



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Ordinary Meeting

30th January 2023 @ 1.30p.m.

Solstice Theatre, Navan (and online via zoom)

Presiding

An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Nick Killian

Councillors Present:

Councillors Yemi Adenuga, Joseph Bonner, Mike Bray, Eugene Cassidy, Francis Deane, Sean Drew, Edward Fennessy, Brian Fitzgerald, Pdraig Fitzsimons, Joe Fox, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy, Trevor Golden, Wayne Harding, Suzanne Jamal, Alan Lawes, Paul McCabe, Paddy Meade, Ronan Moore, Maria Murphy, Gerry O'Connor, Damien O'Reilly, Sarah Reilly, Tommy Reilly, Amanda Smith, Alan Tobin, Emer Tóibín, Gillian Toole.

Councillors Present via Zoom:

Councillors Tom Behan, Aisling Dempsey, Noel French, Deirdre Geraghty-Smith, Geraldine Keogan, Elaine McGinty, Stephen McKee, Aisling O'Neill, Niamh Souhan, Sharon Tolan, Conor Tormey.

Apologies:

None

Officials in attendance:

Deputy Chief Executive: Jackie Maguire

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

Meetings Administrator: Elaine Daly

Planning Staff: Ms. Wendy Bagnall; Mr. Sean Clarke

1 Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 5th December 2022

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 5th December 2022 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding**.

2 Matters arising from the Minutes

Councillor Gillian Toole noted that she had previously requested an update on the Tabor House Facility for women, which was yet to be provided.



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3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

3.1 Expressions of Sympathy

Expressions of Sympathy were extended to:

Con Murnane, Transportation on the death of his mother, Mary (Maisie) Murnane.

The family and friends of the late Christy Foley, retired Station Officer, Meath County Council Fire and Rescue Services, Dunshaughlin.

Audrey Norris, Corporate Affairs and Governance on the death of her mother, Molly Halligan.

Patrick (Poncho) Farrelly, Corporate - Declan Farrelly, Kells Office - Paul Farrelly, Kells Fire Station - Eamon (AO) Farrelly, former councillor on the death of their brother, Sean Farrelly.

The family of the late Peg Curtis, former employee.

Noel Leonard, former Councillor on the death of his wife, Philomena Leonard.

The family of the late Sib Rooney, former Cathaoirleach of Meath County Council.

Charlie Tully, Transportation on the death of his mother, Mary Tully.

The family of the late Francis (Francie) McKenna, former employee.

John P O'Reilly, Housing on the death of his mother, Margaret O'Reilly.

Aisling O'Brien, Arts Office on the death of her father, John O'Brien.

Kitty Foyle, Transportation on the death of her brother, Seamus Foyle.

John Farrell, Housing Maintenance on the death of his mother, Nancy Farrell.

The family of the late Fr. Michael Sheeran, Parish Priest of Lobinstown.

The family of the late Donald (Dan) Murphy, Navan.

The family of the late Patrick (Shonie) Cunningham, Navan.

The family of the late Sharon (Spidy) Fitzpatrick, Navan.

The family of the late Thomas (Tom) Dowdall, Navan.



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The family of the late Peter Darby, captain to the Meath team that won the 1967 All-Ireland SFC title.

The family of the late Bertie Cunningham, member of the Meath team who won the 1967 All-Ireland SFC title.

The family of the late Tom Moriarty, member of the Meath junior team who won the 1952 All-Ireland title.

Keith Traynor, Ashbourne MD, on the death of his nephew Conor Traynor Murphy.

3.2 Expressions of Congratulations

Dunshaughlin Tidy Towns and the wider Dunshaughlin community, winners of the national Pride of Place Awards.

Meath County Council and Meath Sports Partnership on the Project LongGame event which promotes sustainability in sport.

Mr. Evan Ferguson, Bettystown on his current success in the English Premier League.

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 0.3172 Ha of land at Eamonn Duggan 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 November 2, 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**.

4.2 Disposal of 0.0103 Ha of land at Claremont Estate, Townparks, 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 November 29, 2022, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Francis Deane** and seconded by **Councillor Yemi Adenuga**.

4.3 Disposal of 0.0009 Ha of land at Preston Place, 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 November 29, 2022, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Paddy Meade** and seconded by **Councillor Yemi Adenuga**.

