comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Economic Development, Enterprise, Tourism, EU Affairs & Rural Regeneration SPC
3.00pm Thursday 5th March 2026, THRIVE Centre & Hybrid Format

Attendees

Councillors: Cllr Joe Fox (Chairperson), Cllr Gerry O'Connor, Cllr Padraig Fitzsimons, Cllr Brian Fitzgerald, Cllr Paul O'Rourke,

Sectoral Representatives: Dermot Ward IFA, Carol McSherry ICTU

Apologies: Dara McGowan, Director of Services, Paula McCaul CEO, Meath Chamber, Cllr Eugene Cassidy, Cllr Sarah Reilly, Anne Headley, Kentstown ICA

Officials: Majella Farrell, A/Director of Services, Pat Shore, Rural Regeneration, Emma Gill, Tourism, Michelle Goodwin, Regional Enterprise, Michelle Rogers, Rural Regeneration, Áine Bird, Rural Regeneration, Jamie Nolan, Climate Action, Marc Cahill, Climate Action.

Item	Discussion
1.	**To Approve Minutes** The minutes of the SPC meeting held on the 3rd of December 2025 were approved by **Cllr Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Cllr Padraig Fitzsimons**.
2.	**Ethics Declaration** **2.1 To Declare any Conflicts of Interest** Members were asked to disclose any conflict of interest be it financial or other beneficial interest that they may have with an item that comes before the meeting. There were none.
3.	**Rural Regeneration** **3.1 To seek updates and/or comments on the County wide Community and Amenity Facilities matrix.** Pat Shore gave a briefing on the matrix outlining the facilities & amenities available. He asked if there were any updates, amendments that the members may wish to give.

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	Cllr O'Connor requested a few changes for Dunshaughlin, Parish Centre amend to Pastoral Centre, amend "beside Community College" to "Community Sports Centre" the Civic Offices has a Remote Working Hub as opposed to an Economic Hub. Cllr O'Connor advised to liaise with Colin Ludlow in Meath Partnership regarding the Assets Register they collated a few years ago. Cllr Fitzgerald raised the issue of a Swimming Pool for the Ratoath Municipal District. He stated that there were plans to look at this a number of years ago, but the costs were deemed to be too high and that this side of the county has been overlooked in this regard. Carol McSherry noted that there is no community hall in Kells, she said that there are some rooms available for groups to use but some are very small. Cllr Fox said that hot desks don't work anymore and these are now being converted into offices for rental by workers. Dermot Ward suggested that satellites could be erected on farm buildings for micro storage of data. Dermot Ward also raised the issue of boundary treatments between any proposed community facilities and agricultural land and that fencing etc must be of a required specification. Cllr Fox suggested to submit any further details into Pat as the matrix is a working document so it can be added to at any time.
4.	**Climate Action** **4.1 Overview of Decarbonisation Zones in Meath, and next steps** Jamie Nolan gave a presentation on Meath's decarbonising zones (DZ) and said that this is a requirement in the National Climate Action plan 2019 and a core focus in Meath's Climate Action Plan. He said a DZ is an area identified by the Local Authority where they work with businesses and communities to reduce the amount of carbon produced by everyday activities through a range of actions. He said that 9 towns have been identified in Meath for DZ and plans will be prepared for each town. To develop climate actions in each DZ a Baseline Emissions Inventory was developed which identified the number of emissions coming from the 4 main sectors, namely Commercial & Manufacturing, Waste, Residential and Transport. Jamie outlined the next stages whereby plans must be completed; with Navan and Dunshaughlin plans done. A taskforce needs to be set up for each DZ who will identify the actions for their area. The CA team are currently looking for volunteers

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	for these task force groups in each of the 7 towns. Once plans are in place these will be implemented, monitored and reported on annually. Cllr O'Connor stated that funding was crucial to progressing actions with grants and EU funds available for groups to apply for. He also said that transportation is a big issue regarding emissions. Cllr Fitzgerald said some of the larger industries have high emissions and some are carbon neutral. He also stated that farmers are being unfairly targeted as being a big problem while they are often doing a lot to mitigate impacts through the planting of trees etc. Dermot Ward requested infrastructural works emissions be included in this inventory and confirmed that hedgerows are being planted at a fast pace nationally Carol McSherry enquired about the current national reduction rate and was advised of a 17% reduction but that there would be another assessment in 2027 when better data will be available. . She asked how the reps are being sourced and was informed that invites have gone through the Public Participation Network, Local Enterprise Office and businesses. She also suggested that old buildings should be repurposed. Cllr Fitzgerald said that developers can contribute as a condition of their planning permission by being asked to plant trees etc The committee were advised that all the plans are being prepared at the same time and that the taskforce will give guidance on the actions for inclusion.
5.	**Tourism** **5.1 Boyne Valley Tourism priorities 2026** Emma Gill presented to the members on progress to date and outlined several of the priorities for the coming year. She advised that they are reducing the use of paper brochures and concentrating on digital advertising and ezines with a new PR agency in situ updating the website and promoting more through social media. An AI project is being tested looking at a tool to create a "What's On" itinerary planner for the Boyne Valley region and that a Brand refresh is being undertaken. Emma outlined the various Local, European and International events that Boyne Valley Tourism attended. She said that there have been several business sector meetings along with a members Familiarisation Trip around the Boyne Valley Destination. She outlined new festivals for this year including the Navan Midsummer Festival as well as focus on growing the established Siamsa Glas festival along the Boyne Valley to Lakelands Greenway (BVLG).

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	She updated on some of the destinations being developed with a video and information boards along the BVLG, promotion of intercounty trail development and the Trim Market House project due to commence later in the year. The committee commended Emma on all the works being done. Cllr Fitzsimons said that the County has so much to offer. He suggested that the Colomban way be promoted as it is close to the greenway. Cllr Fitzgerald stated that he wanted to see the Meath name more prominent when promoting the destination. Cllr Fox has concerns with the lack of accommodation and camper van sites which need to be looked at. Majella Farrell welcomed the feed back and welcomed Emma formally as the new Boyne Valley Tourism Officer. She updated on the TV show for the county and said that it is being broadcast in America. Season 2 she said is due to start. Emma also updated on the traitor's show which was filmed in Meath and got good promotion and coverage in the UK. The next series will also be filmed in Meath.
6.	**Enterprise** **6.1 To receive the final review of the Mid-East Region Enterprise Plan** Michelle Goodwin presented on the progress whereby the last plan is now finished. She stated that there was a lack of regional projects and therefore the funding allocated was €18m out of an allocation of €145m. Currently she said that final progress reports and case studies have been submitted to the Minister for review. Under the next plan, she said that a new steering committee will be set up and there will be an additional focus on Tourism which now comes under DETE. She said also that Louth is moving into this region. Under the next plan there will be less actions and more high level goals, with less funding available. Whilst awaiting government policy for the new plans, she said a two year transitional plan will be prepared. She outlined several areas for consideration for the next plan which included The Equine Industry, Offshore Renewable Energy, Centre of Food Culture, Film, Agri/Food and FDI attraction. The Committee thanked Michelle and raised issues around EU funding, the equine industry which is a massive area that supports a lot of other industries and Bremore Port which will be a key port when developed. They welcomed the possible

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	realignment within the regional structure and cautioned about having too narrow of a focus when it comes to future priorities. Majella asked that the committee submit any suggestions/ideas for the next plan.
7.	**AOB** The committee extended "Best Wishes" to Dara and wished him well. They also state that Meath must ensure that it is included in the planning for the EU presidency and that all possible opportunities for hosting events are explored. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday June 11th, 2026, at 3pm.

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