



Miontuairiscí/ Meeting Minutes

Ordinary Meeting

3rd October 2022 @ 1.30p.m.

Solstice Theatre, Navan (and online via zoom)

Presiding

Councillor Nick Killian, An Cathaoirleach

Councillors Present:

Councillors Joseph Bonner, Eugene Cassidy, Francis Deane, Aisling Dempsey, Sean Drew, Edward Fennessy, Brian Fitzgerald, Joe Fox, Noel French, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy, Trevor Golden, Wayne Harding, Alan Lawes, Paddy Meade, Maria Murphy, Gerry O'Connor, Damien O'Reilly, Tommy Reilly, Amanda Smith, Alan Tobin, Gillian Toole.

Councillors Present via Zoom:

Councillors Yemi Adenuga, Tom Behan, Padraig Fitzsimons, Deirdre Geraghty-Smith, Suzanne Jamal, Geraldine Keogan, Paul McCabe, Elaine McGinty, Stephen McKee, Ronan Moore, Aisling O'Neill, Sarah Reilly, Niamh Souhan, Emer Toibin, Sharon Tolan, Conor Tormey.

Apologies:

Councillor Mike Bray

Officials in attendance:

Chief Executive: Jackie Maguire

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

Meetings Administrator: Elaine Daly

Financial Management Accountant: Margaret Clarke

Senior Executive Planner: Billy Joe Padden

Executive Planner: Frank O'Donnell

1 Confirmation of Minutes

Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 5th September 2022.

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 5th September 2022 were confirmed on the proposal of

Councillor Tommy Reilly and seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade**.

2 Matters arising from the Minutes

Councillor Gillian Toole raised a matter under item 7.5. She noted that she had requested that Bus Éireann, Irish Rail and the NTA be requested to attend a tripartite meeting with the Council.

Councillor Elaine McGinty noted that a response had not yet been received from the Minister for the Environment, Climate, Communications and Transport, Minister Eamon Ryan in relation to item 7.2 and she asked that a reminder letter be issued.

3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations



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Expressions of Sympathy were extended to the following:

Veronica Quinn, Finance Department on the death of her mother, Monica McConnon.

Claudine Shortall, Housing Department on the death of her father, Gregory Duffy.

Catherine Dowdall, Transportation on the death of her mother, Elizabeth (Betty) Anderson.

To the family of the late Jonathan Flanagan.

To the family of the late Peadar Newman, Navan.

3.1 Congratulations were extended to the following:

Councillor Mike Bray on his marriage to Maureen Farrell.

Councillors Nick Killian and Joe Fox on the excellent AILG conference in Trim.

Mr. Fintan Bray, the first person with Down Syndrome to be elected to a senior position in a political party in Ireland.

Dunshaughlin Youths FC and Dunshaughlin Athletics Club on the opening of their new 14 acre Sports Campus at the Willows, Dunshaughlin.

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 0.6490 Ha of land at Roestown, Dunshaughlin, 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 August 2022, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Gillian Toole**.

4.2 Disposal of 0.2876 Ha of land at Hermitage, Moynalty, Kells, Co Meath, in accordance with Section 211 of Planning & Development Act 2000 and subject to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

The disposal, in accordance with the statutory notice issued on 18th August 2022, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding**.

4.3 Disposal of 0.0173 Ha of land at Bailis, Athlumney, 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.



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The disposal, in accordance with the statutory notice issued on 28th July 2022, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of Councillor Edward Fennessy and seconded by Councillor Francis Deane.

4.4 Disposal of 0.0124 Ha of land at Mullaghboy, 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 26th July 2022 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Edward Fennessy** and seconded by **Councillor Francis Deane**.

4.5 Disposal of 0.3172 Ha of land at Corporation Land 3rd Division / Eamonn Duggan Industrial Estate, Trim, 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 19th August 2022, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Joe Fox** and seconded by **Councillor Noel French**.

Councillor Gillian Toole queried the details in relation to the disposal of land. Responses to the queries raised were provided by the Chief Executive.

4.6 Disposal of 0.0031 Ha of land at Johnstown Road/Glen Abhainn Avenue, Enfield, 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 28th July 2022, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Joe Fox** and seconded by **Councillor Trevor Golden**.

