

## **Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes**

### **Ordinary Meeting**

**12<sup>th</sup> June 2023 @ 1.30p.m.**

**Buvinda House, Navan (and online via zoom)**

#### **Presiding**

An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Tommy Reilly

#### **Councillors Present:**

Councillors Joseph Bonner, Mike Bray, Eugene Cassidy, Francis Deane, Aisling Dempsey, Brian Fitzgerald, Padraig Fitzsimons, Joe Fox, Noel French, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy, Trevor Golden, Wayne Harding, Suzanne Jamal, Geraldine Keogan, Nick Killian, Alan Lawes, Paul McCabe, Elaine McGinty, Stephen McKee, Paddy Meade, Maria Murphy, Gerry O'Connor, Damien O'Reilly, Sarah Reilly, Amanda Smith, Emer Tóibín, Sharon Tolan, Gillian Toole.

#### **Councillors Present via Zoom:**

Councillors Yemi Adenuga, Tom Behan, Sean Drew, Eddie Fennessy, Deirdre Geraghty-Smith, Ronan Moore, Aisling O'Neill, Niamh Souhan, Alan Tobin.

#### **Apologies:**

Councillor Conor Tormey

#### **Officials in attendance:**

**Chief Executive:** Fiona Lawless

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

**A/Director of Service:** Sheila Harkin

**Meetings Administrator:** Elaine Daly

### **1 Confirmation of Minutes**

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Noel French** and seconded by **Councillor Elaine McGinty**.

### **2 Matters arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising.

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### **3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations**

Sympathy was extended to:

James Beirne, Water Services on the death of his sister, Ann Gilsenan.

David Griffin, PPN and Emer Coveney, Age-Friendly on the death of their mother/mother in law, Theresa Griffin.

Alison Lynch, Community Section, Nicola Mitchell, LEO and Bernard Lynch, former Clerk of Works, Housing on the death of their mother/wife, Frances Lynch.

Paul Beggy, GSS Ashbourne and Ann Beggy, Ashbourne Library on the death of their mother/mother-in-law, Margaret (Maggie) Beggy.

Tony Hand, General Operative, Ratoath MD on the death of his father, John Hand.

To the family and friends of the late Paul Coghlan, former Senator and uncle of former Meath County Councillor, the late Bernard Deighan.

### **4 Disposal of Land in accordance with Statutory Notices circulated pursuant to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001**

None

### **5 Statutory Business**

#### **5.1 Corporate Affairs and Governance**

5.1.1 To note the 2022 MD Allocations Scheme Report.

The report was noted by the Elected Members

5.1.2 To adopt Meath County Council's Annual Report 2022.

The report was adopted on the proposal of **Councillor David Gilroy**, seconded by **Councillor Gillian Toole** and approved.

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### **5.2 Climate Action and Environment**

- 5.2.1 To receive a presentation in respect of the preparation of a Climate Action Plan for County Meath pursuant to the provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2021.

Mr. Dara McGowan introduced Mr. James Geaney, Ernst and Young and Ms. Mary Darcy, Meath Climate Action Co-ordinator to the meeting.

Mr. Geaney and Ms. Darcy provided an overview of the preparation of Meath County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029. It was noted that the content and methodology used was supported through guidance from the Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs). The key objectives of the plan were outlined which include a 51% reduction in emissions by 2030 and 50% increase in energy efficiency by 2030. Details in relation to emissions by sector were provided, as well as details in relation to decarbonizing zones within the County. The next stages of the process were outlined which include an inventory of county baseline emissions, climate change risk assessment and engaging with stakeholders, which will take place in advance of the pre-draft public consultation process.

