

## ***Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes***

### ***Ordinary Meeting***

***3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 @ 1.30p.m.***

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

**Presiding:** An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Sharon Tolan

**Councillors Present:**

Councillors Fionnán Blake, Joe Bonner, Mike Bray, Padraig Coffey, Francis Deane, Yvonne Everard, Brian Fitzgerald, Padraig Fitzsimons, Noel French, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy, Wayne Harding, Suzanne Jamal, Nick Killian, Alan Lawes, Carol Lennon, Helen Meyer, Maria Murphy, Sarah Reilly, Amanda Smith and Emer Tóibín.

**Councillors Present via Zoom:**

Councillors Dave Boyne, Eugene Cassidy, Sean Drew, Eddie Fennessy, Geraldine Keogan, Stephen McKee, Paddy Meade, Ronan Moore, Caroline O'Reilly, Paul O'Rourke, Alan Tobin, Conor Tormey and Maria White.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Yemi Adenuga, Peter Caffrey, Joe Fox and Gerry O'Connor.

**Officials in attendance:**

**Chief Executive:** Kieran Kehoe

**Directors of Service:** Des Foley, Fiona Lawless, Barry Lynch, Dara McGowan, Martin Murray, Fiona Fallon, Pádraig Maguire.

**Meetings Administrator:** Elaine Daly

### **1.0 Confirmation of Minutes**

#### **1.1 Confirmation of minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Sarah Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Maria Murphy**.

#### **1.2 Confirmation of minutes of meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

The minutes of the Special meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2025 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Michael Gallagher** and seconded by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald**.

### **2.0 Matters arising from the Minutes**

**Councillor Nick Killian** raised the matter regarding tenancy allocations at the Aylesbury development. His comments were supported by **Councillor Noel French**.

### **3.0 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations**

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Expressions of Sympathy were extended to:

Áine Bird, Rural Regeneration on the death of her brother, Micheál Bird.

The family of the late Sean Kelleher, former employee.

Jason Sheils, Transportation on the death of his mother, Ann Sheils.

Kevin Flanagan, Kells Station Officer on the death of his father, Michael Flanagan, former Fire Fighter.

The family of the late Bernard (Benny) Coldrick, former employee.

The family of the late Michael Kiernan, former employee.

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

None

### **5.0 Statutory Business**

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

##### **5.1.1 To consider the Audit Committee Annual Report 2024 from Ms. Geraldine Tallon, Chair of Audit Committee.**

Ms. Geraldine Tallon, Chair of the Meath County Council Audit Committee, presented the key details of the Audit Committee's Annual Report for 2024, along with the Audit Committee Report in relation to the AFS and LG Auditor's Report 2023. She emphasized the Committee's ongoing commitment to providing independent assurance regarding the Council's control environment and governance framework. Ms. Tallon also expressed the Committee's satisfaction that it has fulfilled its statutory obligations under the Local Government Acts and related regulations. She acknowledged the robustness of the Council's financial management systems and acknowledged the transition from a significant deficit to a modest surplus in the end-of-year accounts. Finally, Ms. Tallon thanked the members of the Audit Committee for their dedication and further acknowledged the continued support from the Council's executive team.

**Councillors Sean Drew and Maria Murphy** acknowledged the ongoing commitment of the Audit Committee.

##### **5.1.2 To consider the Audit Committee Report in relation to the AFS and LG Auditor's Report 2023**

Noted by the Elected Members

##### **5.1.3 To adopt the Audit Committee Charter 2025**

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The Audit Committee Charter 2025 was adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Maria Murphy**, seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian** and unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

### **5.1.4 To adopt the Audit Committee Annual Work Programme 2025**

The Audit Committee Annual Work Programme 2025 was adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Maria Murphy**, seconded by **Councillor Pdraig Coffey** and unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

## **5.2 Community**

### **5.2.1 To receive a presentation from Meath Comhairle na nÓg.**

Ms. Olivia Costello and Ms. Lisa O'Reilly updated the members on the activities of Meath Comhairle na nÓg. They expressed their concerns about several issues, including the availability of period products in schools, the limited number of autism classes within the County, and the availability of full-time school completion staff/career guidance teachers. Additionally, they requested the support of the Elected Members for their annual Youth Conference and urged ongoing consultation with the Comhairle to ensure that youth voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes.

There were interventions of support from Councillors **Nick Killian; Noel French; Maria White; Mike Bray; Wayne Harding; Ronan Moore; Emer Tóibín; Sarah Reilly; Helen Meyer** and **An Cathaoirleach**.