4.4 Disposal of 0.3947 Ha of land at Beechmount Industrial Park, 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 December 21, 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**.

5 Statutory Business

5.1 Corporate Affairs and Governance

5.1.1 To adopt the 2023 Annual Service Delivery Plan.

On the proposal of **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Fox**, the 2023 Annual Service Delivery Plan was adopted.

5.1.2 To appoint replacement IFA sectoral nominee, Mr. Seamus McGee, as member of the Climate Action, Environment and Emergency Services SPC.

On the proposal of **Councillor Joe Fox** and seconded by **Councillor Eugene Cassidy** the appointment of replacement IFA sectoral nominee, Mr. Seamus McGee, as member of the Climate Action, Environment and Emergency Services SPC was approved.

5.1.3 To appoint replacement IFA sectoral nominee, Mr. Dermot Ward, as member of the Transportation SPC.

On the proposal of **Councillor Mike Bray** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Fox** the appointment of replacement IFA sectoral nominee, Mr. Dermot Ward, as member of the Transportation SPC was approved.

5.1.4 To appoint replacement Construction Industry Federation nominee, Mr. Danny Murphy, as member of the Transportation SPC.

On the proposal of **Councillor Francis Deane** and seconded by **Councillor David Gilroy** the appointment of replacement Construction Industry Federation nominee, Mr. Danny Murphy, as member of the Transportation SPC was approved.

5.2 Planning

5.2.1 To receive a briefing from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on the content of the Hill of Tara Conservation Management Plan.



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Mr. Michael MacDonagh, Chief Archaeologist, the National Monuments Service and Peadar ó Broin, Head of National Monuments and Visitor Services, Office of Public Works outlined the salient points of the Tara Conservation Management Plan which was published in September 2022. Mr. MacDonagh set out the three main principles of the plan as well as the four objectives and the time-sensitive actions that are associated with each of the objectives. He further noted that the plan was developed in parallel with the World Heritage Ambition and the Royal Sites of Ireland was included on Ireland's new World Heritage Tentative List in July 2022. The Chief Executive thanked Mr. MacDonagh for his unflinching support for the Plan, she further acknowledged the support of the OPW and Fáilte Ireland.

There were interventions and queries from **Councillors Tommy Reilly; David Gilroy; Suzanne Jamal; Paddy Meade; Ronan Moore; Brian Fitzgerald; Gillian Toole; Eugene Cassidy; Paul McCabe; Noel French** and **An Cathaoirleach**. While the plan was broadly welcomed by the elected members there was some dismay that the process had taken so long. The queries focussed on the proposals for an interpretation plan for the site, transport arrangements, proposals for car parking and additional facilities at the site. Responses to queries raised were provided by Mr. MacDonagh, Mr. ó Broin and the Chief Executive.

5.3 Community

5.3.1 To approve a replacement member of the Meath LCDC & LAG, Ciara Burke from Sage and Stone representing the Business Sector.

On the proposal of **Councillor Joe Fox** and seconded by **Councillor Wayne Harding**, Ciara Burke from Sage and Stone, representing the Business Sector, was appointed to the Meath LCDC and LAG.

6 Reports

6.1 Chief Executive's Report

There were interventions from the following Elected Members: **Councillors Ronan Moore; Damien O'Reilly; Wayne Harding; Trevor Golden; Sharon Tolan; Paul McCabe; Amanda Smith; Edward Fennessy** and **Gillian Toole**. The issues raised included:

Human Resources: Gender Pay Gap Report; Women in Leadership Programme.

Planning: New legislation in relation to Part 8 developments; e-Planning; Enforcement of Planning Conditions on Solar Farms.

Transport: N51 Dunmoe Phase 2; Boyne Greenway; Donnycarney footpath works; CPO Tara Road; Retrofitting Council Building.

Housing: Notices to Quit; Housing Acquisitions; Age Demographic of Homelessness.



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Environment: Inclusion SDG Goals in CE Report; Progress on Burial Grounds.

Economic Development: Remote Working Hubs.

Responses to queries raised were provided by the Chief Executive, Mr. Barry Lynch, Mr. Martin Murray and Mr. Des Foley.