5 Statutory Business

5.1 Planning

5.1.1 To receive a presentation on Planning for Solar Farms in County Meath.

The Chief Executive introduced Mr. Frank O'Donnell, Executive Planner and Mr. Billy Joe Padden, Senior Executive Planner. She noted that the presentation was arranged at the request of the elected members. Mr. O'Donnell provided details of the number of planning applications that had been granted for solar farms throughout the County. He outlined some of the planning and environmental matters that are considered as part of the planning application process.



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There were interventions from **Councillors Noel French; Trevor Golden; Michael Gallagher; Gillian Toole; Aisling O'Neill; Alan Tobin; Alan Lawes; Joe Bonner; Ronan Moore; Paddy Meade; David Gilroy; Elaine McGinty; Brian Fitzgerald; Sean Drew; Eugene Cassidy; Gerry O'Connor and An Cathaoirleach**. Queries raised included the volume of planning appeals, connection applications to Eirgrid, appropriate land use, The Community Benefit Fund and the retention of hedgerows. Responses to queries raised were provided by Mr. Billy Joe Padden.

5.2 Corporate Affairs and Governance

5.2.1 To receive a presentation on proposed Council Chamber, Buvinda.

Mr. Martin Murray introduced Ms. Karen McEvoy and Mr. Merritt Bucholz of Bucholz McEvoy Architects. He noted that the planning application for the proposed new development of a council chamber and office space would be submitted to An Bord Pleanála over the coming weeks and that the planning process could take approximately 6 – 9 months.

Ms. McEvoy and Mr. Bucholz outlined the plans for the proposed new council chamber and office space which included details of the structure of the proposed new chamber and how it would incorporate into the existing structure. There were interventions from **Councillors Ronan Moore; Noel French; Gerry O'Connor; Maria Murphy; Gillian Toole; Paddy Meade; Yemi Adenuga; Paul McCabe and An Cathaoirleach**. Queries raised concerned the anticipated time frame for delivery and the funding for the project. Responses to queries raised were provided by Mr. Martin Murray, Ms. Fiona Lawless and Mr. Merritt Bucholz. The Chief Executive thanked the members of the sub-group of the council for their commitment to the project.

5.2.2 To receive a verbal update from the Meath Women's Caucus.

Councillor Maria Murphy, Chair of Meath Women's Caucus, provided a verbal update to the activities of the Meath Women's Caucus. She noted that the caucus was launched in April and a Terms of Reference had been agreed. She further noted that the members had met several times over the summer months and that plans were being prepared for an Autumn meeting and training events.

5.2.3 To receive a presentation on proposed temporary chamber, Buvinda

Mr. Dara McGowan gave a presentation to the members regarding the proposals for a temporary chamber. He noted that the Solstice Theatre was fully operational following the Covid pandemic and that the use of the Theatre for Council meetings was no longer sustainable. The difficulties with hosting a hybrid meeting in the Council Chamber in County Hall, as well as details of the proposed works in Buvinda were also outlined.

There were interventions of support from **Councillors Alan Tobin, Michael Gallagher; Paddy Meade; Yemi Adenuga; Paul McCabe; Damien O'Reilly; Maria Murphy and An Cathaoirleach**. Responses to queries raised were provided by Mr. Dara McGowan. On the proposal of **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade** it was unanimously agreed that the monthly council meetings would take place in Buvinda, with effect from February 2023.

5.3 Finance



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5.3.1 To consider the 3 Year Capital Programme 2023 - 2025, under S.135 of the Local Government Act 2001.

In accordance with Section 135 of the Local Government Act 2001, the Head of Finance presented the Capital Investment Programme 2023 – 2025 to the elected members. She noted that the capital investment programme gave priority to capital works on Meath County Council assets, project of strategic importance, projects where external funding sources can be leveraged and projects that provide for job creation. She further outlined the salient points in relation to the proposed overall spend of almost €605m, which included inter alia provisions for Housing and Building, Road Transportation and Safety, and Environmental Protection.