There were interventions from **Councillors Elaine McGinty; Alan Lawes; Paddy Meade; David Gilroy; Eugene Cassidy; Alan Tobin; Aisling O'Neill; Maria Murphy; Sarah Reilly; Gillian Toole; Ronan Moore; Michael Gallagher; Yemi Adenuga; Trevor Golden; Sharon Tolan; Gerry O'Connor** and **Mike Bray** with queries focusing on emissions by industries, use of recycled material on our roads, potential impacts on economic development and the farming sector, public consultation, opportunities for industries and public transport initiatives, costs associated with recycling and the requirements for a just and fair transition. The Climate Action Forum were commended for their work to date and Elected Members were encouraged to attend the meetings of the Forum.

### **5.3 Finance**

- 5.3.1 To approve the raising of a loan of €10,000,000 from the Housing Finance Agency (HFA) to provide finance for approved house purchase applications under the Local Authority Home Loan (LAHL) Scheme, Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan (RIHL) Scheme, loan restructuring and other housing loan related activities, as authorised by the Housing Acts 1966 – 1992 as amended.

**Councillor Gillian Toole** raised a query in relation to the loan restructuring and a response was provided by the Chief Executive.

On the proposal of **Councillor Nick Killian**, and seconded by **Councillor Joe Fox**, the raising of the loan in the sum of €10,000,000 from the Housing Finance Agency was approved.

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### **5.4 Community**

5.4.1 To consider Arts Grants, Bursaries & Awards Spring 2023 recommendations.

On the proposal of **Councillor David Gilroy** and seconded by **Councillor Paul McCabe** the Arts Grants, Bursaries & Awards Spring 2023 were approved.

### **5.5 Planning**

5.5.1 To receive the Chief Executive's Report in accordance with Section 37E(4) of the Planning and Development Acts, in relation to a Strategic Infrastructure Development application made to An Bord Pleanála, reference ABP-316212-23, for proposed development of 26 wind turbines and associated works at the Ballivor Bog Group, County Meath and County Westmeath. (separate attachment)

**An Cathaoirleach** welcomed Ms. Teresa O'Reilly, Executive Planner to the meeting. He also advised the Elected Members that any specific points that they would like appended to the report should be emailed to the Meetings Administrator on/before 5.00pm, Tuesday June 13, 2023, to ensure accuracy of the information provided.

Ms. O'Reilly gave a detailed presentation in respect of the proposed development by Bord na Mona Powergen Ltd (within the administrative boundary of Co. Meath) Reference no. ABP-316212-23, the subject of the Chief Executive's Report to An Bord Pleanála of June 2023.

There were interventions from **Councillors Noel French; Joe Fox; Gillian O'Toole; Paul McCabe; Elaine McGinty; Emer Tóibín and Trevor Golden**. Matters raised included the following:

- Agree with recommendation for request for further information.
- Absence of updated guidelines on wind farms has a negative impact in ensuring proper planning and ensuring appropriate distance between turbines and local residences. Technology has also moved on and the Guidelines should reflect this progression.
- Lands are/ may be more suitable to a solar farm development.
- Proximity of turbines to residential properties is an issue. Turbines should be located as far away as possible from such properties. Additional lands could be used to provide a greater buffer for residents or assurances that there are no other options (excluding cost).
- Importance of a Decommissioning Plan being agreed to protect the landscape and whether remediation of the site will fall to the Council if the developer no longer owns the site.
- Concern of residents with respect to the devaluing of their properties could be alleviated by excellent community amenities.

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- A community fund is required to assist local people. Details with regards to community benefits/amenities should be included and conditioned as part of any grant of permission.
- In addition to proposed paths and cycleways, horse tracks, a natural play park, sensory garden, waymarked posts, orientation information boards and toilets should be provided.
- Potential challenge to the wind farm indicated in local media.
- How the neighbouring and approved wind farm was considered in the assessment of the proposed one and how would both sites contribute to targets?
- Will the proposed development prevent parts of the bog from taking part in the Peatland Climate Action Scheme (PCAS), specifically the rewetting element, and if so, what percentage of the bog will be prevented from taking part in this element of the scheme.
- What consideration was given to solar renewable energy in this project to reduce the number of wind turbines, particularly close to existing homes?

Responses to queries were provided by Ms. O'Reilly.

