



Ordinary Meeting

3rd July 2023 @ 1.30p.m.

Buvinda House, Navan (and online via zoom)

Presiding

An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Tommy Reilly

Councillors Present:

Councillors Joseph Bonner, Mike Bray, Francis Deane, Aisling Dempsey, Eddie Fennessy, Brian Fitzgerald, Joe Fox, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy, Trevor Golden, Wayne Harding, Suzanne Jamal, Nick Killian, Alan Lawes, Paul McCabe, Elaine McGinty, Paddy Meade, Helen Meyer, Ronan Moore, Maria Murphy, Damien O'Reilly, Amanda Smith, Gillian Toole.

Councillors Present via Zoom:

Councillors Yemi Adenuga, Tom Behan, Eugene Cassidy, Sean Drew, Padraig Fitzsimons, Noel French, Geraldine Keogan, Gerry O'Connor, Sarah Reilly, Niamh Souhan, Alan Tobin, Sharon Tolan

Apologies:

Councillor Deirdre Geraghty-Smith, Stephen McKee, Emer Tóibín, Conor Tormey

Officials in attendance:

Chief Executive: Fiona Lawless

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

A/Head of Finance: Sheila Harkin Meetings Administrator: Elaine Daly

On the proposal of **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** it was agreed to bring forward Item 5.1.1: To fill the casual vacancy (1 No.), in the Membership of Meath County Council, following the resignation of Councillor Aisling O'Neill (Ashbourne Municipal District), in accordance with Section 19 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended.

The Meetings Administrator outlined the provisions of Section 19 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended. She noted that pursuant to S.19(3)(a) a nomination for co-option to Meath County Council, dated 27th June 2023, was received from Mr. Ken O'Connell, General Secretary, Sinn Féin advising that Ms. Helen Meyer had been nominated as the replacement for former Councillor Ms. Aisling O'Neill and that written consent had been received from Ms. Meyer consenting to co-option to the local authority in accordance with Section 19(5) of the Act.

Ms. Helen Meyer was proposed by **Councillor Edward Fennessy** and seconded by **Councillor Michael Gallagher** to fill the casual vacancy. **An Cathaoirleach** deemed the casual vacancy to be filled.





Councillor Edward Fennessy paid tribute to former Councillor, Aisling O'Neill and commended her on her commitment to the Council. He also welcomed Councillor Meyer and referenced her active involvement in community affairs in Ashbourne as well as her role as Constituency Manager for Deputy Darren O'Rourke TD. The following Councillors paid tribute to former Councillor Aisling O'Neill and welcomed Councillor Meyer to the Council; Councillors Joe Bonner; Elaine McGinty; Maria Murphy; Paddy Meade; Alan Lawes; Gillian Toole; Suzanne Jamal; Yemi Adenuga and An Cathaoirleach. The Chief Executive welcomed Councillor Meyer to the Council and paid tribute to the commitment and dedication of former Councillor Aisling O'Neill.

Councillor Helen Meyer thanked the proposer and seconder and noted that she was looking forward to the challenge ahead and working with the Council in her roles as a Councillor in both Meath County Council and Ashbourne MD.

1 Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Annual meeting held on 12th June 2023.

The minutes of the Annual meeting held on 12th June 2023 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Francis Deane** and seconded by **Councillor Paul McCabe**.

1.2 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 12th June 2023.

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 12th June 2023 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Joe Fox** and seconded by **Councillor Michael Gallagher**.

2 Matters arising from the Minutes

Councillor Gillian Toole noted that a public meeting had been held in relation to water outages in the Ratoath area and she further noted that the 24-hour protocol in relation to supply of bottled water and water tanks during periods of water outages has not changed. Councillor Toole expressed her dissatisfaction with the correspondence received from Minister Jack Chambers TD, Minister of State for Transport. Finally, Councillor Toole queried whether the proposed settlement capacity audit includes an audit of existing infrastructure.

Councillor Nick Killian noted that the Master Agreement with Uisce Éireann would take effect on July 19, 2023 and he asked that Uisce Éireann refrain from mentioning Meath County Council in social media posts relating to water outages.

Responses to queries raised were provided by Mr. Des Foley and Mr. Dara McGowan.





3 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

3.1 Expressions of Sympathy were extended to:

Emmet Conboy, Environment on the death of his father, John.

The family and friends of the late Mary Finegan, former employee.

The family and friends of the late Denis Kealy, Dunshaughlin

The family and friends of the late David McAteer

The family and friends of the late Noel Thomas Martin, Navan.

The family and friends of the late Thomas (Tommy) Coleman, Navan.

