



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Ordinary Meeting

5th December 2022 @ 1.30p.m.

European Commission Offices, Grange, Co. Meath

Presiding

An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Nick Killian

Councillors Present:

Councillors Yemi Adenuga, Tom Behan, Joe Bonner, Mike Bray, Eugene Cassidy, Francis Deane, Aisling Dempsey, Sean Drew, Brian Fitzgerald, Pdraig Fitzsimons, Joe Fox, Noel French, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy, Trevor Golden, Wayne Harding, Geraldine Keogan, Alan Lawes, Paul McCabe, Elaine McGinty, Paddy Meade, Ronan Moore, Maria Murphy, Gerry O'Connor, Damien O'Reilly, Sarah Reilly, Tommy Reilly, Amanda Smith, Niamh Souhan, Alan Tobin, Emer Tóibín, Sharon Tolan, Gillian Toole, Conor Tormey.

Apologies:

Councillors Edward Fennessy; Deirdre Geraghty-Smith; Suzanne Jamal; Stephen McKee and Aisling O'Neill.

Officials in attendance:

Deputy Chief Executive: Barry Lynch

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

Meetings Administrator: Elaine Daly

Planning Staff: Pdraig Maguire, Senior Planner; Alan Russell, Senior Executive Planner

Apologies: Jackie Maguire, Chief Executive

Maria Pilar Aguar Fernandez, Director of Health and Food Audits and Analysis welcomed the Elected Members and officials of the Council to the European Commission Headquarters. **An Cathaoirleach** thanked Ms. Aguar Fernandez for the invitation and for her hospitality. He acknowledged the fine facility that was nestled in the heart of the Kiltale countryside.

1 Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 14th November 2022

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 14th November 2022 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Elaine McGinty**.



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1.2 Confirmation of minutes of Preliminary Budget meeting held on 28th November 2022

The minutes of the Preliminary Budget meeting held on 28th November 2022 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons**.

1.3 Confirmation of minutes of Statutory Budget meeting held on 28th November 2022

The minutes of the Statutory Budget meeting held on 28th November 2022 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Mike Bray** and seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding**.

2 Matters arising from the Minutes

Councillor Francis Deane expressed his disappointment in the correspondence received from Minister Burke's Office in relation to item 7.3 which was in response to Notice of Motion 9.1 adopted at the September Council meeting. There were interventions from **Councillors Pdraig Fitzsimons; Trevor Golden** and **Paddy Meade**. It was agreed that a list of planning permissions that were due to expire within the next twelve months would be forwarded to the Elected Members for their information.

Councillor Sharon Tolan noted a clerical error in relation to Motion 10.4. The Meetings Administrator advised that she would correct the error on the published minutes.

Councillor Gillian Toole noted Approved Officers Order No. AO17583/22 and she asked that it be considered to extend the watering of hanging baskets to all areas of the county. She also asked that the minutes of meeting should include more detail relating to the discussions held.

Responses to queries raised were provided by Mr. Martin Murray and Mr. Dara McGowan.

3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

3.1 Expressions of Sympathy

Expressions of Sympathy were extended to:

The family of the late Maria Kealy, former Meath footballer and coach;

The family of the late Christopher (Christy) Smyth, former employee and uncle of Emmet Smyth, Environment Section;

To the family of the late Joe Mannering, former employee of Dunshaughlin Area Office;

The Owen Heaney, former Councillor on the death of his wife Rita.

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 0.5370 Ha of land at Wotton, The Ward, Ashbourne, Co Meath, in accordance with Section 211 of Planning & Development Act 2000 and subject to the provisions of



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Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

In advance of this item being considered, **Councillor Conor Tormey** declared a potential conflict of interest due to a previous business relationship with the family. Councillor Tormey absented himself from the meeting for the duration of the discussion of this item.

The disposal, in accordance with the statutory notice issued on Councillor September 22, 2022, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Maria Murphy** and seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade**.

