

**Minutes of Athy Municipal District Meeting held at 10.40 am on Monday, 26
September 2016 in the Athy Municipal District Office, Rathstewart, Athy, Co.
Kildare**

Members Present: Councillor A Breslin (Cathaoirleach), Councillors M Dalton, I Keatley, M Miley and M Wall

Apologies: Councillor T Redmond

Officials: Mr J Boland (District Manager), Mr J Coppinger (Senior Engineer), Mr D O'Flaherty (District Engineer), Ms E Wright (Senior Executive Officer), Mr M McLoughlin (A/Senior Executive Officer), Ms Edele O'Brien (Executive Engineer), Ms Patricia Berry (County Enterprise Office), Ms A M Gough (Meetings Administrator) and Ms O Mooney (Secretary)

AY01/1609

Suspension of Standing Orders

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Wall, seconded by Councillor Dalton that standing orders be suspended for forty minutes. Meeting started at 10.40 am.

AY02/1609

Minutes and Progress Report

The members considered the minutes of the annual meeting held on 18 July 2016 and the monthly meeting held on 18 July 2016.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Dalton, seconded by Councillor Wall, that the minutes of the annual meeting and the monthly meeting of Athy Municipal District held on 18 July 2016 be confirmed and taken as read. The progress report was noted.

AY03/1609

Matters Arising

Safety Measures - Kildangan Bridge, Kildangan (AY08/1606)

Councillor Wall noted report indicating that the preliminary assessment and initial cost estimate had been carried out by the Traffic Management Section in consultation with the

District Engineer. Councillor Wall stated that this was a very serious issue and the safety of persons using the bridge had to be prioritised and that funding had to be identified immediately. Mr Coppinger stated that a Part 8 would need to be done and that he would be looking for substantial funding from a mixture of sources such as the National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the Council next year in order to carry out works at this location. He stated that this project was high priority on his agenda and that he would come back to the members before Christmas with a more definite response.

Councillor Miley stated that temporary traffic lights at this bridge would help in the short-term in order to alleviate traffic jams and safety of children and all those using this bridge. Mr Coppinger stated that he would ask the District Engineer to install temporary traffic lights at this bridge.

Development of a Policy or assist local community alerts in the maintaining of sight lines at junctions throughout the Athy Area (AY08/1607)

Councillor Wall asked for clarity as to whether the landowners had to get a letter from the council in order to carry out maintenance of hedges in order to improve sight lines at junctions. The members were informed that the Risk Assessment Unit advises that the Council's Public Liability Policy with Irish Public Bodies Insurance Limited only covers the activities of the council and its employees. Residents Associations, Tidy Town Committees and others must have their own public liability insurance in regard to their activities. If they are carrying out activities or work on council property, then evidence of public liability insurance must be submitted to the council, which would then be forwarded to Irish Public Bodies Insurances and the policy should have an indemnity to the council in relation to these activities.

Meeting with IDA and Enterprise Ireland (AY29/1605)

Councillor Keatley informed the members the IDA were going to the Chamber of Commerce meeting on 7 October 2016.

Briefing from Respond Housing Association on proposed development at Flinter's Field (AY01/1605)

The members were circulated with a drawing of the proposed 33 units under the current proposal. Councillor Wall stated that he welcomed the plan especially the five four bedroom units being provided. Mr McLoughlin stated that the Part 8 would be arranged. He stated that

he was meeting with Respond on Friday, 30 September and he asked members to contact him before then, if they had any queries in regard to the drawing circulated to them.

AY04/1609

Update on the Improvements on the Sewerage Network Planned for Narraghmore

Councillor Keatley stated that he was very frustrated about this situation as currently there was sewage flowing down the footpath in Oak Park and that residents and children were trying to by-pass same on a regular basis going about their business and going to school. He stated that tankering was provided during the summer months but it was not happening at present. He asked for an update and asked when this problem would be alleviated.

Councillor Miley stated that he was baffled as he understood that works would be commencing as soon as engineers were employed over the summer and the problem is still ongoing. He asked that public lighting also be looked at under this project. He stated that the cost of tankering loads per week were huge and he urged that the Oak Park situation be sorted out quickly. Councillor Wall thanked the District Manager and his staff for their work behind the scenes but he asked for a commitment that works on Oak Park would be carried out first in order to give relief to its residents. The cathaoirleach understood that the District Manager was committed to finding a solution for this problem but it had to happen as soon as possible.