Following the meeting, the following submissions were received:

### **Cllr Joe Fox:**

I wish to make the following submission to the Chief Executive's Report on the proposed Ballivor Wind Farm.

- (1) The absence of updated planning guidelines on wind farms is a major handicap to proper planning and to ensure turbines are a proper distance from any dwelling.
- (2) The lands in question are mostly cutaway boglands which in my opinion would be more suited to a solar farm.
- (3) These lands were acquired by Bord na Mona from mostly small landowners and householders for nominal sums and by CPO. Therefore it would be only just that a proper Community Fund be made a condition if any planning is granted.

### **Cllr. Aisling Dempsey:**

First and foremost, I would like to commend the Council on their comprehensive assessment of the application. I would wholeheartedly agree with many of the queries and concerns raised therein. And I am very glad to see further information requested and indeed proposed planning conditions suggested.

Most notably, I would like to ensure that BnM have located in particular the 10 turbines in the Meath area as far as possible from residential properties. I would like their full assurances that there are no other options. I do not accept cost as a reason to locate close to housing.

I would like to see more detail around the community benefits/amenities that will be included here. I note the mention of paths and cycleways, what about horse tracks? What about a natural

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play park and/or sensory garden? Waymarker posts and orientation info boards? Toilets? Many residents are concerned about the cost of their homes being reduced due to proximity to a wind farm. Excellent community amenities may alleviate some of this.

### **Cllr. Ronan Moore**

Under the Peatland Climate Action Scheme (PCAS), peatland rehabilitation will be undertaken in selected bogs across the Bord na Móna bog group. This scheme is a form of enhanced and accelerated peatland rehabilitation which will encourage bog rewetting, thus rehabilitating the peat bogs by putting existing peatland environments on a path back to them becoming naturally functioning peatlands. This is a vital element of helping us as a country to achieve our climate targets as well as safeguarding against bog fires that are expected to increase as the climate warms. Will the proposed development prevent parts of the bog from taking part in the PCAS, specifically the rewetting element, and if so, what percentage of the bog will be prevented from taking part in this element of PCAS due to the proposed development?

Though renewable wind energy, on a yearly average and per acre, currently produces more energy than solar renewable energy, the gap between the two continues to narrow. What level of conversations and analysis was done to integrate solar renewable schemes in this project, thus negating the number of wind turbines proposed, particularly in those areas closer to existing homes?

### **5.5.2 To receive a presentation from EirGrid on the North South Interconnector.**

Presentation by: Mr. Michael McMahon, Chief Infrastructure Officer  
Ms. Sinead Dooley, Head of Public Engagement

Mr. McMahon and Ms. Dooley provided an overview of the proposals for the North South Interconnector. It was noted that the project is required to ensure a sustainable security of supply solution, which will drive down energy costs for the consumer and supports the connection of more renewables with a target of 80% by 2030. It was further noted that the only viable connection was between Woodland and Turleenan by way of an overhead line. The next steps involve engagement with communities, landowners and businesses across the project area, the establishment of a community forum to inform delivery of the Community Benefit Fund, with substantive public and landowner engagement due to take place from September 2023.

There were interventions from Councillors **Michael Gallagher; Eugene Cassidy; Paddy Meade; Sarah Reilly; Emer Toibin; Mike Bray; Brian Fitzgerald; Gillian O'Toole; David Gilroy; Trevor Golden** and **An Cathaoirleach**. Queries raised included local opposition to the project, implications of Brexit for the project, the powers of Eirgrid to CPO lands, costs of the project to date, anticipated project start date, potential health implications and the risk of overhead cables during storms/high winds.

Responses to queries raised were provided by Mr. McMahon and Ms. Dooley.