A number of elected members spoke in response to the presentation. These included **Councillors Gerry O'Connor; Joe Fox; Eddie Fennessy; Emer Tóibín; Elaine McGinty; Aisling O'Neill; Sara Reilly; Sean Drew; Paddy Meade; Michael Gallagher; Maria Murphy; Noel French; David Gilroy; Sharon Tolan; Eugene Cassidy; Gillian Toole; Wayne Harding; Yemi Adenuga; Damien O'Reilly and An Cathaoirleach**. The elected members welcomed the ambitious capital programme and thanked the Head of Finance and the Finance Staff for their diligence in the preparation of the programme. Responses to queries raised were provided by Ms. Fiona Lawless, Mr. Barry Lynch, Mr. Martin Murray, Mr. Dara McGowan, Mr. Des Foley and the Chief Executive.

5.4 Community

5.4.1 To approve the allocations under the Community Amenity Scheme as recommended by the Members of each of the Municipal Districts at the September Municipal District meetings.

In advance of the item being considered the following elected members declared a potential conflict of interest:

- **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** in relation to his involvement with Dunshaughlin Community Centre CLG;
- **Councillor Sharon Tolan** due to her husband's involvement with Bettystown Tidy Towns Group;
- **Councillor Joe Fox** in relation to his involvement with Summerhill Tidy Towns Group;
- **Councillor Alan Tobin** in relation to his involvement with Garden City and Crestwood Residents Association;
- **Councillor Amanda Smith** in relation to her involvement with Duleek Revival Group.

The elected members absented themselves from the meeting for the duration of the discussion of this item.

There were interventions from **Councillors Gillian Toole; Trevor Golden; Paddy Meade; Noel French and Maria Murphy**. Queries raised included whether it was appropriate for declarations of interest to be made at MD meetings and it was agreed that the matter would be referred to the Protocol



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Committee for clarification. It was also proposed that the scheme should be reviewed, and it was agreed that the matter would be referred to the Housing and Community SPC.

On the proposal of **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** and seconded by **Councillor Tommy Reilly** the allocations under the Community Amenity Scheme were approved. **Councillor Paddy Meade** was not in agreement.

On a proposal from **Councillor Trevor Golden** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Fox** it was agreed to take a 30-minute extension to 6.30pm.

6 Reports

6.1 Chief Executive's Report

There were interventions from Councillors Trevor Golden; Gillian Toole; Alan Lawes; Damien O'Reilly; Paul McCabe; Sarah Reilly and An Cathaoirleach. The issues raised included:

Tourism: The Púca Festival;

Transportation: Footpath improvement works;

Community: JPC vacancies;

Housing: Increased homeless figures and age profile in emergency accommodation; EOIs for purchase of land and turnkey developments; Adaptation grants;

Planning: In-person pre-planning meetings.

Responses to queries raised were provided by Mr. Barry Lynch, Mr. Martin Murray, 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 September 30, 2022 and reviewed the agenda for the October Council meeting. Notices of Motion not included on the Agenda were noted by the members of the CPG.

The arrangements for the CPG meeting in November were noted and it was agreed that the CPG meeting would take place at 11.00am on 11th November 2022. This meeting will be held in hybrid format and the whips will also be invited to attend. The members of the CPG were advised that the annual mass will take place after the Council Meeting on 14th November in Buvinda.

The arrangements for the December Council meeting were noted. The meeting will take place in the European Commission premises in Kiltale. The meeting will be in-person only and will commence at



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11.00am with a presentation and a tour of the premises. Lunch will be provided, and the Council meeting will take place at 1.30pm in the large meeting room.

6.3 Report from the Protocol Committee

The Meetings Administrator reported that the Protocol Committee met on Monday morning October 3, 2022.

The meeting arrangements for the December meeting, as previously outlined, were noted. Mr. Tommy Moylan, AILG gave a presentation to the members of the Protocol Committee outlining the provisions of the recent Directions issued under Regulation 17 of the Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations 2021 (S.I. No. 313 of 2021) by the Minister of State with special responsibility for Local Government and Planning. The Meetings Administrator advised the members that she would be in contact with them individually via email in relation to their own expenses and allowances.

The conference and training schedules were approved and circulated to the elected members.

6.3.1 To approve recommendation from the Protocol Committee

Following a recommendation from The Protocol Committee and on the proposal of **Councillor David Gilroy** and seconded by **Councillor Trevor Golden** it was agreed that a commemorative plaque would be installed at Mellow's Terrace in Navan, which was named to honour William (Liam) Mellows.

