

Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Ordinary Meeting

Ashbourne Municipal District

11:00 am, 5th December 2023, Ashbourne Civic Offices

Cathaoirleach, Councillor **Conor Tormey** presided.

Councillors Present: Joe Bonner, Suzanne Jamal, Amanda Smith, Helen Meyer, Alan Tobin.

Apologies/ Absent: n/a

Councillors Present via Zoom: none.

Officials in Attendance:

Director of Service: Barry Lynch

Executive Engineer: Mel Cronin

Meetings Administrator: Áine Bird

Staff Officer: Ann Monaghan

1 Election of Cathaoirleach

Councillor Alan Tobin proposed Councillor Conor Tormey, and this was seconded by Councillor Amanda Smith.

Councillor Joe Bonner proposed himself and this was seconded by Councillor Helen Meyer.

A roll call was taken with Councillors Jamal, Smith, Tobin and Tormey voting for Councillor Tormey and Councillors Bonner and Meyer voting for Councillor Bonner.

It was declared that **Councillor Tormey** was **elected Cathaoirleach**.

2 Confirmation of Minutes

2.1 Confirmation of Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held on 7th November 2023

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on the 7th of November 2023 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Amanda Smith** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin**.

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2.2 Confirmation of Minutes of Special Finance Meeting held on 7th November 2023.

The minutes of the special finance meeting held on the 7th of November 2023 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Suzanne Jamal** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin**.

3 Matters arising from the Minutes.

- A discussion ensued regarding the Flood Alleviation Scheme that was carried out at the Broadmeadow River by the OPW. The members requested that the full report of the completed works be circulated.
- Update on the flooding issue at the GAA- advised that the contractor is to address this issue.

4 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

Sympathy was extended to the family of the late Jack Holmes.

5 Disposal of Land pursuant to the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001

There were no disposals.

6 To receive a Presentation from Bremore Ireland and Drogheda Port in respect of the proposed Bremore Ireland Port.

Dr Joseph Hiney, Bremore Ireland Port and Paddy Tehan Chairperson Bremore Company gave an overview on the Bremore Port Master Plan vision. Dr Hiney advised on the following:

- Public Private development with 51% owned by Drogheda port.
- Location studies ongoing over 15 years.
- Situated along a connected East Coast as close to the M1 motorway, rail link and other ports.
- A new state of the art port catering for all cargo types and complementing Drogheda and Dublin ports.
- An energy hub with a transition to green hydrogen production and offshore windfarm support.
- Economic impact by creating employment locally and nationally.
- Enhance the tourist attractions in the area.

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- A phased development with a planning application due for submission 2025/2026.

The members raised the following queries:

- The development is close to the Delvin River and will impact on the heritage within the area.
- Referred to the Environmental impact concerns.
- Enquired if the Drogheda port could be expanded instead.
- Referred to the requirements for deep waters for the port, could the location be moved north.
- Referred to the walking routes that will be provided where a lot of the land is privately owned.
- No reference to aquatic species and the impact it may have on this.
- Referred to hydrogen production and who will invest in this.
- Fossil fuels being used to develop as opposed to green products.
- Enquired about transporting freight by rail and has there been any discussion with TII.
- Referred to the private investment and will it include the development of housing.
- Referred to early community engagement as this will have a big impact on the area.
- Enquired if any lands have been bought yet.
- Asked about the total area of the port and the distance from the beach.

Responses to the queries were provided by Dr Hiney and Mr Tehan, Bremore Ireland.

7 Statutory Business

7.1 Transportation

7.1.1 To receive a Progress Report on works undertaken/planned for Ashbourne Municipal District

The report circulated in advance was noted and the following raised:

- The Arkle Memorial statue needs some repairs – advised that a proposed plan of works will need to be prepared.
- Enquired when the pedestrian crossing will be installed at St Marys, Ashbourne – advised that Fox Contractor will do crossing when they finish the works they are currently completing.
- Welcomed the works completed in Stamullen and Ardcath.

7.2 Corporate Affairs and Governance

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7.2.1 To note the Municipal District Allocations submitted by Councillors on behalf of Ashbourne Municipal District.

The allocations were noted.

8 Notice of Question

8.1 Submitted by Councillor Conor Tormey

To provide an update regarding the Greenogue Bus Stop:

Has tendering for consultant taken place? We were told “coming weeks” at March 2023 meeting. If not, why not, if yes:

Has the appointment of a consultant taken place, If not why? If yes:

Has a planning permission application been lodged? If not, why not? We were told end May 2023.

RESPONSE

- Has tendering for consultant taken place? We were told “coming weeks” at March 2023 meeting. If not, why not, if yes:

Yes, the tender for the Consultants has been completed.