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### **6 Reports**

#### **6.1 Chief Executive's Report**

There were interventions from the following Elected Members: **Councillors Gillian Toole; Alan Lawes; Nick Killian; Sharon Tolan; Alan Tobin; Joe Bonner; Damien O'Reilly** and **Sean Drew**. The issues raised included:

**Transport:** Upgrades of commuter services, Julianstown By-Pass, N2 Roadworks, M2 Roadworks.

**Housing:** Provision of Part V properties, homeless figures, family hub, RTB inspections, housing adaptation grants.

**Planning:** Planning enforcement figures.

**Uisce Éireann:** Water outages.

On the proposal of **Councillor Damien O'Reilly**, seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**, it was agreed that the Meetings Administrator would write to Uisce Éireann requesting that a contingency plan be put in place to ensure a constant supply of water to the Ratoath area while capital works are ongoing.

Responses to queries raised were provided by Mr. Martin Murray, Ms. Fiona Lawless, Mr. Dara McGowan, Mr. Des Foley and Ms. Corrina Elder.

#### **6.2 Report from the Corporate Policy Group**

The Meetings Administrator reported that the CPG met on Friday, June 9, 2023, and reviewed the arrangements for the Annual Meeting as well as the agenda for the June Council Meeting. It was noted that one Notice of Motion was not included on the agenda. She further noted that the members had been provided with an update on the National Industrial Action by SIPTU Retained Fire Fighters. Finally, it was noted that the membership of the CPG would be reviewed following the election of the Cathaoirleach at the Annual Meeting.

#### **6.3 Report from the Protocol Committee**

The Meetings Administrator reported that The Protocol Committee met on Friday afternoon and the practical arrangements for the Annual Meeting and the June Council Meeting were discussed. It was noted that the current arrangements for the Local Representation Allowance were working well and that this item would no longer remain as a standing item on the Protocol Committee Agenda. The Conferences and Training Schedules were agreed. Finally, it was agreed that the work programme for Protocol Committee would include a review the Standing Orders for Council Meetings as well as the development of a policy on civic events in the County.

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### 7 Correspondence

- 7.1 Correspondence from Minister Jack Chambers TD., Minister of State for Transport in response to Notice of Motion 10.3 adopted at the April 2023 meeting of the full Council re. request to direct Dublin Airport Authority to implement Noise Abatement Departure Protocol One (NADP1) as standard procedure at Dublin Airport.

**Councillor Gillian Toole** queried whether an acceptance to a meeting request had been received. Mr. Dara McGowan noted that the meeting request had come from Ratoath MD and not the Plenary Council.

The correspondence was noted by the Elected Members.

- 7.2 Correspondence from TII re. M1 PPP – Road Lighting Mary McAleese Boyne Valley Bridge.

Noted by the Elected Members.

### 8 Notice of Question

#### 8.1 Submitted by Councillor Noel French

*“How many dog fouling fines were issued in 2022, how many were paid, and will Meath County Council consider the installation of dog toilets as done in Dublin city this year?”*

#### **Response**

No dog fouling fines were issued in 2022 for as previously advised there are a number of difficulties associated with enforcement of the provisions of the Litter Pollution Act 1997 which makes it an offence for the person in charge of a dog not to clean up when their dog fouls in a public place.

The burden of proof for this nationwide problem is high and prosecutions are extremely difficult including identifying culprits as the Dog Warden must witness an incident and the dog must be connected to a person at the time. Where members of the public report instances, they had to be willing to give evidence in court, but experience has shown that there is often a reluctance to do so.

It is noted that the working group established by the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Rural and Community Development were requested to examine amongst other things relative legislative and enforcement issues and specifically look at fines under the Control of Dogs Act, and it is hoped that arising from the consideration of these issues the difficulties in enforcing the provisions of the Act will be addressed.



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While no fines were issued the Council continue to be extremely active in promoting responsible dog ownership and highlighting the health risks associated with dog fouling and in this regard continue to run dog fouling education and awareness campaigns on Local Radio and local media, on our social media platforms, video productions, erection of signage and spray painting stencil messages in areas where dog fouling had been reported as a particular problem.

