



**Minutes of meeting of Full Council held at 3:00 p.m.  
Monday 16 December 2024 in the Council Chamber  
Áras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare**

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**Members Present:** Councillors K. Duffy, (Leas Cathaoirleach), P. Balfe, A. Breen, F. Brett, S. Doyle, G. Dunne, T. Durkan, W. Durkan, D. Fitzpatrick, R. Heather, N. Heavey, I. Keatley, C. Kelly, N. Killeen, M. Leigh, T. McDonnell, P. McEvoy, P. Melrose, S. Moore, P. O'Dwyer, T. O'Dwyer, B. O'Loughlin, R. Power, E. Sammon, and D. Trost.

**Online:** Councillors A. Breslin, B. Dooley, B. Clear, A. Feeney, C. O'Rourke, C. Pender, L. Panaite Fahy, P. Ward and B Wyse.

**Apologies:** Councillors V. Behan, B. Caldwell.

**Also Present:** Ms. S. Kavanagh (Chief Executive), Ms A. Apell, Ms M. Higgins, Mr. E. Ryan, Mr. A. Dunney, Mr. D. Creighton, (Directors of Service). Ms. C. Barrett, (A/Director of Service), Ms. E. Hanlon (Head of Finance), Mr. O. Brady, (A/Senior Executive Officer), Ms. C. O'Grady (Meetings Administrator), Ms. L. Morgan (Meetings Secretary), M. Richardson and other officials.

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The Leas Cathaoirleach welcomed everyone to the December monthly meeting of the Council and confirmed that the meeting was being live streamed on the Council's YouTube channel. He reminded everyone attending that no recording or photography is allowed online or in the chamber during the meeting. He reminded members that there is no privilege attaching to anything said at the meeting, either online or in the chamber.

He acknowledged members that put themselves forward to the Dail, congratulated their success, and noted that the vacancies would be addressed at the Special Full Council meeting on Thursday.



**00/1224**

**Bereavements**

There were no bereavements.

**01/1224**

**Declaration of Interests**

The Leas Cathaoirleach sought from the members any declarations of conflicts of interest or pecuniary or beneficial interests under Section 177 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended. There were no declarations.

**02/1224**

**Minutes and Progress Report**

The council considered the draft minutes of the annual budget meeting held on 18 November 2024, the monthly meeting held on 25 November 2024 and the progress report.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Power, seconded by Councillor Leigh and agreed by the members present that the draft minutes of the annual budget meeting held on 18 November, 2024 be adopted.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Kelly and agreed by the members present that the draft minutes of the monthly meeting held on 25 November 2024 be adopted.

The progress report was noted.

**03/1224**

**Chief Executive's Monthly Management Report**

The members noted the Chief Executives monthly management report.



**04/1224**

**Disposal of Lands Section 183**

**Donaghcumper House, Gate Lodge and associated out buildings together with 7.5097 Hectares**

The members considered the the disposal of lands pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, (as amended). Disposal of 7.5097 hectares at Donaghcumper, Celbridge (Statutory notice dated 4 December 2024, circulated previously, and attached).

Mr E Ryan stated that Kildare County Council had purchased the property via the National Assets Management Agency as part of a larger landholding of 68 acres, but that given the costs of renovating the house and outbuildings, Kildare County Council entered a co-purchasing agreement with the Office of Public Works with the intention that these lands (subject to the S.183) would be sold to the OPW for the pre-arranged and agreed price of €1.5m. The OPW intend to conserve the property as a potential country tourist attraction. Mr. Ryan stated that this was an excellent solution for Kildare County Council, and it may also provide alternative access points to Celbridge Town/Castletown House via a pedestrian-cycle connection from Donaghcumper.

Councillor Painate Fahy said the public had lost any faith in the Office of Public Works because of issues with Castletown House. She requests Kildare County Council correct the public record and reinstate the riverside public right of way, known as the Old Dublin Road, along the north side of the River Liffey, in keeping with statutory requirements. .