The District Manager stated that he had given the members a comprehensive update last July in regard to the long-term solution to this issue and he acknowledged the frustration of the members and the community. He clarified a solution had been found and that an extensive report, assessments and works had already happened.

In regard to the Wastewater Treatment Plant, he stated that this plant was not functioning properly. He had a number of meetings with Irish Water and have agreement with Irish Water to upgrade the plant at a cost of €110,000 which was sanctioned by Irish Water under small schemes initiative. He stated that this project was going to tender at present.

In regard to Oak Park, the pumping station is deficient and a new pipe network would have to be installed. Over the summer months, the council engaged consultants to look at this and they gave a report and costings of €140,000. He stated that Oak Park was not taken in charge but the council were looking at taking the wastewater element in charge. The design has been agreed and was also going to tender.

The District Manager re-iterated that there were large works to be carried out in both areas and that this project was prioritised. He stated that this project would be funded by Irish Water, the Council and some bond monies.

In regard to tankering, the District Manager understood that tankering was adhered to and was unaware of any problems. He added that in conjunction with Development Control that tankering would continue to be provided in the short-term.

The members asked for a timescale for the tendering process for both of these issues.

The District Manager stated that tenders should be back in before the November meeting of the municipal district.

AY05/1609

Town and Village Renewal

Councillor Wall asked the District Manager to clarify how many projects would be involved, the deadline and funding involved. Councillor Miley stated that this scheme was announced by the Government and that the members had no input in this matter and asked whether the Director would give the members a presentation before the closing date.

The District Manager stated that the Government gave relatively little notice for this scheme. He stated that the deadline was 30 September 2016 and that monies available were €380,000. He added that he did ask for details of this scheme and same was sent to community groups and others. There were two different categories, one for smaller towns and one for bigger towns. He stated that contact was made with all Tidy Town Groups and that there were some applications already received.

The members were unhappy and stated that the whole matter was handled badly by municipal district areas as there was no discussion at their meetings and the closing date is 30 September next. Councillor Miley stated that Tidy Town Groups were given short notice of this scheme. Groups should have been brought in and the matter discussed. The members asked whether the deadline could be extended to allow all concerned apply.

The District Manager stated that the Government had set this scheme up not the council. He stated that the likelihood now was that there would be sufficient projects submitted by the

deadline and that officials would be making their decision. He stated that he had a meeting organised with the co-ordinating Director on the 27 September and that he would get more clarity on this matter then. He asked the members to speak to him directly regarding any issue around groups. The members agreed to meet themselves to discuss this matter further.

AY06/1609

Update on the Schedule of Municipal District Works

The District Engineer gave a comprehensive report of the works being carried out as part of the restoration maintenance works for the Athy Municipal District as follows; Bituminous overlay of roads at Passlands, Monasterevin, Duneany/Oghill/Clonegath, Broofield/Irishtown, Woodhill, Narraghmore as part of the Restoration Improvement Job; preparation and surface dressing of roads at Gormanstown/Gilbinstown/Knockroe, Halverstown/Killinane/Baronsland, Ballymount/Ballybarney/Calverstown for Restoration Maintenance Works; municipal district street sweeping and litter bin cleaning plan has been implemented; comprehensive maintenance operations undertaken through the south of the county; work has been completed on (local property tax funded scheme) footpath in Castledermot and completion of two local improvement schemes and one community involvement scheme. He stated that he was coming near the end of the works programme. The report was noted.

AY07/1609

Time and Date of the Athy Municipal District Budget Meeting

The meetings administrator stated that it was proposed that the Athy Municipal District Budget meeting would be held on the same day as the monthly Athy Municipal District meeting on 17 October 2016 commencing at 10.00 a.m. and the monthly meeting held at 10.30 a.m. All the members agreed. The members were reminded that the Joint Policing Committee would commence at 9.00 a.m. on the same morning.

Resolved on the agreement of the members that the Athy Municipal Budget meeting would commence at 10.00 a.m. and the normal monthly Athy Municipal District meeting would commence at 10.30 a.m. on the 17 October 2016.

AY08/1609

Appoint Nominee to the Corporate Policy Group

Councillor Breslin was nominated by Councillor Miley and seconded by Councillor Keatley.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Miley, seconded by Councillor Keatley, that Councillor Breslin be appointed to the Corporate Policy Group for one year. This was agreed by all.