While the Council have no proposals at present to introduce dog toilets, we will monitor the implementation and success of the initiative which was recently introduced by Dublin City Council in the inner City area consider the matter further thereafter

The response was noted by the Elected Members.

### **8.2 Submitted by Councillor Elaine McGinty**

*“To ask the Chief Executive to detail the total number of queries that Meath County Council have received from tenants seeking to avail of the cost-rental backstop and how many referrals have been made to the Housing Agency arising from these queries.”*

#### **Response**

There have been two referrals made to date to the Housing Agency under the Cost Rental Tenant in Situ scheme (CRTiS).

The response was noted by the Elected Members.

### **8.3 Submitted by Councillor Trevor Golden**

*“By Municipal District, how many designated Shared Spaces Zones are in County Meath?”*

Meath County Council currently do not have shared zones. We have approximately 109 slow zones which are used in housing estates that have a 30kph speed limit, the numbers per MD are as follows;

Ashbourne - 22

Kells - 22

Laytown - 10

Navan - 23

Ratoath - 22

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Trim – 10

Slow zones utilise a similar sign to F404 in the Traffic Signs Manual as shown below.



Sign F 403:  
Slow Zone

Shared space zones are however being considered where appropriate on schemes in Ratoath, Navan and Dunboyne.

The response was noted by the Elected Members.

### 8.4 Submitted by Councillor Damien O'Reilly

*“How many Croí Cónaithe vacant / derelict homes grant applications has Meath County received to date and how many grants have been paid out in full to date?”*

*In tabular format per municipal district.*

#### **Response**

Municipal District	No of Application	€ Grant Paid Out
Kells	20	0 *
Trim	12	0 *
Navan	7	0 *
Bettystown/Laytown	6	0 *
Ashbourne	3	0 *
Ratoath	2	0 *

\* No money is paid out until works are fully completed, as per terms and conditions of the grant.

The response was noted by the Elected Members.

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### 9 Notice of Motion

#### 9.1 Submitted by Councillor Brian Fitzgerald

*Further to motion adopted by the members of Meath County Council on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and on subsequent advice of the Minister responsible for Planning Minister Burke “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 line with the adopted said motion and in accordance with the Planning Guidelines issued on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 with particular reference to the de-zoning of services lands.”*

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

The Planning Authority is currently progressing a number of variations to the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. These proposed variations will include, but are not limited to, new policy objectives with respect to the adoption of local area plans and to introduce more flexibility into the overall Core Strategy so that settlement growth targets can be managed within the respective tiers of settlement in the Core Strategy Table, and yet, remain consistent with the current RSES and NPF targets that are set for population and housing growth in County Meath.

Any proposed variations will be subject to compliance with national and regional policy, Core Strategy, legal advices based on the judicial challenges against the Plan, staffing resources and changes made to the NPF and RSES.

**Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** introduced the motion, and he noted the position of the Executive of the Council. He noted that the Core Strategy is out of date due to increased census figures. He further noted that in order for the motion to progress it would require the support of 30 Elected Members. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Nick Killian; Michael Gallagher; Joe Fox; Gerry O’Connor; Paddy Meade** and **Noel French**. **Councillor Ronan Moore** stated that he couldn’t support the motion in its current format and **Councillor Alan Tobin** queried what impact the motion would have in terms of infrastructure requirements and the Climate Action Plan.

Mr. Des Foley outlined the statutory provisions. He further noted that any variation that includes zoning of additional residential lands may contravene existing national and regional policies and would be open to legal challenge. In addition, the current County Development Plan has circa. 1100 hectares of zoned residential land which is likely to adequately accommodate the increased population. Mr. Pdraig Maguire, Senior Planner, noted that any variation to zone additional lands would require a settlement capacity audit as part of revised Development Plan Guidelines, August 2022.