6.2 Report from the Corporate Policy Group

The Meetings Administrator reported that the CPG met on Friday January 27, 2023 and reviewed the agenda for the February Council Meeting. The minutes of the following 3 SPC meetings were noted:

- Climate Action, Environment and Emergency Services SPC
- Housing Community and Cultural Development SPC
- Transport SPC

There were two recommendations from the Transport SPC to the CPG and it was noted these will be brought to the full Council Meeting in March.

The Meetings Administrator further advised that An Cathaoirleach had referred to the new Planning Bill that had been published and he proposed that the Council hold a special meeting to review the implications of the proposed legislation and such a meeting should include the Oireachtas Members representing the County. It was noted that the elected members would be contacted once the details were finalised.

6.3 Report from the Protocol Committee

The Meetings Administrator advised that the Protocol Committee met on Friday January 27, 2023. She noted that the Elected Members' Local Representation Allowance (LRA) remains as a standing item on the agenda and that the final date for submission of documentation for the LRA 2022 is January 31, 2023. She further noted that the final date for submission of the Disclosure of Donations is January 31, 2023 and the deadline for submission of Annual Declarations of Ethics is February 28, 2023.

It was noted that **Councillor Emer Tóibín's** Notice of Motion had been referred to the Women's Caucus for their opinion and report back to the Protocol Committee.

The Conferences and Training Schedules were agreed and circulated to all Elected Members.

7 Correspondence

- 7.1 Correspondence from the National Transport Authority (NTA) in response to Item 2 agreed at the November 2022 meeting of the full Council re. request for tripartite meeting between Iarnród Éireann, Bus Éireann and the NTA to discuss ongoing**



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transport issues in County Meath.

The correspondence was noted by the Elected Members.

There were interventions from Councillors **Sharon Tolan; Gillian Toole; Alan Tobin; Maria Murphy; Damien O'Reilly** and **An Cathaoirleach**. It was noted that a response had not yet been received from Bus Eireann. On the proposal of **Councillor Sharon Tolan** and seconded by **Councillor Noel French** it was agreed that a date would be arranged for a special meeting between the NTA and Irish Rail and that Bus Eireann would be invited once the date had been set. It was further agreed that this meeting would take place following the publication of the details of the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area as well as the details of the review of the National Bus and Rail fares.

- 7.2 Correspondence from the Minister for Health in response to Notice of Motion 10.7 adopted at the September 2022 meeting of the full Council re. request that all Emergency SARS Cov 2 measures that were implemented, be fully reviewed and a risk/benefit analysis of health services, older persons' experiences and SME sector be carried out and reported upon.**

Councillor Gillian Toole noted and welcomed the information contained in the correspondence. She noted, however, her disappointment that the correspondence ignored the request contained in the Notice of Motion.

The correspondence was noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.3 Correspondence from the Minister for Rural and Community Development in response to Notice of Motion 9.2 adopted at the October 2022 meeting of the full Council re. request to commence a review of the CLÁR Scheme.**

The correspondence was noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.4 Correspondence from the Minister for Planning and Local Government in response to Notice of Motion 9.2 adopted at the November 2022 meeting of the full Council re. Meath County Development Plan and de-zoning of land.**

The correspondence was noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.5 Correspondence from Minister for Health in response to Item 12 agreed at the December 2022 meeting of the full Council re. Our Lady's Hospital, Navan.**

Councillor Emer Tóibín expressed her disappointment in the correspondence and noted that there was no reference to an objective to ascertain the costs of maintaining services at Navan ED. It was agreed that the Meetings Administrator would write to Minister Donnelly seeking details of the costs to maintain services at Navan ED. **An Cathaoirleach** commended the staff of the hospital for their ongoing commitment over what was a very busy Christmas period.

The correspondence was noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.6 Correspondence from the National Transport Authority (NTA) in response to Notice of Motion 10.4 adopted at the November 2022 meeting of the full Council re. publication of the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area and 'Fairer Fares'.**



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The correspondence was noted by the Elected Members.

Circular LGSM 01/2022 – Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage re. Best Practice Recommendations for Local Authorities on the operation of Municipal Districts.

Councillor Gillian Toole welcomed the report and noted that she would like to see additional services being delivered at MD level. She acknowledged the role of MDs as vehicles of governance and public service.