5 Statutory Business

5.1 Corporate Affairs and Governance

5.1.1 To approve the 2023 Protocol for the Municipal District Allocation Scheme.

Mr. Dara McGowan presented the revised document to the Elected Members and outlined the proposed changes for the 2023 Scheme. **Councillor Gillian Toole** suggested that as the funds were provided through proceeds from Local Property Tax that this should be referenced in promotional material relating to projects benefitting from the Scheme. Mr. McGowan agreed to include this provision in the Scheme.

On the proposal of **Councillor Gillian Toole** and seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade** the Protocol for the Municipal District Allocation Scheme 2023 was approved.

5.2 Planning

5.2.1 To receive a presentation on the Annual Monitoring Report of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027.

Mr. Alan Russell, Senior Executive Planner outlined the legislative context for the monitoring of the County Development Plan. He further presented the key analysis of the Annual Core Strategy and Commercial Monitoring for year one of the County Development Plan. He demonstrated the online monitoring tool to track the delivery of housing as measured against the County's core strategies.

There were interventions and queries from **Councillors Alan Tobin; Brian Fitzgerald; Sean Drew; Paddy Meade; Gillian Toole; Maria Murphy; Ronan Moore; Gerry O'Connor; Elaine McGinty; Joe Fox; Damien O'Reilly; Tommy Reilly; Pdraig Fitzsimons; Eugene Cassidy and An Cathaoirleach.**

Issues raised included: the impact of the recent census figures; judicial reviews; Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy; rural nodes; speculative developers and the role of the Office of the Planning Regulator. The Elected Members welcomed the new online monitoring tool. Responses to queries raised were provided by Mr. Des Foley and Mr. Pdraig Maguire. Mr. Foley noted that the two-year review will also monitor compliance with the objectives of the County Development Plan.

5.3 Community



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- 5.3.1 To receive details and approve the allocation under the Knockharley Environmental Community Projects Scheme, as recommended by the Knockharley Community Liaison Committee and endorsed by the Ashbourne Municipal District Councillors on 15th November 2022.**

The Knockharley Environmental Community Projects Scheme was approved and agreed unanimously on the proposal of **Councillor Alan Tobin**, seconded by **Councillor Conor Tormey**.

5.4 Finance

- 5.4.1 To note the Quarterly Financial Statement as at 30th September 2022.**

The Elected Members noted the Quarterly Financial Statement.

6 Reports

6.1 Chief Executive's Report;

There were interventions from the following Elected Members: **Councillors Gillian Toole; Alan Tobin; Maria Murphy; Elaine McGinty; Emer Tóibín; Damien O'Reilly** and **An Cathaoirleach**. The issues raised included:

Housing: Tabor House facility for women; age profile of Homeless clients; standards in rental accommodation;

Community: Women's safety matters

Corporate Governance: Venue for Council meetings

Responses to queries raised were provided by Mr. Barry Lynch and Mr. Dara McGowan.

6.2 Report from the Corporate Policy Group

The Meetings Administrator reported that the CPG met on Friday December 2, 2022, and reviewed the agenda for the December Council Meeting. The practical arrangements for the presentation at the EC Offices in Kiltale and the subsequent Council Meeting were noted.

It was further noted that the council had received a circular in relation to increased payments to the elected members in line with the recent pay agreement and payment would be made to the Elected Members in the new year.

The report was noted by the Elected Members.

6.3 Report from the Protocol Committee

The Meetings Administrator reported that the Protocol Committee met on Friday December 2, 2022. It was noted that the Local Representation Allowance remains as a standing item on the agenda. The



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Elected Members were advised that an email would issue to them individually to request confirmation of the amount of LRA that would be seeking in 2023. The Meetings Administrator further advised that the Conferences and Training Schedules were agreed and would be circulated to the Elected Members.