## **5.3 Transportation**

### **5.3.1 To approve the Road Traffic (Special Speed Limit) (Housing Estates) County of Meath Bye-Laws (No. 1) 2024**

The Road Traffic (Special Speed Limit) (Housing Estates) County of Meath Bye-Laws (No. 1) 2024 were approved on the proposal of **Councillor Wayne Harding**, seconded by **Councillor Pdraig Fitzsimons** and unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

## **6.0 Reports**

### **6.1 Management Report**

There were interventions from **Councillors Nick Killian; Noel French; Helen Meyer; Brian Fitzgerald; Alan Tobin; Ronan Moore; Joe Bonner; Maria Murphy; Pdraig Fitzsimons; Eddie Fennessy** and **Fionnan Blake**. Matter raised included:

**Community** East Meath Civic Centre, Ashbourne Skatepark,

**Housing** Land banks, cost rental schemes, housing support clinics, energy upgrades, affordable housing, tenant-in-situ scheme,

**Planning** Reduction in number of commencement notices,

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**Transport**      NTA funding, R135 roadworks, dezone lands, Navan to Trim Pathfinder Project.

It was proposed by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald**, seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian** and agreed by the Elected Members to write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to seek approval to rezone lands that were de-zoned in the review of the last County Development Plan.

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

The Meetings Administrator noted that the CPG met on Monday, February 24, at the East Meath Civic Centre in Bettystown and that the draft agenda and arrangements for the February Council Meeting were reviewed. She further outlined that the reports of the Climate Action, Environment and Emergency Services SPC, 22nd January 2025, the Community & Cultural Development and Gaeltacht Affairs SPC, 22nd January 2025 and the Forward Planning and Development Management SPC, 7th February 2025 were noted by the CPG and the minutes of the meetings have been uploaded to the Resources Section of Decision Time.

Finally, it was noted that the Conference and Training Schedules were approved and circulated.

### **7.0      Correspondence**

Noted by the Elected Members

### **8.0      Notice of Question**

#### **8.1      Submitted by Councillor Francis Deane**

*"What is the proposed time frame for resurfacing the R153 (Duleek to Navan), following the recent water mains pipe installation?"*

#### **Response**

All permanent reinstatement will be as specified by the 'Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Road', also known as the 'Purple Book', and any conditions prescribed by the Road Opening Licence.

The contractor is required to develop the schedule and sequencing for the permanent reinstatement works along the R153. The permanent reinstatement will be half carriageway width and may require some short term road closures. The contractor's proposed programme will be submitted in 2025 for consideration and approval, it is anticipated works will take place during the summer months and further information will be communicated to the Navan, Ashbourne and Laytown Bettystown Municipal Districts before and during the reinstatement works.

Noted by the Elected Members

#### **8.2      Submitted by Councillor Maria White**

*"How much has been allocated to the tenant in situ scheme this year?"*

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### **Response**

Meath County Council has been advised that the Government is expected to make a decision on a tenant-in-situ programme for 2025 shortly, which will then be communicated to local authorities. The Housing Authority continues to take appropriate steps to support households at risk of homelessness, including in cases where tenants have been served with a notice of termination by their landlord. As a standard practice, the Housing Authority assesses all the options available in each case and decides on the appropriate action. All available options are considered to prevent homelessness.

Noted by the Elected Members

### **8.3 Submitted by Councillor Maria Murphy**

*“What are the plans for the parklets which were installed outside public houses and restaurants etc. during COVID-19.”*

### **Response**

A scheme of parklets was provided by Meath County Council across the County with Department of Transport/NTA funding. Unless otherwise authorised (for example by way of planning permission), street furniture on the public road associated with outdoor dining requires a licence under Section 254 of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2023. A significant number of licences were required and processed for the parklets. These schemes have since closed. However, applicants must continue to comply with any conditions attached to a licence, including in respect of the duration of the licence.

Noted by the Elected Members

### **8.4 Submitted by Councillor Yvonne Everard**

*“Can the Chief Executive clarify how many section 183s had taken place in the year 2015?”*

### **Response**

In accordance with Assets S183 register, a total of 17 Section 183 applications were approved in 2015.

Mr. Martin Murray noted that there was a clerical error in the response provided and he noted that a total of 23 Section 183 applications were approved in 2015.

Noted by the Elected Members

### **9.0 Notice of Motion**

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### **9.1 Submitted by Councillor Francis Deane**

*“I call on Meath County Council to engage with local farming organisations, such as the Irish Farmers' Association (IFA) and the Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers' Association (ICMS), to implement a scheme, similar to those established by other local authorities, to address the concerns related to falling and diseased trees in proximity to overhead power lines.”*

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

The legal responsibility for maintenance of road side trees rest with the landowner. If a Central Government funded scheme is developed through or in conjunction with any specific association or organisation, Meath County Council will administer accordingly.

**Councillor Francis Deane** introduced the motion and welcomed the response. He noted that central government funding would be required to assist farmers in addressing the issue.

The Motion, together with supporting information, was unanimously agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Francis Deane** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**.

### **9.2 Submitted by Councillor Ronan Moore**

*“To ask the council to invite public submissions, through way of an online portal, so as to understand Meath resident's experience of Storm Eowyn, and in doing so help the county learn lessons and prepare for weather events of such magnitude in the future”.*

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

Meath County Council and the Meath Local Coordination Group acknowledge the significant impact of Storm Eowyn on communities across the county. We understand the importance of learning from this experience to better prepare for future severe weather events. Therefore, we will be conducting a comprehensive review of our response to Storm Eowyn, working closely with key stakeholders including emergency services, community representatives, and relevant agencies.