The correspondence was noted by the Elected Members.

7.7 LG 07-2002 – Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage re. Application of pay adjustments due on 2 February and 1 October 2022.

The correspondence was noted by the Elected Members.

7.8 Circular LG 08/2022 – Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage re. Local Representation Allowance and end of year requirements. (see below)

The correspondence was noted by the Elected Members.

7.9 Circular Letter: F.01/23 – Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage re. 31 January 2023 deadline for the reporting of political donations by elected members.

The correspondence was noted by the Elected Members.

8 Notice of Question

8.1 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín

“What actions or inquiry process does Meath County Council engage in, in the event of it giving planning permission to an applicant where information falsely provided by the applicant and contrary to planning criteria, comes to light?”

Response

All planning applications are assessed in accordance with national, regional and local policy and Ministerial guidelines that are in operation at the time of the decision. Once a final grant of planning permission is issued, the role of the Planning Authority is to ensure compliance with the conditions of the planning permission.

It has been and continues to be the policy of the Council not to comment on any aspect of individual planning applications.

Councillor Emer Tóibín expressed her dissatisfaction with the response received.

Noted by the Elected Members.



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9 Notice of Motion

9.1 Submitted by Councillor Yemi Adenuga

“I call on Meath County Council to appoint an EU Funding Officer at a senior level, whose role will be to analyse Meath County Council’s Corporate and strategic plans, to identify where EU funding could be used to progress elements of the plan and apply for such funding to deliver the identified elements.”

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

Meath County Council is aware of the wide range of EU funding streams available and the potential benefits to the county in availing of these funding opportunities (e.g. Interreg). The Council works in collaboration with the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly, East Border Region, the Irish Regions European Office and other potential partners involved in sourcing funding under the EU programmes. In addition, the Local Enterprise Office has a remit to identify potential funding sources and projects that could benefit from EU funding. The Council has, in the past, availed of EU funds for several projects within the county.

Councillor Yemi Adenuga introduced the motion. She acknowledged that the Council had availed of EU funding in the past but that there was more funding available. She further noted that 3 other councils had appointed an EU Funding Officer. The Chief Executive advised that the matter had been discussed in the past. There is a member of staff whose remit is to explore EU funding opportunities. She further noted that there may be opportunities to learn from the experience of other local authorities.

The motion, proposed by **Councillor Yemi Adenuga** and seconded by **Councillor Maria Murphy**, was agreed.

9.2 Submitted by Councillor Brian Fitzgerald

“The Members of Meath County Council are requesting the Chief Executive to initiate the statutory process to consider the variation of the County Development Plan in accordance with the Planning Guidelines issued on 1st July 2022 with particular reference to the de-zoning of serviced lands.”

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



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Section 13 of the Act provides for the planning authority, at any time, to decide to make a variation of the development plan that is in force at that time.

The elected members may, at any time and for stated reasons, submit a resolution to the Chief Executive requesting that he/she prepares a report on a proposal by the members to initiate process to consider the variation of the development plan in force. It is a requirement that 3/4 of the members approve such a resolution.

Please note that as previously advised at the November Council meeting by the Senior Planner, a number of variations to the County Development Plan will be required on foot of, but not limited to the following:

- Outcome of the Judicial Review cases to the County Development Plan;
- Publication of the Census figures (April/May);
- Updates to Development Plan Guidelines since the publication of the Meath County Development Plan (eg tiered zoning);
- Outcome of the Residential Zoned Land Tax process.

Subject to the adoption of the above resolution by not less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Elected Members, the Chief Executive must submit a report to the Elected Members within 4 weeks.

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** and seconded by **Councillor Amanda Smith**. **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** agreed to defer the motion to allow the proceedings, as outlined in the supporting information, to continue. This was agreed by the Elected Members.

9.3 Submitted by Councillor Padraig Fitzsimons

"I propose the motion that Meath County Council apply to SEAI for grants for Public Charger points so as to increase the amount of public EV charging points throughout the county."

