority around appropriate facilities for families with children and homeless single people and couples and the provision of same in recent years as a strategic priority. Other providers such as Simon, Drogheda Homeless Aid, Shared Housing and certain Emergency Accommodation providers have such facilities available for use.

Meath County Council will continue to endeavour to attain the highest quality of emergency accommodation in line with the aforementioned policy frameworks and will seek expressions of interest from Emergency Accommodation providers who have access to facilities for users. It is also proposed that the Settlement Office will conduct a review of all current Emergency Accommodation providers to confirm the level of facilities which are available to all users. Settlement Officers will continue to work closely with providers to encourage the provision of necessary facilities.



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The Council's goal remains to ensure entry into Emergency Accommodation is a short-term solution and it will continue to encourage exits from such accommodation through Placefinder support, HAP System, Housing First, Social Housing Tenancy, Shared Accommodation Licence etc.

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Aisling O'Neill**. There were a number of interventions by elected members in support of the premise of the motion, though concerns were raised with the specific wording of the motion itself. Contributions were made by **Councillors Michael Gallagher, Alan Lawes; Nick Killian; Aisling Dempsey; Paddy Meade; Gerry O'Connor** and **Damien O'Reilly**. **An Cathaoirleach** proposed an amendment, which was seconded by **Councillor Gillian Toole** and agreed as follows:

"Given that emergency accommodation is being used for periods far longer than anticipated in what is accepted as a housing crisis, the Elected Members ask that Meath County Council ensures that, where practicable, all emergency accommodation has cooking and laundry facilities so that the people accessing emergency accommodation do not have to use their limited resources on eating out and using launderettes."

Mr. Barry Lynch reaffirmed the commitment of the Housing Authority to conduct a review of all current Emergency Accommodation providers to confirm the level of facilities which are available to all users.

The motion, as amended, was proposed by **Councillor Aisling O'Neill**, seconded by **Councillor Michael Gallagher** and agreed.

10 General Interest Motions

There were no General Interest Motions

11 Schedule of Chief Executive & Approved Orders (For Information Only)

Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Transportation

Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Environment

Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Housing

Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Community & Enterprise

Noted by Elected Members.

12 Any Other Business

Councillor Alan Lawes raised a concern regarding two cases of homelessness within the county. There were interventions from **Councillors Gillian Toole; Michael Gallagher, Noel French; Tom Behan; Aisling O'Neill** and **Maria Murphy**.

Mr. Barry Lynch advised that while he couldn't discuss the specifics of the individual cases, that emergency measures put in place during Covid-19 no longer applied and the Council apply the



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provisions of the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011. **An Cathaoirleach** suggested that the Housing Authority seek further clarification from the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

An Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Robert Collins on his term as Meetings Administrator and welcomed his replacement Ms. Elaine Daly.