This review will include a thorough examination of how we identify and support those most vulnerable and at-risk during severe weather events. We recognise that the impact of such events can vary significantly across different demographics and locations, and our review will take this into account. We will be looking at ways to improve our communication strategies, resource allocation, and support mechanisms to ensure we are effectively reaching and assisting those who need it most. For the purpose of this specific review, we will be conducting a targeted

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review process with key stakeholders. This approach will allow us to gather focused feedback from those directly involved in the response to Storm Eowyn.

**Councillor Ronan Moore** introduced the motion and welcomed the response. He noted the importance of learning from the recent experience of Storm Eowyn . The Motion proposed by **Councillor Ronan Moore**, seconded by **Councillor Joe Bonner** was unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

### **9.3 Submitted by Councillor Fionnan Blake**

*“To ask the Executive to clarify the timescales for commencements of roads waiting to be resurfaced on the Community Involvement scheme.”*

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

The existing list of Community Involvement Schemes applications is currently being assessed to develop the 2025 list for the Department of Transport funding, the discharge of this funding has specific requirements as set out in the Memorandum for Grants for Regional and Local Roads. €3,083,800 of Own Resources has been committed to investment in Local Tertiary (Class 3) Roads with 15% of this figure allocated to cul-de-sacs. The tender process has commenced for the 2025 Roadworks Programme, once tenders are returned there will be greater clarity on how many cul-de-sacs works can be completed. Upon tender evaluation and assessment the number of CIS and cul-de-sacs to be delivered this year will be communicated to the members as well as a proposed estimation for future years.

**Councillor Fionnan Blake** introduced the motion and called for a review of the scheme by Central Government. The Motion proposed by **Councillor Fionnan Blake** and seconded by **Councillor Helen Meyer** was unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

### **9.4 Submitted by Councillor Helen Meyer**

*“Recognising the considerable cost incurred by Meath County Council in dealing with the damage caused by fallen trees due to Storm Éowyn, that Meath County Council engage with landowners, local groups and organisations on the planting and management of trees throughout the county.”*

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

The legal responsibility for maintenance of road side trees rests with the landowner. Currently there are agencies available to provide tree management advice for all private landowners and other groups, the Tree Council of Ireland also has considerable resources relating to the planting of the right tree in the right place.

The provision of specific advice is outside the remit of the local authority.



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**Councillor Helen Meyer** introduced the motion. She noted the response and noted the importance of ensuring the correct type of trees are planted in the correct locations.

The Motion, proposed by **Councillor Helen Meyer** and seconded by **Councillor Fionnan Blake** was unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

### **10.0 General Interest Motions**

#### **10.1 Submitted by Councillor Brian Fitzgerald**

*"I call on Meath County Council to write to the ESB Networks to carry out a Risk Assessment of their overhead Distribution/network, also the Telecommunication Network providers, to minimize the more frequent occurrence of overhead wires falling due to, falling trees and disturbing the transmission network for prolonged periods."*

**Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** introduced the motion. He noted the economic impact of the recent storms and he called for the Minister for Climate, Environment and Energy to co-ordinate efforts to mitigate damage to the electrical and telecommunications network. The motion proposed by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald** and seconded by **Councillor Francis Deane** was unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

#### **10.2 Submitted by Councillor Carol Lennon**

*"That Meath County Council writes to the Minister for Social Protection asking for the time spent on course reading and study to be disregarded when calculating the max 18.5 hour limit allowed to those in receipt of Carer's Allowance who wish to complete courses in education."*

**Councillor Carol Lennon** introduced the motion. She noted that the 18.5-hour limit for education courses, which includes time spent on study and reading, was potentially a barrier for carers wishing to engage in further education.

The motion proposed by **Councillor Carol Lennon** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Lawes** was unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

#### **10.3 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín**

*"To ask Meath County Council to call on the LGFA (Ladies Gaelic Football Association) to reverse its transgender policy, for the sake of the safety of their membership and the sake of fairness on the football field."*

**Councillor Emer Tóibín** introduced the motion. She called on the LGFA to reverse its transgender policy which she stated was introduced without consultation.

There were interventions from **Councillors Maria Murphy; Sarah Reilly; Wayne Harding; Carol Lennon; Dave Boyne; Brian Fitzgerald** and **An Cathaoirleach**. While there was some support for the motion, other Elected Members felt that it was not appropriate for Meath County Council to interfere in another organisation's democratic processes.



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The motion proposed by **Councillor Emer Tóibín** and seconded by **Councillor Yvonne Everard** was defeated on a show-of-hands vote, with 9 members in agreement, 15 members not in agreement, and 1 abstention.

### **11.0 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.

### **12.0 Any Other Business**

The meeting concluded at 3.45pm