

Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Ordinary Meeting

12th May 2025 @ 1.30p.m.

Buvinda House, Navan (and online via zoom)

Presiding: An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Sharon Tolan

Councillors Present:

Councillors Fionnán Blake, Joe Bonner, Peter Caffrey, Eugene Cassidy, Padraig Coffey, Francis Deane, John Duffy, Yvonne Everard, Eddie Fennessy, Brian Fitzgerald, Padraig Fitzsimons, Joe Fox, Noel French, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy, Wayne Harding, Suzanne Jamal, Nick Killian, Alan Lawes, Carol Lennon, Paddy Meade, Helen Meyer, Ronan Moore, Gerry O'Connor, Sarah Reilly, Amanda Smith, Alan Tobin, Emer Tóibín and Maria White.

Councillors Present via Zoom:

Councillors Yemi Adenuga, Dave Boyne, Mike Bray, Sean Drew, Geraldine Keogan, Maria Murphy, Caroline O'Reilly, Paul O'Rourke and Conor Tormey.

Apologies:

Councillor Stephen McKee.

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 7th April 2025

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 7th April 2025 were confirmed on the proposal of **Councillor Francis Deane** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin**.

2.0 Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

3.0 Expressions of Sympathy and Congratulations

Expressions of sympathy were extended to:

Joe O'Callaghan, Transportation – Ashbourne MD on the death of his mother, Carmel O'Callaghan.

Lisa Shealy (Housing), Sharon Shealy (HR), James Shealy (Transport), Mark Harrington (Housing) and Dean Smyth (Planning) on the death of their mother/mother-in-law/ grandmother, Kathleen Shealy.

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Marie Ennis, Finance and Finn Ennis, Transportation – Trim MD on the death of their father/father-in-law, Gerry Dunne, former employee.

The family of the late Anthony (Tony) Callan, former employee.

Caroline Reilly, Water Services on the death of her mother, Rosaline Reilly.

Neil Casey, Transportation – Navan MD on the death of his mother, Carmel Casey.

The family of the late Brendan (Barney) Foley, former employee.

Ronan Carey (Transport), Gerry Carey (Water Services & Fire Service) and Tony Carey (Transport) on the death of their mother/aunt, Margaret Carey.

The family and colleagues of the late Garda Kevin Flatley, Balbriggan.

The families of the late Emmanuel Familola and Matt Sibanda, Co. Donegal.

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

There were no proposals for the disposal of land.

5.0 Statutory Business

5.1 Community

- 5.1.1 To approve the allocations under the Community Grants Scheme 2025 as recommended by the Community, Cultural Development and Gaeltacht Affairs SPC on April 30, 2025

The allocations for the Community Grants Scheme 2025 were approved on the proposal of **Councillor Sarah Reilly**, seconded by **Councillor Joe Fox** and unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

- 5.1.2 To approve the allocations under the 2025 Regional Festivals and Participative Events – Small Grants Scheme in Co. Meath as recommended by Community, Cultural Development and Gaeltacht Affairs SPC on April 30, 2025

The allocations for the 2025 Regional Festivals and Participative Events – Small Grants Scheme in Co. Meath were approved on the proposal of **Councillor Ronan Moore**, seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade** and unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

- 5.1.3 To approve Arts Grants Awards & Bursaries 2025

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allocations as recommended by the Community, Cultural Development and Gaeltacht Affairs SPC on April 30 2025

The allocations for the Arts Grants Awards & Bursaries 2025 were approved on the proposal of **Councillor Francis Deane**, seconded by **Councillor Yemi Adenuga** and unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

5.2 Corporate Affairs and Governance

5.2.1 To Consider the Meath County Council Civic Commemoration Policy

Ms. Elaine Daly, Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Affairs and Governance provided an overview of the salient details of the policy. On the proposal of **Councillor Eddie Fennessy** and seconded by **Councillor Noel French** it was agreed to amend Section 5.1C of the policy to the following:

“A monument is a lasting tribute to a person, group, or event. The Council must thoroughly assess the importance of the subject being commemorated and ensure that the decision to approve such a memorial is well-founded and will withstand the test of time. It is therefore considered appropriate that the Council will only generally consider commemorating persons who have been deceased for at least 10 years and after at least 10 years subsequent to an event taking place.”