7 Correspondence

An Cathaoirleach noted that a response from the HSE had been received, in relation to Notice of Motion, Item No. 10.5 of the September Council Meeting, and the contents of the correspondence were noted. There were interventions from **Councillors Paddy Meade; Emer Toibin; Gillian Toole; Edward Fennessy; Joe Bonner; David Gilroy** and **Trevor Golden**. On the proposal of **Councillor Gillian Toole** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Bonner** it was agreed that a response would issue from An Cathaoirleach outlining the dissatisfaction of the elected members to the contents of the correspondence and the alleged contradictory information from Minister Stephen Donnelly, Minister for Health.

7.1 Correspondence from Minister for Health in response to Notice of Motion 10.3 agreed at the June 2022 meeting of the full Council re. Our Lady's Hospital, Navan.

Noted by the Elected Members.

7.2 Correspondence from Irish Rail in response to Item 7.5 agreed at the September 2022 meeting of the full Council re. request for Irish Rail to meet with some members of Meath County Council in relation to car parking at Dunboyne train station.

Councillor Damien O'Reilly expressed his dissatisfaction with the contents of the correspondence.



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Noted by the Elected Members

7.3 Circular LG 05/2022 – Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage re. Allowances and Expenses of Elected Members.

Noted by the Elected Members

7.4 Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage re. Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund: Ready to Build Scheme (Serviced Sites for New Homes).

Councillor Joe Fox welcomed the Scheme.

Noted by the Elected Members

7.5 East Border Region Ltd – Funding for Meath County Council.

Councillor Trevor Golden welcomed the correspondence

Noted by the Elected Members

8 Notice of Question

8.1 Submitted by Councillor Noel French

“What progress has the council made with regard to addressing period poverty?”

Response

The Council has entered into an agreement with the Dept. of Health as part of the Healthy Ireland Programme to pilot a Period Poverty Project. We identified 10 locations across the county, including libraries, civic offices and one resource centre and we are currently monitoring the uptake in each of these locations. We are also preparing a social media campaign to increase awareness of the service. Once the pilot scheme is complete the learnings will be used to roll out the scheme to other locations if appropriate.

Noted by the Elected Members.

8.2 Submitted by Councillor Damien O'Reilly

“Can Meath County Council provide in tabular format, per Municipal District, the number of Meath council houses / units, Peter McVerry Trust, manages or provides support to within the county?”

	Settlement	TLO	Family HUB	Housing First	Total
Navan	13	5	2	16	36
Kells	5	3	0	1	9
Laytown & Bettystown	5	3		2	10

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			0		
Ashbourne	1	1	0	0	2
Ratoath	0	2	0	2	4
Trim	2	1	0	1	4
Total	26	15	2	22	65

Councillor Damien O'Reilly sought clarification in relation to the figures and it was agreed that Mr. Barry Lynch would revert with a response directly to Councillor O'Reilly.

8.3 Submitted by Councillor Michael Gallagher

"What is the extra cost to the Council to have to the monthly Hybrid meeting in the Solstice compared to the meeting in the Council Chamber?"

Response

The introduction of the hybrid meetings in Solstice Theatre was arranged on an interim basis to meet the requirements of social distancing guidelines in place at that time.

The additional cost associated with Hybrid Council meetings in the Solstice Theatre is approximately €4,000 per meeting. This includes the costs to commission and decommission all of the equipment including microphones, projectors, screens and the stage set-up, as well as administrative costs to run the hybrid meeting.

Noted by the Elected Members.

8.4 Submitted by Councillor Paul McCabe

"To ask the number of parking fines issued on behalf of Meath County Council for the years 2019, 2020, 2021 and so far in 2022, in what town and how many fines remain unpaid, and how many Court cases have been taken for unpaid parking fines during the same period?"

Response

The table below shows the total number of fines, number of unpaid fines and number of cases listed for court proceedings for the years 2019, 2020, 2021 Jan to July 2022 for all three towns. Meath County Council has a fine management system supplied by Apcoa for County Meath. Fine numbers are not unique to each town. Consequently, the requested data per town is not currently available however, the Transportation Department has requested a breakdown per town from Apcoa and will forward the data to Cllr Mc Cabe as soon as we receive it.



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For information, the numbers of fines and court cases were lower in 2020, on account of Covid 19 restrictions.