AY09/1609

Update on Community and Economic Development Issues

Ms Patricia Berry gave a comprehensive report to the members outlining all her works over the last two months in the Athy Municipal District including some of the following; working with all resident associations in the municipal district; setting up new resident associations in Canal Walk, Castle Park, Townspark and Ballyroe; organising clean-ups/painting/grass cutting all being done by groups and council staff collecting grass; FAI soccer skills training; assisted family fun day at Vincents Hospital, Kilmead, Andrew Meadows and Ballroe; worked on promotion of "Picture This" concert; worked with Pride of Place; helped on consultation day for Emily Square; working with Monasterevin Youth Cafe and organised family fun cycle evening; organised events in municipal district in conjunction with National Bike Week; worked on awards evening in Clonard Court; presented €27,000 a couple of weeks ago to Pieta House; working with Woodstock Forum; council fun day on 17 September last; community wellbeing event in People's Park; met with Griese Youth Theatre Group in Ballitore and they will come into Athy during Halloween; assisted with the Shackleton Launch; working with all Tidy Town Groups and stated that Athy Concentrates gave €1,400 to help with works on Stradbally Road and that a plan was put together and signed off by Athy Concentrates; 35 french students project which brings in approximately €25,000 to Athy from the French College; organised the wifi launch; working on the new event for Halloween in Athy for the municipal district area on 31 October next to alleviate bonfires in the town and waiting on Tidy Towns Results for 2016.

The members thanked Ms Berry for all her hard work for the area.

AY10/1609

Meeting Lane, Athy

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Wall:
That the council immediately bring the car park and surrounding areas at Meeting Lane, Athy, up to a proper standard including providing for more security at the skate park.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Wall and seconded by Councillor Miley.

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that this matter would be examined by the Road Design Section in consultation with the Municipal District Office.

Councillor Wall stated that he recently attended a meeting with Butler's Lane residents association who raised issues such as anti-social behaviour at the skate park. He added that he had spoken to the District Engineer with regard to upgrading the carpark at Meeting Lane and he asked for cameras or additional lighting to be placed at the skate park. He stated that the skate park was fantastic but it was attracting anti-social behaviour and it needed to be addressed. He asked whether funding had been identified.

The District Engineer stated that this location had been under-developed for many years. It has been used as a carpark but it was never properly designed as a carpark. He stated that a draft plan would need to be designed and brought before the members. He added that installing cameras would not be a problem but they would have to be monitored. He added that he had organised a consultant to look at this area and include additional lighting as part of the design.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Wall, seconded by Councillor Miley that a draft plan be drawn up and brought back to the members as soon as possible.

AY11/1609

Local Improvement Scheme Programme

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Dalton:
That L7026 be considered for works under the LIS programme.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Dalton and seconded by Councillor Wall.

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that an application under the Local Improvement Scheme can be submitted for consideration in 2017 for this work.

Councillor Dalton noted report and stated that he would speak further with the District Engineer.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Dalton, seconded by Councillor Wall that the report be noted.

AY12/1609

Remedial Works - Access Road to Monasterevin Cemetery

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Dalton:
That remedial works be carried out to the access road to Monasterevin Cemetery.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Dalton and seconded by Councillor Wall.

A report was received from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that the matter would be examined and appropriate works undertaken (where necessary).

Councillor Dalton stated that wheelchair access was necessary.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Dalton, seconded by Councillor Wall that report be noted and that works be undertaken on the access road to the cemetery to allow for wheelchair access.

AY13/1609

Parking Spaces - Monasterevin Cemetery

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Dalton:
Can parking spaces be provided at Monasterevin Cemetery?

A report was received from the Environment Section informing the members that this cemetery would be examined to establish where spaces can be provided.

The District Engineer stated that many cemeteries had no provision for carparking. He stated that a plan would need to be designed.

The report was noted.

AY14/1609

Part 8 Process for Car Park at Kildangan, Kildangan Bridge and Re-Design of Edmund Rice Square, Athy

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Breslin:
That the council proceed with the Part 8 process for the following schemes: car park at Kildangan, Kildangan Bridge and the redesign of Edmund Rice Square, Athy.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Breslin and seconded by Councillor Wall.

A report was received from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that a preliminary assessment, outline scope of works and costing had been carried out by the Traffic Management Section and the District Engineer in relation to Kildangan Bridge.

The cathaoirleach noted that the members had discussed Kildangan Bridge earlier under the progress report. The members asked that the Part 8 procedure commence with Kildangan Carpark and Kildangan Bridge and that funding be identified.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Wall that the Part 8 procedure commence in regard to Kildangan Carpark and Kildangan Bridge and that funding be identified.