3.2 In accordance with Standing Order 11.5 Congratulations were extended to:

Dee Rangers Ladies Football Team, winners of division 1 Meath LGFA League.

Cllr. Brian Fitzgerald and staff of Meath County Council for returning St. John's Well to Warrenstown, Drumree.

All involved in the organisation of Navan Pride Parade.

- 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 0.0020 Ha of land at Gort na Glaise, Ferganstown, 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 June 21, 2023, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Francis Deane** and seconded by **Councillor Edward Fennessy**.

4.2 Disposal of 0.0006 Ha of land at Abbey Lane, Abbeylands, 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 June 21, 2023, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Edward Fennessy** and seconded by **Councillor Francis Deane**.

4.3 Disposal of 0.1147 Ha of land, by way of lease, at Bryanstown, Beamore Road, Drogheda, 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 lands are not affected by the provisions of the Land Development Agency Act 2021.

The disposal, in accordance with the statutory notice issued on June 21, 2023, under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved on the proposal of **Councillor Tom Behan** and seconded by **Councillor Sharon Tolan**.

5 Statutory Business

5.1 Corporate Affairs and Governance

5.1.1 To fill the casual vacancy (1 No.), in the Membership of Meath County Council, following the resignation of Councillor Aisling O'Neill (Ashbourne Municipal District), in accordance with Section 19 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended.

As noted above.

5.1.2 To appoint a replacement Councillor to the Joint Policing Committee following the resignation of Cllr. Aisling O'Neill.

As proposed by **Councillor Edward Fennessy**, seconded by **Councillor Michael Gallagher** and agreed, **Councillor Helen Meyer** was appointed to the Joint Policing Committee.

5.1.3 To appoint a replacement Councillor to the Planning, Economic Development, Enterprise and European Affairs SPC following the resignation of Cllr. Aisling O'Neill.

As proposed by **Councillor Edward Fennessy**, seconded by **Councillor Michael Gallagher** and agreed, **Councillor Helen Meyer** was appointed to the Planning, Economic Development, Enterprise and European Affairs SPC.

5.1.4 To appoint a replacement Councillor to the Corporate Policy Group representing the Ratoath Municipal District.





As proposed by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald**, seconded by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and agreed, **Councillor Nick Killian** was appointed to the Corporate Policy Group representing the Ratoath Municipal District.

5.1.5 To appoint a replacement Councillor to Meath Comhairle na nÓg following the resignation of Cllr. Mike Bray.

As proposed by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly**, seconded by **Councillor Michael Gallagher** and agreed, **Councillor Helen Meyer** was appointed to the Meath Comhairle na nÓg.

5.2 Community

5.2.1 To receive details and approve the allocation under the Carranstown Environmental Projects Grants Scheme 2022, as recommended by the Indaver Community Liaison Committee on 8th June 2023 and endorsed by the Laytown/Bettystown Municipal District Councillors on 15th June 2023.

On the proposal of **Councillor Geraldine Keogan**, seconded by **Councillor Sharon Tolan** and agreed, the allocation under the Carranstown Environmental Projects Grants Scheme 2022 was approved.

5.2.2 To receive a presentation on the activity of the Drogheda Implementation Board in relation to recommendations on anti-social behaviour.

An Cathaoirleach welcomed Mr. Michael Keogh, Chair of Drogheda Implementation Board and Ms. Grainne Berrill, Drogheda Implementation Board Co-ordinator. Ms. Berrill outlined the details of the Report on 'Drogheda: Creating a Bridge to a Better Future', produced by Vivien Geiran, former Director of the Probation Service, which included long and short-term recommendations. The Drogheda Report Implementation Plan was published in July 2021. It identified the need for improved interagency co-ordination, a multi-agency response and set out 73 actions to improve community safety and well-being. The Drogheda Implementation Board was established in October 2021 to enable cross agency co-ordination to deliver the actions of the Implementation Plan. The importance of Open Communications as well as resourcing communities and making connections was noted.

There were interventions and queries from Councillors Damien O'Reilly; Nick Killian; Elaine McGinty; Michael Gallagher; Maria Murphy; Paddy Meade; Yemi Adenuga; Ronan Moore; Alan Tobin; Sharon Tolan and Gillian Toole. Queries included how success was measured, Garda resources, quick wins, limiting factors to achieving goals and reporting mechanisms. Responses to queries raised were provided by Ms. Grainne Berrill and Mr. Michael Keogh. An Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Keogh and Ms. Berrill for their attendance and openness in the discussion.