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

Meath County Council supports the provision of infrastructure for electrical vehicles (EVs) both on street and in new developments. This is reflected in the Council's objective to liaise and collaborate with relevant agencies to support, facilitate and encourage the growth of EVs in various ways including a roll-out of additional electric charging points. Through the development management process, the Council requires that new



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residential development, and the development of new car parks and service stations, provides the requisite number of EV charging points and the associated wiring and ducting to accommodate future charge points. In terms of its own infrastructural projects, the Council is currently focussed on providing the facilities for new EV charging points in new car park developments in Navan, Garlow Cross and Laytown/Bettystown. The Council previously applied to the SEAI for a grant in relation to the latter location, for 3No. public charging points in the carpark that was constructed as part of the R150 Tara Road Scheme. The Council will continue to monitor the availability of grants from the SEAI and others and seek to avail of them when possible.

Councillor Padraig Fitzsimons introduced the motion. He noted that only 4 councils had availed of this funding to date, one of which was Meath County Council and that there was further funding available. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Mike Bray; Alan Tobin** and **Michael Gallagher** with suggestions that existing infrastructure including lamp posts could be used as charging points. Mr. Martin Murray noted that he was awaiting details of the scheme to be published and that he would liaise with the Environment Section in relation to any areas specifically raised by the elected members.

The motion, as proposed by **Councillor Padraig Fitzsimons** and seconded by **Councillor Mike Bray**, was agreed.

9.4 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin

"I call on Meath County Council to apply, without delay, for funding for street cleaning services and specialised machinery to deal with street litter and in particular cigarette butts through the new government led €85m contribution scheme from the tobacco industry."

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

The European Union (Extended Producer Responsibility) Tobacco Filters Containing Plastic) Regulations 2022 which came into force on January 5, 2023 provides that tobacco companies will now have to pay for part of the clean-up costs resulting from cigarette-related waste.

The Regulations which were introduced to comply with a European Union directive cutting back on single-use plastics across the bloc, provide for the introduction of an extended producer responsibility scheme for tobacco fillers containing plastic and impose obligations on producers or their nominated authorised representative who place tobacco filler products containing plastic on the Irish market.



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The Minister of State for the Circular Economy in announcing the new provisions indicated that money charged to the cigarette companies would be divided as to market share and will be used to collect the litter itself as well as collecting data and communicating with the public.

Pending the establishment of an extended producer responsibility body to comply with the Regulations, the devising of a means for the apportionment of costs and receipt of details of any scheme from the Department, it may be premature to apply for funding at this point in time.

Councillor Alan Tobin introduced the motion and thanked the Council for the comprehensive response. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Sharon Tolan; Mike Bray** and **Tom Behan**. It was noted that the disposable plastic from eCigarette refills is also a significant cause of litter on the streets. Mr. Dara McGowan noted that the details of the scheme are yet to be finalised and the €85m relates to the cost to all of the local authorities for litter collection, but the scheme would only return a small portion of that cost.

The motion, proposed by **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Sharon Tolan**, was agreed.

9.5 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin

“Following a spate of attacks by dogs on the restricted breed list in Ireland, I call on Meath County Council to employ two dog wardens with specific duties related to the control and welfare of all dogs and other domestic animals. If deemed appropriate, I also call on the relevant Minister/Department to finance such roles.”

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

The Council currently has one full time Dog Warden and two further Wardens who combine dog control and litter/waste management duties. These numbers are consistent with the numbers employed in other Local Authorities across the Country and while there is no funding provision for any additional wardens at present the operation of the Dog control service is kept under regular review and staff diverted as necessary.

The issue of dog control crosses a number of different Government Departments as well as the Local Authorities, and in this regard the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Rural and Community Development recently announced the establishment of a working group to examine relative legislative and enforcement issues and specifically review fines under the Control of Dogs Act, the provision of dog wardens, microchipping, promoting responsible dog ownership and licences.



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The group who are to report to the two Ministers, will consult and engage with relevant stakeholders and update them regularly on the progress of the group. The Council await the findings of this group, including any findings relating to the provision and funding of additional dog wardens

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Alan Tobin**. He noted that there were some high-profile cases in the country which resulted in life-altering injuries to children. He further noted the health risks associated with dog fouling on the streets and in public parks. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Sharon Tolan; Joe Fox; Paul McCabe; Maria Murphy; Pdraig Fitzsimons; Mike Bray; Paddy Meade** and **An Cathaoirleach**. The danger posed to sheep, particularly in the current lambing season, was discussed and it was agreed that the Council would use its social media platforms to remind dog owners to be responsible for their pets and to ensure that they are under control at all times.