Councillor O'Rourke said it was welcoming news regarding the purchasing of land for Celbridge, but prior to the purchase she requested a condition be added: - 'to purchase on condition to ascertain the location of Old Dublin Road.' She said it was such an undeterminable status but that the Council had a legal obligation under the Planning & Development Act to establish right of way at this location.

Councillor Killeen said Donachcumper lands are extremely strategically placed lands. She supported the comments of her fellow municipal district members.

Councillor Clear said that he wants to delay this item until the position is clearer.



Councillor Trost welcomed the disposal but felt clarification is needed regarding the arrangement with the OPW and their plans.

Director of Services, Eoghan Ryan welcomed the comments but stated that the issue of whether a public right of way was or is present at Castletown is irrelevant to the S.183 before the members, as the Donaghcumper estate is situated on the south side of the River Liffey and the rights of way referred to related to the lands on the north side of the River Liffey. He explained that information had been supplied to him from one of the Councillors that alleges confirmation that a right of way exists, but that the supplied copy of an indenture did not make it clear. He said that from his conversations with the members, they were seeking 'dawn to dusk' access and not necessarily 24-hour access. He also cited anti-social behaviour and the need to protect and secure Castletown House, an internationally important protected structure.

The Chief Executive supported the Director stating this is money well spent on land, but the money we spent on the house and out-buildings needs to be recouped from OPW as Kildare County Council does not have the funds to fully conserve the building to the standard required. She advised the members that in agreeing to this today it will not preclude the rights of way issue. She asked them not to make the sale/disposal of land contingent on a condition, that may be difficult for the Council to prove one way or the other.

Councillor Panaite Fahey asked if Kildare County Council would facilitate a presentation from Castletown Residents regarding this? Mr E Ryan said that such a request could be brought before the next CPG meeting.

**Resolved** on the Cathaoirleach calling for a vote, with 25 members voting in favour, 7 members voting against and 1 member abstaining, on the proposal of Councillor Keatley seconded by Councillor Doyle and agreed by the members present that pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended (Statutory notice of 4 December 2024 circulated previously and attached) the disposal of 7.5097 hectares, including the House, Gate Lodge and out-buildings at Donaghcumper, Celbridge be approved.



**05/1224**

**Nominations to Strategic Policy Committees**

The members considered the nominations of external members to strategic policy committees.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Mc Evoy, seconded by Councillor Doyle and agreed by the members that external members be nominated to strategic policy committees.

**06/1224**

**Corporate Plan 2025-2029**

The members considered the Corporate Plan 2025-2029.

Director of Services, Eoghan Ryan said the Corporate Plan was part of the Local Government Act 2001 and Local Government Reform Act 2014, as amended, and is to be presented to the members within six months of the Annual Meeting and adopted by December 21<sup>st</sup>. It has not been translated yet into Irish but will be by Quarter 1 of 2025. It will be then forwarded to the National Oversight Accounts Commission.

Councillor Pádraig Mc Evoy queried if the plan addressed National Strategic Objectives such as Climate Action. He also queried if the plan meets the national guidelines on preparing Corporate Plan including the alignment of the objectives to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Councillor Doyle commended the work done in relation to the Corporate Plan 2025-2029.

Director of Services, Eoghan Ryan noted the key areas of the plan, including the increased focus on Climate Action, Resilience, Protection and reducing energy consumption. He also said that Corporate Plan's objectives would be aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Doyle seconded by Councillor Mc Evoy and agreed by the members present that the Corporate Plan 2025-2029 be approved.

**07/1224**

**Cathaoirleach's Business**

The Leas Cathaoirleach acknowledged Kildare County Council staff with regards to the recent storm damage, and their efforts to clean up etc. The Chief Executive extended her gratitude to all staff involved.

The Leas Cathaoirleach noted that this was Christine O'Grady's last full council meeting, as she retires after 40 years' service. Many warm thanks were given to Christine, followed by a lengthy round of applause.