AY15/1609

Scheme to Replace/Upgrade Litter Bins in Municipal District

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Breslin:

That the council consider a scheme to replace/upgrade litter bins throughout the municipal area.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Breslin and seconded by Councillor Wall.

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that this issue can be considered under 2017 allocations.

The cathaoirleach stated that there were a number of litter bins which were rusty and dirty and in need of replacement. She asked that this be carried out in conjunction with the Tidy Towns as it was taking away from the good image of businesses around the district.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Wall that litter bins be replaced, where required, in the municipal district.

AY16/1609

Approach Roads to Athy

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Miley:

That the council work proactively on all approach roads to Athy and work with all the landowners that are willing to help improve the approaches to Athy town particularly on the Stradbally Road.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Miley and seconded by Councillor Dalton.

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that the Municipal District Office would engage and assist in the co-ordination of all agencies including Tidy Towns, and Athy Regeneration.

Councillor Miley asked the District Engineer to work with the landowners to enhance the Stradbally Road and to improve the sight lines and to get a new hedge sown. The members asked that all the approach roads would be improved especially the Stradbally Road. Councillor Wall stated that Cardington Bridge needed to be improved and that ivy was growing on the bridge.

The District Engineer stated that he was currently re-surfacing the Monasterevin Road, the Traffic Management Plan with schools was in hand and some works on the Carlow Road were completed and resurfacing would happen shortly. He added that signage and lineage was improved at Cardington Bridge. He did agree that Woodstock Street needed attention and that once other jobs were completed, he could start on Woodstock/Stradbally Road.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Miley, seconded by Councillor Dalton that the District Engineer would start works on Woodstock/Stradbally Road as soon as other jobs in hand on that road were completed.

AY17/1609

Repair of Minor Roads and Cul de sacs in the Athy Municipal District

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Miley:

That the council concentrate on the large number of minor roads and cul-de-sacs in the Athy Municipal District to ensure that they are passable and potholes are filled.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Miley and seconded by Councillor Keatley.

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that the Athy Municipal District does not have the resources to concentrate on these areas and to carry out this work.

Councillor Miley stated that he was disappointed with the response as many of the roads in question are almost impassible with potholes. He asked that a two week blitz be organised to carry out repair of potholes. Councillor Keatley stated that people living on rural roads pay their local property tax and get little for it. He stated that roads budgets have improved since recession times. He asked that a policy be put in place to keep these roadways in good condition and that resources be identified.

The District Engineer stated that he did not have the resources to carry out this work in these areas as he was concentrating on bigger issues such as primary and secondary roads. He stated that there were about 70 roads in the area that they cannot get to and that if he concentrated on those and not on the bigger issues, they would get done quicker. He stated that there were more demands on their time and resources and that he had no extra resources in the last eight years. He stated that he now has 700 kilometres of roads in the municipal district area.

Ms Wright stated that a letter had issued to the Department of Transport looking for a special fund to be considered in order to carry out these works.

Councillor Dalton asked whether the council could pick out the ten worst roads and organise a blitz over a two-three week period as it would cost more in the long run if these minor roads and cul de sacs are not repaired.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Miley, seconded by Councillor Keatley that the District Engineer would come back to the members with regard to whether a two-three blitz to carry out maintenance works on minor roads and cul de sacs could be arranged.

AY18/1609

Upgrade of Road Surface and provision of a Footpath linking Cowpasture to Hopkins Haven in Monasterevin

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Wall:

Can the council confirm the up to date position with the provision of a footpath linking Cowpasture to Hopkins Haven in Monasterevin and the upgrade of the road surface there as previously agreed?

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that it was anticipated that work would commence later this year.

The report was noted.

AY19/1609

Flooding at the Courtyard of the Bother Bui housing estate in Athy

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Dalton:

Can works be carried out to alleviate flooding at the courtyard of the Bothar Bui housing estate in Athy?

Councillor Dalton stated that he was approached by a resident of the courtyard in question. He stated that the problem still remains and he asked that someone take ownership of this problem.

The District Engineer stated that the courtyard was enclosed and it did not lead to a public road. He stated that he can deal with road issues and lighting on the main road. The property was looked after by Athy Town Council and was taken over by the council when the town council was abolished in 2014. It had been overlooked for years and no one had taken responsibility for it.