- Has the appointment of a consultant taken place? If not, why not? If yes:

Yes, the Consultants have been appointed.

- Has a planning permission application been lodged? If not, why not? We were told end May 2023.

Planning permission application imminent. The Transportation Department are awaiting completion of the independent Stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit on the proposed design. We have tendered for and appointed the independent RSA Auditor for this process. Once the report is received, the planning application will be finalised and submitted.

Brian Murray Engineer updated the members regarding the Part 8 which is due to go on public display until January. He said that the NTA has committed to funding the scheme and that construction would be due to commence in early 2024. The response was welcomed, and the members unanimously agreed to proceed with the scheme.

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8.2 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin

Following another car accident/fire in the centre of the 9 Mile Stone roundabout and previous queries through the MD following a fatal collision/fire at the same location, can Transport and TII please inform Councillors about the measures, if any, will be taken to improve safety, sightlines, speeding on approach from the M2 exit and the removal of hedging that prevents emergency crews from accessing the central area of the roundabout?

RESPONSE

Transportation Department will follow up on this query, and previous enquiries, with the TII and raise it as an Agenda item at the next TII meeting in the New Year.

The response was noted.

8.3 Submitted by Councillor Helen Meyer

Can we look at putting streetlights the entire length of the river walk. The Riverwalk is lit only halfway. This effectively rules out walking by the river when it gets dark, which is at least 4 months of the year. Also, there is a lot of anti-social behavior in the area when it gets dark. Lighting up that area will decrease that behavior and encourage more legitimate walkers to use that area.

RESPONSE:

The path in question is the road that extends from the Broadmeadow River walk down Deerpark estate past the Council depot and Irish Water Waste Treatment works.

At the minute there is no intention to provide public lighting along this roadway on the basis that the roadway does not have an established footpath, is not considered an amenity as it is removed from the river and is flanked by a council depot and wastewater treatment plant. The residents of Deerpark estate have several fully lit permeability links back to the R135 and also the Broadmeadow River trail. The Meath County Council Public Lighting Section are also conscious of the proliferation of public lighting, and its impact on Biodiversity.

Furthermore, it would not be an efficient use of the limited public lighting budgets for capital works.

The response was noted.

9 Notice of Motion

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9.1 Submitted by Councillor Conor Tormey

That the Council do an investigation and provide a report on the operation of the traffic lights at the junction of Deerpark and Alderbrook on the old N2 at Ashbourne. Residents, parents, commuters, and shoppers are all affected and are suggesting longer time to clear the main old N2 and synchronising of all the traffic lights to provide a proper traffic flow for all. A report to be provided on this for the next council meeting in view of the additional concerns in the lead into seasonal shopping in the town.

Supporting information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered:

Meath County Council Traffic Signals Team have completed a review of the lights and in particular the resting on red function. This function was installed as a speed control measure to slow vehicles that have just come from the motorway onto the regional road and who were still travelling at excessive speeds. The latest speed surveys have shown that this junction does have an effect on slowing vehicles down to the legal speed limit at the junction. However, the team understands the concern relating to the unnecessary slowing and stopping of vehicles during peak traffic. The resting on red phase will be removed for a portion of the day. The lights will rest on red from 20:00 to 06:00 only. This will allow traffic to flow more freely during peak times, while still having a traffic calming effect off-peak.

This change to the signals requires a new configuration to be built for the controller. This has been added to the list of scheduled works and will be updated in due course.

On the proposal of **Councillor Conor Tormey** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin** the motion and response were agreed.

9.2 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin, Councillor Conor Tormey and Councillor Suzanne Jamal. (Joint)

Ashbourne Councillors call on Meath County Council to implement an affordable and social housing option on the upcoming Section 179a application for Archer's Glen, Ashbourne with a 49 social and 30 affordable split, which will ensure the development is in keeping with Department of Housing guidelines under the current Design Manual for Quality Housing.

Supporting information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered:

Meath Co. Council acquired the site in 2022 as part of its ongoing programme to acquire residential zoned land in areas of high social housing demand. The purchase of the site

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was funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage for social housing under the Social Housing Investment Programme on the basis that the Council seek to progress a development as soon as possible using modern methods of construction. The approved funding is for a 100% social housing development at this location and there is no Dept. sanction to progress an affordable scheme on the site.

The Design Manual for Quality Housing proposes that the number of houses in a single tenure development should be 50 in this size of town. However, the housing guidelines recommend that the 'number should not be taken as an absolute maximum and that flexibility is possible'. The Council believes that the number of 79 is acceptable for several reasons, firstly the units are mostly 1 & 2 bed and secondly the appropriate supports to manage the estate will be put in place. Based on the high level of private housing in the vicinity this development does not cause an excessive concentration of social housing in the area.