**08/1224**

**Correspondence**

**The Meetings Administrator informed the members that two resolutions from other County Councils, namely Kerry and Wexford, were received and circulated to the members.**

**09/1224**

**Conferences and Training**

The Meetings Administrator informed the members that there were no new conferences or training requirements.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Mc Evoy and seconded by Councillor Heather that there were no new conferences or training events.

**10/1224**

**Open Government Partnership**

The following motion in the names of Councillors Rupert Heather and Angela Feeney was considered by the members:



That the council, as a member of the international Open Government Partnership Local programme since 2022, meets the requirement to deliver a co-created action plan with civil society on improved citizen engagement, transparency and/or accountability, and that this is delivered with one commitment by April 2025.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Heather and seconded by Councillor Feeney.

A report from Mr E Ryan, Director of Services, Corporate, People and Cultural Services stated that the decision to be involved in Open Government Partnership was made by the previous council and following our review, research and assessment, we believe that that through procedures currently in place, Kildare County Council is adhering to the ethos of OGP. Most of our services and strategic plans are carried out in an open and transparent manner. This ethos is further supported in our Corporate Plan's strategic objective 6: Supporting the Democratic Mandate, Performance and Communications: "To assist local democracy while improving service delivery, engagement and communications by maximising the effectiveness of our people, budgets operations and ICT resources"; and in particular, the supporting objectives 6.4, 6.7, 6.8 & 6.9.

To participate the Office of General Procurement (OGP) in a formal manner would take considerable resources and would not alter greatly what we are currently committed and obligated to do and is premature at this point in time.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Heather, seconded by Councillor Feeney and agreed by all members present that the council, as a member of the international Open Government Partnership Local Programme since 2022, meets the requirement to deliver a co-created action plan with civil society on improved citizen engagement, transparency and/or accountability, and that this is delivered with one commitment by April 2025.

#### **11/1224**

#### **Support and Development of Festivals in Kildare**

The following motion in the name of Councillor Suzanne Doyle was considered by the members.



That the council develops a section to support and develop festivals across the County, using economies of scale to deliver cost savings, expertise in event management and promotion, in the interest of creating destination events to support local economy and positive opportunities for community integration and pride of place.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Doyle and seconded by Councillor Moore.

A report from Ms M Higgins, Director of Service, Climate, Community, Environment and Water stated that Kildare County Council Community Department supports several groups and festivals across the county with significant funding. In 2024, 150 festival groups were supported through the Community Festival scheme and Brigid 1500 celebrations. The Community Department will continue to assist, meet and support these groups/festivals into the future and promote local events that bring communities together.

The Brigid celebrations are directly managed by a small team within the Community Department in Kildare County Council.

The development of a dedicated festivals section would require a significant increase in staffing (administrative, technical and operational) which are not currently available and are not budgeted for. The Community Department do not have the staffing provision to undertake any additional events. This initiative will require significant funding which will need to be identified as part of the budgetary process or by allocation from the Municipal Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee for consideration.

The Community Department will liaise with its counterparts in other Local Authorities, who may have such sections already in place, to ascertain exact needs and requirements.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Doyle seconded by Councillor Moore and agreed by members that the matter be referred to the Community Strategic Policy Committee.





**12/1224**

**Map of Bus Stops in County Kildare**

The following motion in the name of Councillor Bill Clear to be considered by the members: That the council provides the councillors with a map of all bus stops in Co Kildare.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Clear and seconded by Councillor Killeen.

Councillors Pender and Killeen requested a consolidated map listing where all bus stops are, and for Kildare County Council to write to Transport for Ireland for this list. They suggested Kildare County Council review the possibility of funding bus stop up-grades through Local Property Tax/Revenue.

Councillor McEvoy asked if there was any way of generating feedback to TFI about this issue.

Councillor Melrose noted 'disappearing' bus stops and asked how many people use the bus stop outside Carton House.

Ms. C Barrett, Acting Director of Services, Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces said that overall responsibility for bus stop provision resides with the National Transport Authority (NTA). KCC has been allocated a budget by the NTA to progress the delivery of bus stop infrastructure in the county. Kildare County Council have a list of bus stops and is working with Local Link to progress a prioritised list of new infrastructure to be delivered. They also have a new engineer who is prioritising this work.