Mr McLoughlin stated that he would ask the Architects to take a look at the courtyard and would come back to the members.

AY20/1609

Hedgecutting particularly at Belan, Mullaghmast, Usk, Kilrush, Ballyvass and many other areas

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Miley:

Can the council work with landowners to cut hedges where they are causing an obstruction to our roads particularly Belan, Mullaghmast, Usk, Kilrush, Ballyvass and many other areas?

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that the council intends to place an advertisement in local newspapers to advise landowners of their responsibilities with regard to hedges.

Councillor Miley stated that this problem was going on for years and some of the roads are impassible. He stated that the advertisement would not alleviate the problem and asked whether another approach could be taken. He asked whether the council could meet with landowners to co-ordinate works.

Ms Wright stated that the advertisement would appear in about two weeks time in local papers and she was hoping that this approach would work.

The District Engineer stated that landowners in general are normally very good but there was always a few who would not help. He stated it was their duty to maintain the hedges on their own properties. He added that the council had no resources to maintain hedges. He stated that he could meet with representatives of the Irish Farmers Association and a co-ordinated approach might work.

The report was noted.

AY21/1609

Presentation on the South Eastern CFRAMS Draft Flood Management Plan

Ms Edele O'Brien gave a presentation on this plan. She advised the members that the public consultation was being held in the Clonard Court Hotel after the meeting from 1 pm to 7 pm. She stated that submissions would be sent to the Office of Public Works and they would finalise the draft plan. It will then be forwarded to the Minister for approval in order to roll out this plan and allocate funding of €430 million for this project. She stated that approximately €4.1 million would be allocated to Athy to alleviate the flooding problems.

The members raised their concerns indicating that the report would work for the town of Athy but not rural areas. There were currently trees growing in the middle of the river in Maganey. They worried that this plan would intensify the matter in rural areas.

Ms O'Brien stated that the Office of Public Works would not support a plan that would wipe out rural areas. She understood the members worries about intensifying flooding in rural

areas but she stated that the water would be contained. She advised the members to raise their concerns at the public consultation today

The members thanked Ms O'Brien and she withdrew from the meeting.

AY22/1609

Mill Lane, Ballitore

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Wall:

Can the council bring the Mill Lane, Ballitore, up to a proper standard given the number of houses on the lane, the local soccer club using it and the upcoming opportunity of a utility doing some work on it?

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that this work can be considered in 2017 allocations.

The District Engineer stated that he would let the utility take the lead first and he would work with them.

The report was noted.

AY23/1609

Rural Light Policy

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Miley:

Can the council devise a rural light policy to accommodate rural dwellers that lighting would be of benefit to them in this community?

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that the County Lighting Policy sets out policy on lighting and its provision and assessments of requests.

Councillor Miley stated that there were local property tax monies passed at full council that could be used to form a public lighting policy for rural areas. He also asked whether a grant could be given to elderly people and asked to meet with officials in this regard.

The District Engineer stated that the council has a lighting section now and there was a public lighting policy in place. He stated that he would speak with the Public Lighting Engineer on the issue.

The report was noted.

AY24/1609

Safety Works at Bolgers Cross, Grange and Graney Cross, Carrigeen

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Keatley:

Can the council give a timeframe for the completion of safety works at Bolgers Cross, Grange and Graney Cross, Carrigeen?

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that the Road Design Section, in consultation with the District Engineer, would arrange to meet Councillor Keatley on site to discuss safety issues.

The report was noted.

AY25/1609

Sight Lines at George's Cross, Kilkea

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Keatley:

Can the council improve sight lines at George's Cross, Kilkea as a matter of urgency?

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that this matter would be referred to Road Design for a design and funding would need to be identified.

The District Engineer stated that this work should be done during the summer months. Unfortunately, it was a busy season and there were no resources to carry out this work. He clarified that there was only one hedgecutter for the whole of the county.

The report was noted.

AY26/1609

Development of a Watercourse/River Plan

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Redmond:

That we as a municipal district develop a watercourse/river plan for the ongoing future of our area into the next 20 years on how we want to develop this amazing amenity.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Miley. He stated that Councillor Redmonds' motions and questions were to be taken as read.

The meetings administrator pointed out that Councillor Redmond requested that Councillor Miley propose his motions and questions and adjourn them to the next meeting. Councillor Miley stated that he was proposing that they be taken as read and this was seconded by Councillor Dalton and agreed by the members.