The motion, as proposed by **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Sharon Tolan**, was agreed.

9.6 Submitted by Councillor Gillian Toole

"To ask the Transportation Strategic Policy Committee [SPC] of Meath County Council to consider road safety in the vicinity of all schools in the County, on a case-by-case basis, reviewing and amending current policy as a matter of urgency".

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

The Council is finalising its Road Safety Plan 2023 - 2026 which will be presented to the Elected Members at the next Council meeting. The plan builds on the successes of the previous plan which provided for:

- A 50 kl/h speed limit at every school in the county;
- Signage on either side of schools indicating school ahead and indicating the presence of children;
- Flashing school lights on either side of schools;
- Appropriate road markings at and around schools.

In addition, the Road Safety Plan will build on the endeavours that have been done to date as part of the Safe Routes to School Programme, where identified measures will be included in the 2023 road works programme. The safety at every school in the county is continually reviewed by the Council's Road Safety Officer.



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The motion was introduced by **Councillor Gillian Toole**. She thanked the Council for the supporting information and noted that there had been a robust discussion at MD level. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Emer Tóibín; Mike Bray; Michael Gallagher; Alan Tobin; David Gilroy and Pdraig Fitzsimons**. It was suggested that engineering solutions are required to slow traffic and that consideration should be given to prioritising gritting roads to schools, where appropriate. Mr. Martin Murray noted that individual schools will require their own unique solution and that some of these could be addressed through the NTA Active Travel Scheme and the Safe Routes to School Programme.

The motion, as proposed by **Councillor Gillian Toole** and seconded by **Councillor Emer Tóibín**, was agreed.

9.7 Submitted by Councillor Maria Murphy

“We call on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage of Ireland to increase the level of grant assistance paid for the remediation, repair or upgrading works to a domestic wastewater treatment system, or the replacement of such system.”

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

The rates of grants payable for the remediation, repair or upgrading works to, or replacement of a Domestic Wastewater Treatment System is set out in Regulations made by the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government.

The current rates were amended by the Housing (Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems Financial Assistance) Regulations 2020 and with the main provisions of the amended scheme being as follows:

- Meath County Council may pay a grant to a person for the carrying out of remediation, repair or upgrading works to, or replacement of a DWWTs that is deemed, following an inspection, to require such works.
- The treatment system requiring attention must have been registered by the owner by 1st February 2013, or in the case of treatment systems constructed or installed after this date registration must have been completed within 90 days of connection
- The removal of the means test requirement; and,
- The introduction of a uniform grant rate of 85% of the eligible costs of remediation, repair or upgrading works, or replacement of any such system or €5,000, whichever is the lower.



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- Grants will not be paid towards the normal costs of ensuring a system is working properly e.g. maintaining, servicing or de-sludging a domestic waste water treatment system.

Full details on the grants can be viewed at www.meath.ie/council/council-services/drinking-water-and-waste-water/waste-water/domestic-septic-tanks

The Council received the following number of grant applications over the last 4 years:

2019 – 33
2020 – 12
2021 – 51
2022 – 43

It was noted that this matter was also the subject of Item 9.8 and it was agreed that the two items would be considered consecutively. The motion was introduced by **Councillor Maria Murphy**. She noted that the eligible costs of remediation were very low and that the average costs to a homeowner to repair a domestic wastewater treatment system is approximately €12,000. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Joe Fox; Michael Gallagher; Paddy Meade; Brian Fitzgerald and Alan Tobin**. It was noted that there were environmental benefits to remediating wastewater treatment systems and that the technology available now is much more advanced. It was also noted that the eligibility of grants should be widened, and that the registration of wastewater treatment systems was a significant barrier to applying for the grant. Mr. Dara McGowan advised that a number of wastewater treatment systems in the high-risk catchment areas were failing inspections and the cost of remediation was on average between €8,000 and €10,000.

The Motion proposed by **Councillor Maria Murphy** and seconded by **Councillor Joe Fox** was agreed. It was also agreed that the motions be circulated to all other local authorities. **Councillor Paddy Meade** dissented in relation to the circulation of the motion to other local authorities.