A report from Ms. C. Barrett, stated that full details of the public service operator bus services in County Kildare are published by Transport for Ireland on their website <https://www.transportforireland.ie/>. The Council has the geo location data for all bus stops in the County and will examine the feasibility of preparing a map with this data.



**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Clear, seconded by Councillor Killeen that Kildare County Council provide a map in consultation with the National Transport Authority and that infrastructure will be delivered in 2025.

### **13/1224**

#### **Support for Neurodiverse Members of our Community**

The following motion in the name of Councillor Peter Melrose was considered by the members.

Where the council are responsible for the organisation of events or funding of events, that the following commitments be made, where practicable, in support of neurodiverse members of our community:

- The provision of designated sensory or quiet spaces.
- Publication of related materials prior to events, outlining key information about what an attendee can expect.
- Consider, where practicable, adjustments to the sensory environment, such as reduced noise levels, dimmed lighting or fast pass options.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Melrose and seconded by Councillor Killeen.

A joint report from Mr E Ryan, Director of Services, Corporate, People and Cultural Services and Ms M Higgins, Director of Service, Climate, Community, Environment and Water stated that as part of the Local Authority Access Officers Network (a national body), KCC are currently looking at developing a procedure and checklist for hosting inclusive meetings and events which will help us ensure that they are more accessible and inclusive for all, including neurodiverse members of our community.

Kildare Library Service continues to review our events and activity organisation guidelines with access and inclusion central to everything we do. We currently provide Sensory Spaces in our branch libraries that have the capacity to do so. We have 360-degree tours for all our branches and social stories for our main branches available on our website to help inform neurodiverse members of our community what to expect when they visit our libraries to participate in events. We provide a programme of events



throughout the year aimed at neurodiverse children and those with sensory needs. All our libraries have sensory boxes funded by CKAN with aids to help calm and relax that can be used in the library during events. We also lend Toys and Technology for neurodiverse children and adults and provide a programme of professional supports for teachers, parents and carers through the Toys, Technology and Training Programme. We aim to trial sensory hours where possible in our main libraries in 2025 and we aim to commit where practicable to the suggestions made by Cllr Melrose when organising events and activities.

Kildare Arts Service continues to review and update its grants processes and procedures, providing information and guidance for applicants and grant recipients on best practice and industry recommendations. As a standard for all Arts Grants 2025 and in future, a budget line regarding access costs will be included in applications to resource grant recipients with funding to address access needs and support all members of the community to engage and participate in the arts.

Kildare County Council Community Department provides funding to Community groups through the Community Grant Scheme to purchase and upgrade equipment to support the neurodiverse members of our community. The department will continue, as much as is practicable, to support these groups. While it is not possible to direct organising committees of local festival, who avail of funding through Kildare County Council Festival Grant Scheme, to implement proposals to assist neurodiverse members of the community, additional weighting can be applied to events who provide these services which may lead to additional funding being allocated to the group.

Brigid, Spirit of Kildare festival will ensure that inclusivity, collaboration and alignment with the communities' needs and interests are felt throughout. Some of the various approaches we will take include designated quiet areas, fast pass options and a sensory toolkit with earplugs and fidget toys for those who may require them. There will be online publication of related materials prior to events, outlining key information about what an attendee can expect and symbol imagery on signage designed for readability. Accessibility access information will be provided alongside tickets.



Kildare Sports Partnership when organising events and programmes as part of our Sports Inclusion Disability Programme always considers the needs of the participants and their families, providing sensory spaces when necessary and any other requirements that are needed. For other Sports Partnership events and programmes, provision is made, where possible, to ensure that all our activities are inclusive.

Councillor Melrose commended the report. He defined Neurodiversity (Autism/ADHD/Dyspraxia/Dyscalculia etc). He commended Kildare County Council and in particular Kildare Library Services for the stellar work they do to support and champion the needs of neurodiversity.