A roll-call vote was taken as follows:



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	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
<b>ADENUGA, Yemi</b>	X			
<b>BEHAN, Tom</b>	X			
<b>BONNER, Joseph</b>	X			
<b>BRAY, Mike</b>	X			
<b>CASSIDY, Eugene</b>	X			
<b>DEANE, Francis</b>	X			
<b>DEMPSEY, Aisling</b>	X			
<b>DREW, Sean</b>				X
<b>FENNESSY, Eddie</b>				X
<b>FITZGERALD, Brian</b>	X			
<b>FITZSIMONS, Padraig</b>	X			
<b>FOX, Joe</b>	X			
<b>FRENCH, Noel</b>	X			
<b>GALLAGHER, Michael</b>	X			
<b>GERAGHTY-SMITH, Deirdre</b>				X
<b>GILROY, David</b>	X			
<b>GOLDEN, Trevor</b>	X			
<b>HARDING, Wayne</b>	X			
<b>JAMAL, Suzanne</b>	X			
<b>KEOGAN, Geraldine</b>	X			
<b>KILLIAN, Nick</b>	X			
<b>LAWES, Alan</b>	X			
<b>MC CABE, Paul</b>	X			
<b>MC GINTY, Elaine</b>	X			
<b>MC KEE, Stephen</b>	X			
<b>MEADE, Paddy</b>	X			
<b>MOORE, Ronan</b>		X		
<b>MURPHY, Maria</b>	X			
<b>O'CONNOR, Gerry</b>	X			
<b>O'NEILL, Aisling</b>	X			
<b>O'REILLY, Damien</b>	X			
<b>REILLY, Sarah</b>	X			
<b>REILLY, Tommy</b>	X			
<b>SMITH, Amanda</b>	X			
<b>SOUHAN, Niamh</b>	X			
<b>TOBIN, Alan</b>	X			
<b>TÓIBÍN, Emer</b>	X			
<b>TOLAN, Sharon</b>	X			
<b>TOOLE, Gillian</b>			X	
<b>TORMEY, Conor</b>				X

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Votes For = 34 members, Against = 1, Abstain = 1, Absent = 4.

In accordance with this decision the motion proposed by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian** was approved. Mr. Des Foley agreed that a CE report will be prepared in accordance with the Planning Act and presented to the Elected Members in 4 weeks.

On a proposal from **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** it was agreed to take a 15-minute extension to 6.15pm.

### 9.2 Submitted by the Kells MD Councillors

*“That Meath County Council apply for funding to the Minister of Transport to upgrade the Local Roads in County Meath”.*

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

Meath County Council submit an annual programme of work to the Department of Transport for restoration improvement and restoration maintenance works on regional and local roads. The annual programme is taken from the three-year programme, the current programme being 2022-2024, the programme is data led and supplemented with local knowledge from the Municipal Districts. The objective is to create a balance between improving and maintaining roads, ensuring the correct investment is applied to each. Further to this is creating resilience in the entire network by adapting to climate change, climate change adaptation is now included in funding allocations from the DoT and the DoT has recently published a Climate Adaptation Strategy for Regional and Local Roads. Transportation is in regular communication with DoT officials and other departments in relation to funding, allocation of funding, sustainability and resilience and will continue to work with officials to ensure continued investment in the county's road network including local roads.

It was agreed that Motions 9.2 and 9.3 would be considered together. The Motion was introduced by **Councillor Michael Gallagher**, he outlined that he was seeking funding to upgrade the roads due to deterioration of road surfaces during the past number of years. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Paddy Meade, Sarah Reilly, Trevor Golden, Nick Killian, Mike Bray, David Gilroy and Paul McCabe**, it was noted that there has been significant improvement in the county roads as well as significant investment from the Council. The motion proposed by **Councillor Michael Gallagher** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Lawes** was agreed.