5.3 Planning





5.3.1 To note the Chief Executive's Report pursuant to the provisions of Section 13(1)(b) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) in response to the following notice of motion adopted at the June Council Meeting.

"Further to motion adopted by the members of Meath County Council on 14th 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 1st July 2022 with particular reference to the de-zoning of services lands."

Mr. Des Foley noted that the Council had issued correspondence to Minister Darragh O'Brien TD, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage requesting an urgent meeting to discuss the implications of the Core Strategy on housing development, a copy of the correspondence was forwarded to the Elected Members.

The Elected Members supported the correspondence to Minister O'Brien TD. There were interventions and queries from Councillors Brian Fitzgerald; Joe Fox; Sean Drew; Gillian Toole; Michael Gallagher; Gerry O'Connor; Alan Tobin; Nick Killian and Maria Murphy. Queries included existing infrastructure on zoned lands, land hoarding, availability of zoned lands and requirements for Local Area Plans. Responses to queries raised were provided by Mr. Des Foley and Mr. Padraig Maguire, Senior Planner.

6 Reports

6.1 Chief Executive's Report

There were interventions from the following Elected Members: Councillors Alan Lawes; Nick Killian; Damien O'Reilly; Mike Bray; Edward Fennessy; Gillian Tool and Paul McCabe. The issues raised included:

Environment: HVO Fuel; Grants for Septic Tank Upgrade Works;

Housing: Homeless Figures; Tenant-in-Situ Scheme; CBL System; Availability of one-bedroom

housing;

Transport: Safe Routes to School; Traffic Calming Measures; Provision of School Wardens; Impact

of Water Outages on the Municipal District Works; Rural Bus Stops

Planning: e-Planning Portal.





The Elected Members also commended the Council on the successful launch of the Economic Development Strategy Roadmap. Responses to queries raised were provided by Mr. Des Foley, Mr. Dara McGowan, Mr. Barry Lynch and Mr. Martin Murray.

6.2 Report from the Corporate Policy Group

The Meetings Administrator reported that The CPG met on Friday June 30, to review the draft agenda and the practical arrangements for this this afternoon's Council Meeting. The minutes of the Transportation SPC which took place on June 15, 2023 were noted. There were no recommendations to the CPG.

It was noted that in accordance with the Local Property Tax legislation that the public consultation on the local property tax will commence this Wednesday. It was further noted that the Master Agreement with Uisce Éireann would come into effect from July 19, 2023 and that Uisce Éireann had appointed a designated liaison officer following the water outages in the Ratoath and Ashbourne area.

Mr. Des Foley outlined the details of the composition of the Economic Development Forum. It was agreed at the CPG meeting that each Municipal District would be asked to make nominations to the Forum, to be received by the Economic Development Team no later than 5.00pm Friday July 14, 2023, following which a special meeting of the CPG would be held to consider the nominations.

6.3 Report from the Protocol Committee

The Meetings Administrator reported that the Protocol Committee met on Friday June 30 and arrangements for the Council meeting were discussed as well as the composition of the Protocol Committee following the election of the Cathaoirleach and Leas-Chathaoirleach.

The members of the Protocol Committee received a demonstration on the new Members Portal on the CRM. The Portal will be piloted by four of the elected members before being made available to all elected members in September.

Proposed amendments to the Standing Orders were discussed. It was noted that the Whips had previously met to review the proposed amendments and it was agreed that the proposed amendments would be put forward to the CPG and the full Council at the September Council meeting.

Finally, meeting dates for MDs were discussed and it was agreed that the meeting dates would not change.

7 Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

8 Notice of Question

There were no Notices of Question.





9 Notice of Motion

9.1 Submitted by Councillor Trevor Golden (Deferred from June Council Meeting)

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

<u>Supporting Information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered.</u>

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.

Councillor Trevor Golden welcomed the response. **Councillor Ronan Moore** queried the development of a Communications Strategy and a response was provided by Mr. Dara McGowan.

The Motion proposed by **Councillor Trevor Golden** and seconded by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** was approved.

9.2 Submitted by Councillor Sharon Tolan (Deferred from June Council Meeting)

"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."

<u>Supporting Information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered.</u>

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.





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.

Councillor Sharon Tolan welcomed the response. She noted that community groups were willing to assist, and this could be supported by the appointment of a beach manager.

The Motion proposed by **Councillor Sharon Tolan** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin** was approved.

9.3 Submitted by Councillor Trevor Golden

"We call on Meath County Council to consider the principle, and where appropriate in Towns and Villages, to implement pedestrian first/protected junctions for all future junction design and upgrade works."