A number of Councillors supported the motion, commended Library Services, and queried if the awareness to facilitate neurodiversity at events could be increased.

Councillor Heavey supported this motion but also noted how difficult it is for volunteers and community groups and requested that if this motion is passed, that it does not inhibit community groups from accessing funds.

Councillor McEvoy said that signage is needed at events and that the hooting of horns should be prohibited. He suggested not funding any projects who don't advocate for this.

Councillor Killeen queried if guidance could be provided for event organisers.

Councillor Pender supported that event organisers needed advice and suggested that a toolkit be developed to facilitate full inclusivity.

Councillor T. O'Dwyer acknowledged and supported the motion. She suggested an audit be done on St Patricks Day Festival in Newbridge, that an information leaflet be prepared which could be published online and be made available to groups for the management of events.

Councillor Kelly said that there is some provision in the existing grant application form, but that the criteria may need to be developed further.



Councillor Melrose asked Kildare County Council to keep inclusivity in mind going forward.

Ms. M. Higgins advised the members that Kildare County Council aim to mainstream all events to be as inclusive as possible. Kildare County Council will continue to take a leadership role in education and awareness to support this motion.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Melrose, seconded by Councillor Killeen and agreed by the members that the report be noted.

#### **14/1224**

#### **Corbally Canal**

The following motion in the name of Councillor Moore was considered by the members:

That Kildare County Council, through each of its three evaluation studies on the future uses and development of Corbally Canal from Naas Canal Harbour to Corbally Canal Harbour, include as a priority objective, the re-opening of the canal watercourse after 75 years of closure, for boating and water sports amenities for central Kildare.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Moore and seconded by Councillor Brett.

A report from Mr. A. Dunney, Director of Service, Planning, Enterprise, Economic Development and Emergency Services stated that the importance of opening the Corbally Branch from Naas Harbour to Corbally Harbour has been identified through the Naas Canal Quarter Masterplan process as being of benefit to the regeneration of the Naas Harbour area of the town centre insofar as it will bring canal boats back to the canal and Naas Harbour area and improve the amenity of the canal generally, to the benefit of the wider area. Opening the Canal would be of direct benefit to canal boat users and water sports participants.

The opening up of the Canal is likely to involve replacing the road bridge at Newbridge Road, which currently effectively culverts the canal at this point. Replacing the bridge is anticipated to be a significantly expensive project, the delivery of which would be outside



the remit of the studies currently underway. As part of the Canal Quarter Masterplan process, funding options for the bridge replacement will be scoped, however, from recent scoping, there is unlikely to be any obvious funding source. The proposal to include an objective to replace the bridge is noted and will be given due consideration in relevant policy documents.

Councillor Brett advised we have a blank canvas in this area and said that the absence of a bridge will be a major stumbling block. He advised members that this is a growing population and that they need to factor this in.

Councillor Clear supports this item. He said some joined-up thinking would be required to put this bridge into a study/plan.

Mr. A. Dunney said that the report accepts the motion and that there are 3 projects – Corbally, Northwest Masterplan and Canal Masterplan.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Brett and agreed by members that it is noted and supported.

#### **Any other business:**

Councillor Doyle thanked all staff in Corporate Services and wished the best to Ms. Christine O’Grady on her retirement and for all her tireless work, help, and advice. She said she hopes the next chapter for Christine is exciting. Cllr Doyle welcomed Letitia Hanratty to Corporate Services.

Councillor McEvoy acknowledged Christine and Josh’s work. Cllr Brett added his sentiments and acknowledged Christine for her help, kindness and knowledge and wished all a happy Christmas.

Councillor Killeen thanked Christine and wished her every happiness on her retirement. The Chief Executive acknowledged and thanked Christine and wished her all the best in her retirement. Each member acknowledged Christine on behalf of their party.



## Kildare County Council

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Christine responded and thanked all, acknowledged her work experience and paid tribute to all the members in representing the citizens of Kildare and wished all members and staff a Happy Christmas.

The meeting concluded.