### 9.3 Submitted by Councillor Michael Gallagher

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*“I call on Meath County Council to apply to the Minister for Transport for increased funding to restore local class 3 roads within the County and that this funding should be prioritised by need in accordance with the pavement condition surveys.”*

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

Meath County Council submit an annual programme of work to the Department of Transport for restoration improvement and restoration maintenance works on regional and local roads. The annual programme is taken from the three-year programme, the current programme being 2022-2024, the programme is data led and supplemented with local knowledge from the Municipal Districts. The objective is to create a balance between improving and maintaining roads, ensuring the correct investment is applied to each. Further to this is creating resilience in the entire network by adapting to climate change, climate change adaptation is now included in funding allocations from the DoT and the DoT has recently published a Climate Adaptation Strategy for Regional and Local Roads. Transportation is in regular communication with DoT officials and other departments in relation to funding, allocation of funding, sustainability and resilience and will continue to work with officials to ensure continued investment in the county's road network including local roads.

The Motion was proposed by **Councillor Michael Gallagher**, seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade** and agreed in accordance with Item 9.2 above.

### **9.4 Submitted by Councillor Damien O'Reilly**

*“I call on Meath County Council to request the executive of the Drogheda Implementation Board, to make a presentation to a full Meath County Council meeting on the findings and action points from their report.”*

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

A request has been submitted to the chair of the Drogheda Implementation Board asking if the request could be facilitated.

The Motion was introduced by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly**. He noted that there may be some merit in applying some of the findings of the report to other areas in County Meath. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Sharon Tolan; Paddy Meade** and **Gillian Toole**. **Councillor Toole** suggested that a representative from the Regional Drugs Task Force could be included in the invitation.

The motion proposed by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Trevor Golden** was agreed.

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It was agreed by the Elected Members that due to time constraints, Items 10.2 and 10.3 would be discussed and all other motions on the agenda would be deferred to the July Council meeting.

### **9.5 Submitted by Councillor Trevor Golden**

*“Meath County Council utilises branding on solar-powered compacting litter bins to promote local authority projects, services and other appropriate initiatives.”*

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

The Council has introduced in excess of 150 Solar Powered Compacting Litter Bins across the six Municipal District areas. These bins are the subject of a maintenance contract with a supplier and the Council will investigate the possibility of utilising these bins as a method to promote Meath or to use as another method for awareness campaigns.

Deferred to July Council Meeting

### **9.6 Submitted by Councillor Sharon Tolan**

*“To call on Meath County Council to commit to working towards achieving Blue Flag status for Bettystown Beach, and Green Coast Awards for Mornington, Laytown and Gormanston Beaches for the 2024 Bathing Season.”*

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

The Blue Flag is an international environmental award made to beaches and marinas throughout the world that demonstrate good environmental standards and have good sanitary and safety facilities. An Taisce – The National Trust for Ireland is responsible for the operation of the Blue Flag programme in Ireland on behalf of the Foundation of Environmental Education (FEE).

In order to qualify for the Blue Flag, a series of stringent environmental, educational, safety, and accessibility criteria must be met and maintained and applications for blue flag status are judged against 33 criteria before they're awarded. The Council are examining these criteria with a view to making an application for a Blue Flag for Bettystown as it is considered that a number of recent and ongoing developments including the development of the Community building, and the substantial removal of all cars from the beach enhance the prospects for getting this flag.

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At a recent ceremony Bettystown and Mornington Beaches were granted Green Coast Awards in the International Blue Flag and National Green Coast Awards Scheme for 2023. The Green Coast Award is a symbol of environmental excellence and has been established to acknowledge, promote and protect the environment of beaches in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Wales. The award is for beaches and inland bathing waters which have excellent water quality, but which are also prized for their natural, unspoilt character. The Green Coast Award is objective-led and encourages 'best practice' in the management of rural beaches. The award encourages community involvement through the setting up of Clean Coasts Groups, which actively participate in the management of the site in cooperation with the Local Authority.

While Mornington retained its Green Coast Flag this is the first time such an award has been granted for Bettystown Beach and recognising the sterling efforts of Tidy Towns and other groups and individuals working with the Council in keeping both beaches in pristine condition.

Applications to retain both Blue Flags and Green Coasts are made at the end of each year and while requests to add other areas can be considered this will be dependent on sufficient resources being available to administer the schemes.