There were interventions from **Councillors Ronan Moore; Trevor Golden** and **An Cathaoirleach**.

The report was noted by the Elected Members.

7 Correspondence

7.1 Housing Circular 43/2022 – Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage re. Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant.

The correspondence was noted by the Elected Members

Councillor Gillian Toole noted that a response had not yet been received in relation to correspondence requesting a tripartite meeting between the NTA, Bus Eireann and Irish Rail. Mr. Martin Murray agreed to follow up with the NTA at their next quarterly meeting in the new year.

8 Notice of Question

8.1 Submitted by Councillor Edward Fennessy

"To ask the Chief Executive to set out the current Council policy and practice regarding human rights compliance in procurement (including divestment if required due to human rights violations)"

Response

Meath County Council's Procurement Policy incorporates the provision of Article 57 of the Public Sector Directive 2014/24/EU on Public Procurement. This article requires tendering companies to submit declarations with regard to "Child labour and other forms of trafficking in human beings" Art 57.1.(f). Meath County Council's Corporate Plan and Policy documents make references to social considerations when tendering for contracts.

Tenderers are also required to sign and declare that they are compliant with all relevant Irish employment and Health and Safety Legislation. They are also responsible for the compliance of any subcontractors that may be used in delivering the contract.

Noted by the Elected Members

8.2 Submitted by Councillor Damien O'Reilly



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“I request Meath County Council to provide in tabular format, per municipal district for the previous three years, the amount of social housing applicants that have refused offers of council housing across the county.”

Response

The table below set out the refusals of offers of social housing per Municipal District for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022 year to date. In January 2022, the Council introduced Choice Based Lettings, and this has had a very positive impact on the overall rate of refusal from 33% in 2021 to 10.3% in 2022.

For properties allocated via Choice Based Lettings the refusal rate is 5.3% in 2022.

REFUSALS PER MD	2020	2021	2022 to date
Ashbourne	13	12	0
Kells	75	35	10
Laytown - Bettystown	6	4	19
Navan	43	21	11
Ratoath	52	29	4
Trim	22	15	0
Grand Total	211	116	44

Noted by the Elected Members

9 Notice of Motion

9.1 Submitted by Councillor Damien O’Reilly

“I call on Meath County Council to launch a Start Box Initiative, following the Dublin City Council model in partnership with the Irish Athletic Boxing Association to increase boxing participation across county Meath for young people.”

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

Meath Local Sports Partnership developed the Box Smart (as it was originally known) programme almost 10 years ago which was subsequently replicated by Dublin City Council. The Sports Partnership has rolled this programme out over different years with varying degrees of success. Success and sustainability of the programme is very dependent on the ability of the local boxing club to assist with the programme. The local boxing club is required to provide coaches and time within their club for the roll out of



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the programme and in exchange for that commitment, Meath LSP provides a grant to the club.

It is noted that there is only as small number of boxing clubs in Meath and those that are in existence are apparently at capacity and are challenged in terms of volunteers and coaches. MLSP is currently attempting to get a programme up and running for girls – both through the secondary school route and the School Completion Programme. Before MLSP is in a position to run this programme, capacity issues within the clubs may need to be addressed.

Working with the local club is critical to the success of the programme. Once the initial 6-week programme is complete, the pathway to continue boxing has to be developed and agreed with the club, otherwise rolling out such programmes will not be successful.

The Sports Partnership is willing to engage with interested parties on how this programme might be progressed.

Councillor Damien O'Reilly introduced the motion and noted his satisfaction with the response as outlined.

The motion, proposed by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly**, and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin**, was agreed.

10 General Interest Motions

10.1 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín (Deferred from October and November Meetings)

“That Meath County Council calls on the Government to copper fasten women's identity in all future legislation pertaining to women's rights and words like woman, maternal and womanhood are never diluted, diminished or deleted from laws or regulations going forward.”