9.8 Submitted by Councillor Joe Fox

“Meath County Council calls on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to extend the eligibility of the Domestic Wastewater Treatment (Septic Tank) Grant.

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

The rates of grants payable for the remediation, repair or upgrading works to, or replacement of a Domestic Wastewater Treatment System is set out in Regulations made by the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government.



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The current rates were amended by the Housing (Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems Financial Assistance) Regulations 2020 and with the main provisions of the amended scheme being as follows:

- Meath County Council may pay a grant to a person for the carrying out of remediation, repair or upgrading works to, or replacement of a DWWTS that is deemed, following an inspection, to require such works.
- The treatment system requiring attention must have been registered by the owner by 1st February 2013, or in the case of treatment systems constructed or installed after this date registration must have been completed within 90 days of connection
- The removal of the means test requirement; and,
- The introduction of a uniform grant rate of 85% of the eligible costs of remediation, repair or upgrading works, or replacement of any such system or €5,000, whichever is the lower.
- Grants will not be paid towards the normal costs of ensuring a system is working properly e.g. maintaining, servicing or de-sludging a domestic waste water treatment system.

Full details on the grants can be viewed at www.meath.ie/council/council-services/drinking-water-and-waste-water/waste-water/domestic-septic-tanks

The Council received the following number of grant applications over the last 4 years:

2019 – 33
2020 – 12
2021 – 51
2022 – 43

The Motion proposed by **Councillor Joe Fox** and seconded by **Councillor Maria Murphy** was agreed. It was also agreed that the motions be circulated to all other local authorities. **Councillor Paddy Meade** dissented in relation to the circulation of the motion to other local authorities.

9.9 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín

“That Meath County Council reports to the councillors on all steps that are being taken to speed up the smooth delivery of the rail line to Navan.”

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



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Meath County Council is currently waiting for the GDA Transport Strategy to be signed off by the Minister for Transport. Following this we intend to engage with the NTA to discuss the development of the project.

In that regard Meath County Council has made a provision of €100,000 in the capital plan (under Service B 'Miscellaneous' – Navan Rail – Tech Support to IE) to assist with the procurement of professional and technical services to support the progression of the scheme.

Councillor Emer Tóibín introduced the motion. She noted that the rail line had been included in the GDA Transport Strategy, however, there was still too much uncertainty and significant delays in the statutory processes. **Councillor Gillian Toole** supported the motion. There were interventions from **Councillors Pdraig Fitzsimons; David Gilroy; Maria Murphy; Mike Bray; Joe Fox; Paul McCabe; Trevor Golden; Michael Gallagher** and **Brian Fitzgerald**. The commitment by the Executive and the Elected Members to ensure the Navan Rail Line was included in the Transport Strategy was acknowledged. In particular, the Chief Executive, Jackie Maguire and Director of Services, Des Foley were commended for their ongoing commitment to the proposal. It was noted that the inclusion of the project in the Transport Strategy represented a definite commitment by the Government to proceed with the scheme. Mr. Martin Murray noted that it was a significant day in respect of the scheme. He further noted that the timelines had been substantially reduced from the Draft Strategy and while there are statutory processes to be undertaken this will not slow down delivery of the project.

Councillor David Gilroy proposed an amendment which was seconded by **Councillor Maria Murphy** and agreed as follows:

“That Meath County Council continues to report to the councillors on all steps that are being taken in the delivery of the rail line to Navan.”

The motion as amended, proposed by **Councillor Emer Tóibín** and seconded by **Councillor Gillian Toole** was agreed. **Councillor Joe Fox** dissented from the motion.

10 General Interest Motions

10.1 Submitted by Councillor Michael Gallagher (Deferred from December meeting)

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

Councillor Michael Gallagher introduced the motion. He outlined the cost of tolls associated with regular travel which was in addition to the unprecedented costs of fuel. There were interventions



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from **Councillors Paddy Meade; Elaine McGinty; Brian Fitzgerald** and **An Cathaoirleach**. It was noted that the proposed toll increase had been deferred, however, the location of tolls was causing traffic congestion in certain towns across the county. It was further noted the taxpayer had to pay for any shortfalls in the minimum traffic target.