Deferred to July Council Meeting

### **10 General Interest Motions**

#### **10.1 Submitted by Councillor Elaine McGinty (Deferred from May Meeting)**

*“To write to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and the Minister for the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications to jointly consider the implementation of a radical public procurement strategy for food, whereby the immense buying power of the government is directed towards ecology, friendly farming methods and local production. This will not only support our local economy here in Meath, but also promote and create a greater connection between farmers and the Irish public as we move towards a more sustainable and greener economy.”*

Deferred to July Council Meeting

#### **10.2 Submitted by the Fine Gael Councillors**

*“That Meath County Council calls on the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Public Expenditure to provide the funding necessary to sustain and enhance the Retained Fire Service now and for future generations.”*



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It was agreed that Items 10.2 and 10.3 would be considered together. **Councillor Elaine McGinty** commended the fire-fighters on their roles in their communities and noted their request for improved working conditions and pay. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Joe Bonner, Gerry O'Connor** and **Sarah Reilly**. The motion proposed by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Sharon Tolan** was agreed.

### **10.3 Submitted by Councillor Elaine McGinty**

*“That Meath County Council calls on the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Public Expenditure to provide the funding necessary to sustain and enhance the Retained Fire Service now and for future generations.”*

The motion proposed by **Councillor Elaine McGinty**, seconded by **Councillor David Gilroy** was agreed in accordance with Item 10.2 above.

### **10.4 Submitted by Councillor Edward Fennessy**

*“That Meath County Council calls on the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Public Expenditure to provide the funding necessary to sustain and enhance the Retained Fire Service now and for future generations.”*

**Councillor Edward Fennessy** had left the meeting due to matters relating to his role as Mayor of Navan, therefore this motion was dropped in accordance with Standing Order Number 18.3.

### **10.5 Submitted by Councillor Gerry O'Connor**

*“That Meath Council request that the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Public Expenditure and reform as part of the Budget discussions, give consideration to reversing the pension levy on the value of pension assets applied during the financial crisis in 2013-2015.”*

Deferred to July Council Meeting

### **10.6 Submitted by Councillor Trevor Golden**

*“Meath County Council calls government and regulators (Competition and Consumer Protection Commission) - to ban the practice of dual/discriminatory pricing of goods, specifically by supermarkets by means of a membership system such as Rewards/Club cards. This coercive practice unfairly discriminates and effectively forces an additional condition on the sale of goods.”*

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Deferred to July Council Meeting

### **10.7 Submitted by Councillor Gillian Toole**

*"Meath County Council calls on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to amend planning legislation, as a matter of urgency, to condition for the commencement of large scale/multi-unit housing developments, within 12 months of the grant of planning permission by Local Authorities or An Bord Pleanála, in order to ensure the delivery of homes in Ireland".*

Deferred to July Council Meeting

### **10.8 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín**

*"That Meath County Council calls on the Government to ensure that women as a distinct sector of society are specifically acknowledged and referenced in all future legislation on issues relating to biological women and that words like mother, maternal, womanhood are never diluted, diminished or deleted from laws or regulations going forward."*

Deferred to July Council Meeting

### **10.9 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín and Councillor Gillian Toole**

*"That Meath County Council calls on the government to create a fair, just and humane asylum application process that helps those in need and identifies those who falsely apply for asylum."*

Deferred to July Council Meeting

### **10.10 Submitted by Councillor Noel French**

*"That Meath County Council ask that the Irish Government and the European Commission establish the first tobacco-free generation by 2030, by commencing the process to end the sale of tobacco and nicotine products to people born on or after January 1, 2010."*

Deferred to July Council Meeting

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

### **11.1 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Transportation**

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11.2 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Environment

11.3 Schedule of Chief Executive's Orders – Housing

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

Noted by the Elected Members.

12 Any Other Business

The meeting concluded at 6.15pm.

**NB Please ensure mobile phones are switched off during council meeting.**