The Meath County Council Civic Commemoration Policy, with the amendment as outlined above, was unanimously approved on the proposal of **Councillor Eddie Fennessy** and seconded by **Councillor Noel French**.

Councillor Ronan Moore noted that the Commemorative Committee should also consider gender balance when considering the naming of infrastructure.

6.0 Reports

6.1 Management Report

There were interventions from **Councillors Nick Killian, Helen Meyer, Sean Drew and Alan Tobin**. Matters raised included:

Housing: Housing support applications, response by AHBs to Elected Members Reps, AHBs housing adaptations;

Transport: N2 to Rath Roundabout;

Economic Development: Support to restaurant industry.

6.2 Report from Corporate Policy Group

The Meetings Administrator noted that the CPG met on Monday, May 6 2025, to consider the draft agenda and arrangements for the May Council Meeting.

She noted that the members of the CPG reviewed the Meath County Council Draft Commemoration Policy.

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She further outlined that the reports of Forward Planning and Development SPC, 4th April 2025, the Climate Action, Environment and Emergency Services SPC, 15th April 2025 and the Community & Cultural Development and Gaeltacht Affairs SPC, 30th April 2025 were noted and these 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 Peter Caffrey

“What is the current status of funding for upgrading fire stations in County Meath?”

Response:

The National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (DHLGH) has approved upgrade works for the Oldcastle Fire Station, with a maximum funding of €915,196.

The Council is in the process of developing a tender framework for consultancy services. The upcoming projects in Oldcastle will be sourced from this framework.

Plans are in place for the upgrading, remodelling, and extension of additional fire stations in Navan, Ashbourne, Kells, and Trim; however, capital funding approvals from the Department for these projects have yet to be secured.

Funding for the upgrading of fire stations is included in the Meath County Council Capital Investment Programme for the years 2024-2027.

Noted by the Elected Members.

8.2 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín

“How many public car park spaces have been removed from each of the six Municipal Districts (MDs) in Meath over the last five years, including the number of spaces expected to be removed this year and how many disabled parking spaces have been added across each MD in the same time frame?”

Response:

Meath County Council Parking Section only retain data on parking spaces in

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pay and display streets and carparks in Navan Trim and Kells.

The table below outlines the Net Change in Car Parking across the 3 Towns.

Navan		
Navan 2030 Project: Pay and Display streets and carparks	-94	+4
Moathill N51 Park & Ride Carpark	+151	+5
Garlow Cross Park & Ride	+50	+1
Total Net Change	+107	+10
Kells		
Pay and Display streets and carparks	0	0
Pay and display parking spaces converted to parklets and into accessible parking.	-7	+2
Total Net Change	-7	+2
Trim		
Pay and display parking spaces converted to parklets and into accessible parking.	-6	+2
Free Long -term Carparking Meath County Council Offices Summerhill Rd.	+20	+1
Total Net Change	+14	+3

Noted by the Elected Members.

9.0 Notice of Motion

9.1 Submitted by Councillor Helen Meyer

"In order to better understand the need for emergency housing assistance, the Housing Department should gather more detailed demographic information from applicants seeking emergency housing assistance. This data should include the number of individuals requesting assistance due to reasons such as relationship breakdowns, notices to quit, inability to find rental properties, overcrowding, couch surfing, addiction, domestic violence, house fires, and rough sleeping. This information should be included in the monthly executive report."

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

Statistics on the numbers of people in emergency accommodation together with

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the reasons for presentation are prepared and presented at the quarterly Regional Homeless Forum meetings with details for Q3 and Q4 for 2024 set out below. Q1 2025 data will be presented at the next Regional Homeless Forum meeting in June and can thereafter be made available to the Members.

The presentation of homeless data in the monthly Management Report is currently being reviewed to ensure the information requested by the Members can be incorporated. It is anticipated that this review will be completed shortly and relevant information included for the June Full Council Meeting.

Councillor Helen Meyer introduce the motion and welcomed the response above. She further noted the importance of examining trends in the homeless figures. The motion, together with supporting information, was unanimously agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Helen Meyer** and seconded by **Councillor Eddie Fennessy**.