<u>Supporting Information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered.</u>

The Council support the provision of protected junctions at appropriate locations in the County. For example, recent part 8 proposals for cycle schemes in Navan along the R147 propose protected layouts at certain junctions. Similarly, protected junctions are due to be constructed at the R135/Ballybin Road and R135 Castle Street junctions in Ashbourne.

The motion proposed by **Councillor Trevor Golden**, seconded by **Councillor Michael Gallagher** was agreed.





10 General Interest Motions

10.1 Submitted by Councillor Elaine McGinty (Deferred from May and June Council Meetings)

"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."

Councillor Elaine McGinty introduced the motion noting that a balance needed to be reached between food requirements and climate change. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Michael Gallagher** and **Paddy Meade**.

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

10.2 Submitted by Councillor Gerry O'Connor (Deferred from June Council Meeting)

"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."

Councillor Gerry O'Connor introduced the motion. He noted that he had circulated background information to the Elected Members. **Councillor Alan Tobin** supported the motion.

The motion, proposed by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Suzanne Jamal** was agreed.

10.3 Submitted by Councillor Trevor Golden (Deferred from June Council Meeting)

"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."





Councillor Trevor Golden introduced the motion noting that the requirement for reward cards to receive the benefit of in-store promotions placed an additional criterion of sale on some goods. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Gillian Toole** and **Elaine McGinty.**

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Trevor Golden**, seconded by **Councillor Gillian Toole** and agreed.

10.4 Submitted by Councillor Gillian Toole (Deferred from June Council Meeting)

"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".

Councillor Gillian Toole introduced the motion. She acknowledged the comments from the executive in relation to Item 5.3.1 of the agenda, however, she noted that there were large parcels of serviced land in the County remained undeveloped.

There were interventions of support from **Councillors Elaine McGinty** and **Ronan Moore** and it was suggested that An Bord Pleanala should give priority to planning applications where developers are in receipt of funding.

Councillors Brian Fitzgerald and Paddy Meade did not support the motion and it was noted that due to complexity of some planning conditions it could take longer than 12 months to comply with planning conditions in advance of commencement of development. The motion proposed by Councillor Gillian Toole and seconded by Councillor Elaine McGinty was not agreed on a show of hands vote, with 7 members in agreement and 20 members not in agreement.

10.5 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín (Deferred from June Council Meeting)

"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."

The Meetings Administrator advised the Elected Members that as **Councillor Emer Tóibín** was not present at the meeting, nor had any Councillor received authorisation in writing to propose the motion on her behalf, then the motion is dropped in accordance with Standing Order No. 19.3.

10.6 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín and Councillor Gillian Toole (Deferred from June Council Meeting)





"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."

On the proposal of **Councillor Gillian Toole** and seconded by **Councillor Elaine McGinty**, it was agreed to defer the motion to the September Council meeting.

10.7 Submitted by Councillor Noel French (Deferred from June Council Meeting)

"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."

The motion was introduced by Councillor Noel French. There were interventions of support from Councillors Paddy Meade; Gillian Toole; Trevor Golden; Maria Murphy and Gerry O'Connor. While Councillor Ronan Moore supported the motion, he noted that vaping products should also be included. Councillors Alan Lawes and Brian Fitzgerald didn't support the motion as they believed there were practical issues in implementing the proposal.

The motion proposed by **Councillor Noel French** and seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade** was agreed on a show of hands vote, with 15 members in agreement and 9 members not in agreement.

10.8 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 Mortgage to Rent (MTR) positive equity limit from €35,000 to €60,000."

The motion proposed by **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian** was agreed.

10.9 Submitted by the Fine Gael Councillors

"That Meath County Council recognises that Tara Mines is a significant employer in County Meath, both directly and indirectly, and it asks relevant Government ministers to work tirelessly to ensure that all employees are adequately supported, and that Boliden is enabled to resume business in an appropriate and timely manner."

The motion was introduced by **Councillor Sarah Reilly.** There was overwhelming support in the Council Chamber with interventions from **Councillors Paddy Meade**; **Brian Fitzgerald**; **Michael Gallagher**; **Gillian Toole**; **Wayne Harding**; **Nick Killian**; **Alan Lawes** and **An Cathaoirleach**. The Chief Executive noted that Tara Mines was a significant wealth generator within the County, and she advised





the Elected Members that she had been in contact with Senior Management at Tara Mines to support the long-term future and viability of the mines.

The motion proposed by **Councillor Sarah Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade** was agreed.

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

There was no other business.

The meeting concluded at 5.20pm.