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Emer Tóibín** and seconded by **Councillor David Gilroy** and introduced by **Councillor Tóibín**. She noted that she had originally submitted the motion as words referencing 'woman' and 'womanhood' had been removed from the Work Life Balance Bill, though she noted that the Bill had been amended to include these and similar words.

There were interventions of support from **Councillors Paddy Meade; David Gilroy; Elaine McGinty; Amanda Smith; Gillian Toole** and **Geraldine Keogan**. However, interventions from **Councillors Ronan Moore; Maria Murphy; Yemi Adenuga; Pdraig Fitzsimons; Aisling Dempsey; Gerry O'Connor; Tom Behan** and **Joe Bonner** expressed some concern and confusion around the inferences of the motion.



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It was agreed to refer the matter for consideration at the next meeting of the Protocol Committee.

10.2 Submitted by Councillor Trevor Golden and Councillor Alan Tobin (Deferred from October and November Meetings)

“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.”

Councillor Trevor Golden introduced the motion, stating that the purpose of the motion was to have an honest debate about nuclear energy and its possible role in the transition to low carbon electricity generation. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Alan Tobin; Ronan Moore; Gerry O’Connor; Brian Fitzgerald; Michael Gallagher** and **Gillian Toole**. Some reservations were expressed by **Councillor Elaine McGinty**.

The motion, proposed by **Councillor Trevor Golden**, and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin** was agreed. It was also agreed to circulate the motion to all other Local Authorities.

10.3 Submitted by Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons (Deferred from November meeting)

“I propose the motion to write to the Minister of Transport to introduce new legislation regarding the use of scooters, electric bicycles and bicycles on our roads. I refer in particular to speed control, licensing, lights, use of high viz attire and helmets and penalties for speeding on footpaths.”

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons** and seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade** and introduced by **Councillor Fitzsimons**. There was support for the premise of the motion from **Councillors Trevor Golden; Paddy Meade; Tom Behan; Gillian Toole; David Gilroy; Ronan Moore; Brian Fitzgerald; Alan Tobin** and **Yemi Adenuga**, although concern was raised regarding the inclusion of bicycles in the motion as the Council did not want to discourage active travel.

Mr. Martin Murray noted that the Road Traffic and Roads Bill 2021 is currently before Seanad Éireann, and if enacted will address the classification of e-scooters as “powered personal transporters”. He advised that he would have to wait for the primary legislation to be finalised before reviewing whether or not local Bye-Laws would be required.

Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons noted the comments and agreed to defer the matter until the legislation had been finalised.

On a proposal from Councillor Paul McCabe and seconded by Councillor Tom Behan it was agreed to take a 30-minute extension to 6.30pm.

10.4 Submitted by Councillor Michael Gallagher



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“That Meath County Council calls on the Minister for Transport to intervene to stop the maximum increase in the Toll charges across the state.”

It was agreed to defer this matter to the February Council Meeting.

10.5 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín

“That Meath County Council invites the Minister for Justice to attend the next Council meeting to discuss crime, anti-social behaviour, and Garda staff numbers in the county.

It was agreed to defer this matter to the February 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 noted that the HSE were due to implement an ambulance by-pass of Navan Emergency Dept. which was due to commence on December 12, 2022. She noted that 17 consultants of Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital had written to the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly in which they stated that they could not stand over any planned reconfiguration of Navan Hospital until the HSE can guarantee adequate staffing and infrastructure would be put in place. She asked that the Council write to the Minister for Health to ask him to immediately reverse his decision to implement the ambulance by-pass of Navan Emergency Dept.

There were interventions of support from **Councillors Elaine McGinty; Paddy Meade; Gillian Toole; Michael Gallagher; Damien O’Reilly; Joe Bonner; Brian Fitzgerald; Pdraig Fitzsimons; Mike Bray and An Cathaoirleach.** It was agreed that correspondence would issue to the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly and a copy would issue to the Oireachtas Members representing County Meath.