	2019	2020	2021	January to July 2022
Number of Fines issued	10,132	8,443	11,431	7,558
Number of Fines unpaid	2,265	2,817	2,989	2,652
Number of Court Cases	561	337	533	745

8.5 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín

"To ask Meath County Council to outline its Social Media Policy on foot of significant disappointment that it did not seek to support and disseminate information to the people of Meath about a public protest gathering, organised by Save Navan Hospital Committee.

Response

The Council's social media Policy was developed by the LGMA and adapted for use by Meath County Council. The policy ensures that the Council adopts a responsible approach to managing the use of social media platforms and channels for the purpose of conducting County Council business. This policy states that the social media content shall meet the acceptable standard for Council conduct and should not include content that does not relate to the functions of the Local Authority.

Councillor Emer Tóibín sought clarification in relation to the role of the LGMA in the preparation of the document. A response was provided by Mr. Dara McGowan.

Noted by the Elected Members.

8.6 Submitted by Councillor Trevor Golden

"In tabular form, the total number of properties provided by Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) and Meath County Council. This information is sought for each of the last 4 years (2018, 19, 20 & 21)."

	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
HAP Properties	755	699	725	525	2704
AHB Properties	222	182	254	242	900
Meath Co Co Properties	179	258	300	290	1027
	1156	1139	1279	1057	4631

Noted by the Elected Members.



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9 Notice of Motion

9.1 Submitted by Councillor Paul McCabe

‘That Meath County Council calls on the Minister for the Environment Eamon Ryan TD to immediately increase the penalties laid out in the Litter Pollution Act 1997 (as amended in 2017) for persons found to be carrying out illegal dumping to: €1500 for first offence; €3000 for second offence & €5000 for any subsequent offence.’

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

The definition of litter is contained within the Litter Pollution Act 1997 (as amended) and refers to the deposition of a substance or object in a public place which is or is likely to become unsightly, deleterious, nauseous or unsanitary.

Litter has many forms and sources from a street wrapper thrown on the street, cigarette ends, empty bottles, dog fouling etc and generally is of a casual nature and rarely premeditated unlike the illegal dumping of waste which may often be planned and may involve participation or connivance of landowners. The 1997 Acts provides for an on the spot fine of €150 or a maximum fine of €4000 if convicted in the District Court.

Most illegal dumping cases and involving larger volumes of waste material are dealt with and prosecuted under the Waste Management legislation and particularly under Section 14, 18 & 55/56 of the Waste Management Act 1996 (as amended) - such prosecutions may be tried summarily in the District Court but In the case of serious environmental crime, these may be at Circuit Court or High Court level to ensure that the sanction is commensurate with the crime.

Persons who are found to be responsible for, or involved in, the unauthorised disposal of waste are liable to a maximum fine of €5,000 on summary conviction and/or imprisonment for up to 12 months, and to a maximum fine of €15 million on conviction on indictment and/or imprisonment for up to 10 years.

Councillor Paul McCabe agreed to defer this matter to the November Council Meeting.

9.2 Submitted by Councillor Maria Murphy

“We call on the Minister for Rural & Community Development Heather Humphreys to commence a review of the CLÁR Scheme.”

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



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A review of CLÁR areas nationally was undertaken in 2021 using the 2016 Census of Population data. The review examined the most recent changes in population patterns throughout the country on the basis of 2016 Census data. It also examined the approach to developing the existing CLÁR designations, which is based on 2002 data and it considered how changes in population since then impacted on designations.

The details of the review are currently being considered by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

The motion, proposed by **Councillor Maria Murphy** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin** was agreed.

10 General Interest Motions

10.1 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín

“That Meath County Council supports the redrafting of the Work Life Balance Bill to include the words woman, female and mother, in the clauses that relate to maternity protections.”

Councillor Emer Tóibín agreed to defer this matter to the November Council Meeting.

10.2 Submitted by Councillor Trevor Golden and Councillor Alan Tobin

“Meath County Council calls on the Government to amend the Electricity Regulation Act and associated legislation to allow for the consideration and possible implementation of nuclear power generation in Ireland.”

Councillors Trevor Golden and **Alan Tobin** agreed to defer this matter to the November Council Meeting.

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 the Elected Members.

12 Any Other Business

Councillor Emer Tóibín queried the considerations given to undertaking road works at night. A response to the query was provided by Mr. Martin Murray.