9.2 Submitted by Councillor Helen Meyer

"To call on Meath County Council to install signage in public areas such as woods, cycle paths, mountain trails, and beaches to educate the public about the dangers of Lyme disease. The Lyme Resource Centre will provide these awareness signs at no cost. The signs should include information on outdoor tick awareness, along with a QR code linking to HSE information."

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

It is not within the Transportation Departments remit to erect signs in relation to public health, that would be a matter for the HSE. The Transportation Department would of course support a HSE run campaign and would accommodate the erection of signs if required. However a national information or communication campaign by the HSE may be more effective at raising public awareness than the placing of signs in rural locations.

Councillor Helen Meyer introduced the motion. She noted the Executive response and proposed an amendment to the motion, seconded by Councillor Eddie Fennessy as follows:

"To call on the HSE to to install signage in public areas such as woods, cycle paths, mountain trails, and beaches to educate the public about the dangers of Lyme disease. The Lyme Resource Centre will provide these awareness signs at no cost. The signs should include information on outdoor tick awareness, along with a QR code linking to HSE information."

Councillor Alan Tobin noted that the public should be informed of known locations of infected ticks that cause lyme disease. The motion, as amended, together with supporting information, proposed by **Councillor Helen Meyer** and seconded by **Councillor Eddie Fennessy**, was unanimously agreed by the Elected Members.

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9.3 Submitted by Councillor Emer Tóibín

"To ask the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage if he will ensure that all homeless accommodation funded by his Department across the county is required to meet minimum standards, including the provision of access to laundry and cooking facilities, in order to promote dignity, autonomy, and healthier living conditions for individuals and families experiencing homelessness."

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

If the motion is agreed, the Council will write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Councillor Emer Tóibín introduced the motion. She noted that there should be a minimum standard in homeless accommodation to include the provision of access to laundry and cooking facilities. The motion was supported by **Councillor Alan Lawes**. The motion, together with supporting information, was unanimously agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Emer Tóibín** and seconded by **Councillor Amanda Smith**.

9.4 Submitted by Councillor Edward Fennessy

"To write to the Minister for Transport and the National Transport Authority to request a review of the proposal in the National Cycle Plan Report 2023 and the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan 2023 for the Greenway development between Navan and Kells, to extend the route to Oldcastle."

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

If the motion is agreed, the Council will write to the Minister for Transport and the National Transport Authority.

Councillor Eddie Fennessy introduced the motion. He outlined the potential to link the greenway from Loughcrew to Newgrange. The motion, together with supporting information, was unanimously agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Eddie Fennessy** and seconded by **Councillor Helen Meyer**.

9.5 Submitted by Councillor Edward Fennessy

"To write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to request an increase in the income threshold and increased funding to expand the Cost Rental Scheme in County Meath."

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

Meath County Council complies with the requirements set out in the current

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Scheme. If the motion is agreed, the Council will write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Councillor Eddie Fennessy introduced the motion. He noted that the income threshold should be standardised across the state. **Councillors Fionnán Blake** and **Alan Tobin** supported the motion. The motion, together with supporting information, was unanimously agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Eddie Fennessy** and seconded by **Councillor Fionnán Blake**.

9.6 Submitted by Councillor Carol Lennon

“That Meath County Council writes to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, seeking an amendment to S.I. No. 73/2022 - Social Housing Assessment (Amendment) Regulations 2022, and more specifically Section 3 of the prescribed application form for social housing support which requires an applicant to provide documented evidence of a legal affidavit signed by “a practicing solicitor”, to include a Commissioner of Oaths as an alternative witness to the affidavit.”

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

Meath County Council complies with the requirements set out in the current Regulations. If the motion is agreed, the Council will write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Councillor Carol Lennon introduced the Motion. She noted the costs of applying the services of a practising solicitor versus the costs of an affidavit signed by a Commissioner of Oaths. The motion, together with supporting information, was unanimously agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Carol Lennon** and seconded by **Councillor Amanda Smith**.

9.7 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin

"To write to the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to request the waiver of fees and the introduction of a grant for coffee shops and restaurants to promote outdoor dining and enhance public outdoor spaces, provided that suitable space is available in the public realm."

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

Meath County Council complies with the requirements set out in the current Scheme. If the motion is agreed, the Council will write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Councillor Alan Tobin noted that the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage had recently announced the waiver of fees, and he withdrew the motion.