Councillor Paddy Meade proposed an amendment which was seconded by **Councillor Michael Gallagher** and agreed as follows:

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

The motion, as amended, proposed by **Councillor Michael Gallagher**, seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade** was agreed.

10.2 Submitted by Councillor Damien O’Reilly

“I call on Meath County Council to write to Minister Darragh O'Brien TD - Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to request his department to increase Meath’s property price ceiling on the First House Scheme, from €375,000 to €475,000 in accordance with the property price ceiling for Cork City, Dublin City, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin.”

Councillor Damien O’Reilly introduced the motion. He noted that the scheme was very successful, however, as County Meath was in the commuter belt with Dublin the threshold for the county was too low. He outlined the costs of particular housing in areas in the Ratoath and Ashbourne MDs. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Mike Bray** and **Gillian Toole**.

The Motion proposed by **Councillor Damien O’Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Mike Bray** was agreed.

10.3 Submitted by Councillor Gillian Toole

“The Members of Meath County Council request the Members of Dáil Éireann to begin drafting, without delay, a Well-being of Future Generations [Ireland] Act. This Act will enshrine the rights of future generations; requiring Irish Government Ministers and the organisations they oversee, to firmly fix this commitment into everything they do.”

Due to time constraints, **Councillor Gillian Toole** agreed to defer this matter to the March Council Meeting, which was agreed by the Elected Members.

On a proposal from **Councillor Michael Gallagher** and seconded by **Councillor Gillian Toole** it was agreed to take a 15-minute extension to 6.15pm. **Councillor Paddy Meade** dissented.



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10.4 Submitted by Councillor Elaine McGinty

“That Meath County Council writes to the Minister for Agriculture Charlie McConalogue and Minister of State Pippa Hackett to halt the development of the Irish Strategic Forestry Fund.”

Councillor Elaine McGinty introduced the motion, and she noted that while there had been a lot of debate on the media there was insufficient information regarding the details of the contract, including details relating to carbon credits. She stated that the Government should be supporting Coillte and not involving private investors. There were interventions from **Councillors Michael Gallagher; Alan Tobin; Trevor Golden; Paddy Meade** and **An Cathaoirleach** which included queries regarding the amount of land in County Meath owned and managed by Coillte and the merits to having an open economy that supports investment.

Councillor Alan Tobin proposed an amendment which was seconded by **Councillor Emer Tóibín** and agreed as follows:

“That Meath County Council writes to the Minister for Agriculture Charlie McConalogue and Minister of State Pippa Hackett to review the development of the Irish Strategic Forestry Fund.”

The motion, as amended, proposed by **Councillor Elaine McGinty**, seconded by **Councillor Michael Gallagher** was agreed.

10.5 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín

“That Meath County Council invites the Garda Commissioner to the next full council meeting to discuss crime and anti-social activity in Meath as well as Gardaí numbers in the county.”

Councillor Emer Tóibín introduced the motion and noted that Ireland had the lowest number of police force in Ireland per capita, in addition County Meath had a very low number of Gardaí per capita at 564 Gardaí to every one person. There were interventions from **Councillors Paddy Meade; Aisling O’Neill; Elaine McGinty; Michael Gallagher; Gillian Toole** and **Sharon Tolan** which included the requirement to look at terms and conditions to attract new members to the force, as well as the positive outcomes from community policing and the reconfiguration of Gardaí in the county. It was noted that Elected Members had been advised that County Meath would benefit from increased numbers following recruitment of additional Gardaí to the force.

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Emer Tóibín**, seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade** and agreed. **Councillor Sharon Tolan** dissented from the motion.



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

11.1 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Transportation

Noted by the Elected Members.

11.2 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Environment

Noted by the Elected Members.

11.3 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Housing

Noted by the Elected Members.

11.4 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Community & Enterprise

Noted by the Elected Members.

12 Any Other Business

An Cathaoirleach thanked Belinda and the staff of the Solstice Arts Centre for all of their help and support in allowing the Council to hold their monthly meetings in the Theatre. He noted that the next meeting of the Council will take place in the temporary council chamber in Buvinda House.

Councillor Maria Murphy noted that International Women's Day will take place two days after the March Council meeting. She asked that Elected Members and the Executive wear purple to the Council meeting to support International Women's Day.