To date the Council has pursued the provision of Affordable Housing by direct sale arrangements with developers rather than direct construction as this reduces the financial risk for both parties. The Council has run two affordable schemes in Meath to date in Dunshaughlin (20 units) and Navan (26 units). While there have been a significant number of enquiries, based on the experience to date this has translated into small numbers of purchasers who have the means to buy. However, the Council is prepared to work on a direct sales basis with any interested parties who want to provide affordable housing in Ashbourne and who submit an Expression of Interest on etenders. ([We wish to purchase Housing Developments for Social, Affordable and Mixed Tenure Housing | Meath.ie](#)). The First Home Scheme is also available to first time buyers through the pillar banks as an alternative means to purchase housing on an affordable basis [Home \(firsthomescheme.ie\)](#)

On the proposal of **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Suzanne Jamal** the members agreed that a letter issue to the department seeking sanction to alter the allocation of social housing to include affordable housing.

Barry Lynch Dos Housing told the members that the department are funding the scheme and therefore will need sanction to alter the scheme from social housing to include affordable houses. He said that there will be a requirement to repay the funding for the reduction in the social housing units not being delivered. He advised that a costings to deliver on the affordable units will need to be completed and submitted to the department also.

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To assess where the bins in Ashbourne are located and where there is a shortage of bins. I spoke to one of the men who empties the bins, and he said some bins are used and overflowing, where others are not well located. Tidy Towns is also a good resource as to where the problem litter areas are.

Supporting information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered:

Ashbourne Municipal District continually monitors litter bin usage and locate the bins to best meet demand or deal with problem litter spots. Some bins are only busy during the summer months as they are located in recreational type open spaces. Some bins have been used for domestic waste which can give the impression of an overflowing situation very quickly. The photos below show a bin that was used for domestic waste on a number of occasions and the decision was taken to remove this bin in November 2023 as the service was being abused. The Ashbourne MD will continue to monitor the requirement of litter bins in conjunction with our operatives who maintain same,”

On the proposal of **Councillor Helen Meyer** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin** the motion and response were agreed.

9.4 Submitted by Councillor Helen Meyer

To ask the executive to actively pursue a smaller public site in Ashbourne to develop an off-leash dog park. Ashbourne remains Meath's second largest town with a population of 15,680, up 24 percent since the last census. The population is projected to continue to grow at that rate. With more apartments being built under the new housing model, dog owners will have even fewer options to walk and exercise their dogs. Without anywhere to walk and potty the dogs, green areas where children play are being used with the resultant dog fouling on playing fields and on footpaths. There is no green space to walk dogs in Ashbourne and given that a public park is many years away, a smaller off-leash dog park may be a more feasible proposition.

Supporting information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered:

Meath County Council has carried out some research on dog off-lead areas in parks, to investigate possible steps required to determine the demand, feasibility and implications of the provision of a dog park. Initial findings are as follows:

Surveys with equal numbers of dog owners and non-dog owners/broader consultation with the public would be required to establish demand.

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Members of the public would expect consultation with an animal behavioural expert to identify any issues associated with fenced-off areas (large/small dogs, restricted areas leading to aggression in dogs, etc).

The physical amenity would include the provision of secure fencing, double gates, water taps, bins, signage, benches, safe method of weed control.

Identification of a suitable location, with consideration for access and parking.

Amendment of the Parks Byelaws, including implications for areas outside the off-lead areas (strictly on-lead in other parts of the park and in other parks/specific times for off-lead?).

Inspection and enforcement of dog park rules.

The Community and Transportation Departments, when resources allow, will carry out further research and consider the items above, to determine the suitability and feasibility of a dog park.

On the proposal of **Councillor Helen Meyer** and seconded by **Councillor Conor Tormey** the motion and response were agreed.

10 Strategic Policy Committee & Corporate Policy Group Reports – For Information Purposes

1. To note the Corporate Policy Group Meeting Minutes of 3rd November 2023.

The minutes were noted.

2. To note the Protocol Committee minutes of 3rd November 2023.

The minutes were noted.

3. To note the draft minutes from the Housing, Community, and Cultural Development SPC of 21st November 2023

The draft minutes were noted.

4. To note the draft minutes of the Climate Action, Environment and Emergency Services SPC of 3rd November 2023.

The draft minutes were noted.



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11 Correspondence

There was none.

12 Any Other Business

There was none.

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm

Signed:

Cathaoirleach