9.8 Submitted by Councillor Ronan Moore

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"To write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, to request that as part of the conditions for planning applications for new housing estates, developers must install Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs); and to further request the Minister to consider the opportunity of a grant programme for representative bodies of existing residential developments to apply for funding to purchase and install AEDs in existing residential developments."

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

If the motion is agreed, the Planning Authority will consult with the Forward Planning and Development Management SPC regarding the inclusion of planning conditions for AEDs in planning decisions, where appropriate. Additionally, Meath County Council will write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, in relation to a grant programme for existing residential developments.

Councillor Ronan Moore introduced the motion. He welcomed the response from the Executive. There were interventions of support from **Councillors Noel French, Paddy Meade, David Gilroy** and **Alan Tobin**. The motion, together with supporting information, was unanimously agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Carol Lennon** and seconded by **Councillor Amanda Smith**.

10.0 General Interest Motions

10.1 Submitted by Councillor Yemi Adenuga

"To write to LMETB to ask that they undertake a feasibility study for a dedicated Apprenticeship and Skills Development Centre in County Meath, with the goal of establishing the region as a national leader in accessible, industry-aligned vocational training."

Councillor Yemi Adenuga introduced the motion. She noted the number of commuters in the County as well as the young population of the County that would benefit by improved access to facilities. There were interventions from **Councillors Alan Tobin, Wayne Harding, Nick Killian** and **An Cathaoirleach**. The ongoing work of LMETB in the provision of apprenticeship services was noted, including the provision of the state-of-the-art facility in Drogheda, Co. Meath. The motion was unanimously agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Yemi Adenuga** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin**.

10.2 Submitted by Councillor Noel French

"That Meath County Council writes to the Minister for Health requesting adequate resources for after-hours mental health services in the Emergency Departments in Our Lady's Hospital, Navan and Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda."

Councillor Noel French introduced the motion. He noted the large numbers involved in

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the recent 'Darkness into Light' Campaign and the urgent requirement for out-of-hours mental health services at the hospitals in Navan and Drogheda. The motion was unanimously agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Noel French** and seconded by **Councillor Sharon Tolan**.

10.3 Submitted by Councillor Gerry O'Connor

"Meath County Council requests that the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, as part of the Budget discussions, consider reversing the pension levy on pension assets, that was implemented during the financial crisis from 2013 to 2015."

Councillor Gerry O'Connor introduced the motion. He noted that the initial legislation was introduced as an emergency measure which now was no longer warranted. The motion was unanimously agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Alan Tobin**.

10.4 Submitted by Councillor Gerry O'Connor

"Meath County Council requests the Minister for Finance, as part of the Budget proposals, to review the inheritance tax (Capital Acquisition Tax) thresholds, in light of increased property values in County Meath"

Councillor Gerry O'Connor introduced the motion. He noted the increased values of properties in the County and the implications for those who inherit residential properties. The motion was unanimously agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**.

10.5 Submitted by Councillor Carol Lennon

"That Meath County Council writes to the Minister for Transport and the National Transport Authority (NTA) seeking that the new "Fairer Fares" be reconsidered in circumstances where the youth/child monthly fare and the adult monthly fare have increased."

Councillor Carol Lennon introduced the motion. She noted that in some instances fares had increased under the new 'fairer fares' scheme. The motion was unanimously agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Carol Lennon** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**.

10.6 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin

"Meath County Council calls on the Minister for Climate, Environment and Energy to review the current structure of the Community Benefit Fund under the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) to allow local authorities to administer these funds for the direct benefit of local projects and community groups within the respective municipal district."

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Councillor Alan Tobin introduced the motion. He noted that significant sums of community funding were being distributed by other not-for-profit organisations. The motion was unanimously agreed on the proposal of **Councillor Alan Tobin** and seconded by **Councillor Paddy Meade**.

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

There were interventions from **Councillors Nick Killian, Brian Fitzgerald, Alan Lawes, Alan Tobin, Paddy Meade** and **Dave Boyne**. Matters raised included the revision and re-zoning of lands in the County Development Plan, IPAS Centres, Oireachtas Members' briefing and availability of minutes of council meetings. **An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Sharon Tolan**, reminded **Councillor Alan Lawes** that matters raised in the Council Chamber are not considered privileged.

The meeting concluded at 3.05pm