A report was received from the District Manager informing the members that this matter can be considered in context of the next review of the Athy Town Development Plan.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Miley and seconded by Councillor Dalton that the report be taken as read.

AY27/1609

Overview of Councils Mortgage to Rent Scheme

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Redmond:

Can we as a council be given an overview of the councils mortgage to rent scheme and the role of approved housing bodies in delivering this to our constituents?

The members were provided with a guide to the mortgage to rent scheme which was circulated to them prior to the meeting.

The report was noted and taken as read.

AY28/1609

Provision of a New Secondary School for St Paul's Monasterevin

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Wall:

That the council inform its members of the up to date position with the provision of a new secondary school for St. Paul's Monasterevin, what contact has the local authority had with

the department of education and with those involved in the provision of such a much needed educational facility.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Wall and seconded by Councillor Breslin.

A report was received from the Planning Section informing the members that the council, together with a representative from the NRDO, recently met with representatives from the Board of Management and Monasterevin Parish. It was agreed that all parties would work together and that the council would make technical staff available for the purpose of examining any council-related technical issues which need to be resolved. It was also agreed that the Board of Management would examine all possible other alternatives and would brief the Department of Education and ensure their ongoing involvement.

Councillor Wall stated that a new school needed to be built and he understood that there were ongoing issues with the council which were somewhat solved. He asked whether the council envisaged any other problems with the site.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Wall, seconded by Councillor Breslin that a report be prepared for the next meeting on whether or not there were any other problems envisaged on this site.

AY29/1609

Timeframe for the turnaround of Vacated Council Houses

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Keatley: That council's housing department give an expected timeframe for the turnaround of vacated council houses in the Athy Municipal District following promised improvements in procurement procedures.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Keatley and seconded by Councillor Dalton.

A report was received from the Housing Maintenance Section informing the members that according to most recent statistics, the time span for the return of vacant houses to the general housing stock varies drastically across the state, ranging from 66 weeks in one county to 13 weeks in the most efficient. Delays are sometimes caused through a lack of funding, lack of resources, legal issues, insurance issues, procurement issues, or the level of works required. Therefore, some houses can get turned around within reasonable

timeframes, while some take significantly extra time to deal with. Many of these are referred to as Voids. In 2015, the council returned 22 Void properties to the housing stock, and this year will have returned an additional 8. We will also have returned 5 long-term, fire-damaged houses, some of which have remained unoccupied for as long as two years. By extrapolating figures so far this year, the average turnaround time for vacant houses in the Housing Maintenance Section is approximately 15 weeks. Following introduction of additional resources, new protocols and new procurement practices, this has now been brought down to approximately 12 weeks. Indeed, in some cases, we have been able to return some vacant houses to the general housing stock in less than one week. We are confident that subject to continued provision of resources and funding to be able to maintain these delivery timelines and even improve. The members are presented on a monthly basis with an update on vacant houses for the municipal district. Any additional queries should be forwarded to the Housing Section through the Customer Relations Management system (CRM) for clarification.

Councillor Keatley stated that he was still very concerned about the turnaround time. There were houses lying vacant for long periods of time and it was bringing up problems with anti-social behaviour. Councillor Dalton added that it was a matter of frustration that houses were not being turned around more quickly. Councillor Wall stated that he could add another seven houses to the vacant housing report issued to the members for today's meeting. He asked that inspections be carried out more quickly. Councillor Miley stated that looking at the vacant house report, there were no houses vacant in Athy Town and this was totally incorrect.

The cathaoirleach requested that the members meet with the Director of Housing and officials every six months.

Mr McLoughlin stated that the council's housing section are never told in advance of when houses are being returned by tenants. The only notice received is when houses are damaged or keys handed back. He clarified that houses are being upgraded on a continuous basis.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Keatley, seconded by Councillor Dalton that Mr McLoughlin would go back to the Engineers in Housing Maintenance and would report to next meeting.

AY30/1609

Suspension of Standing Orders

On the proposal of Councillor Dalton, seconded by Councillor Keatley that standing orders be suspended for fifteen minutes to finish the meeting.

AY31/1609

2016 Self Help Scheme

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Breslin:
Can the housing section confirm a date for the commencement of the 2016 Self Help Scheme?

A report was received from the Housing Section informing the members that staff resources to implement the self help scheme have been secured and the person was now in place. The scheme would be advertised the week commencing 19 September 2016. Information and forms are available from the housing maintenance office and online via Kildare County Council website; www.kildarecountycouncil.ie.

The cathaoirleach welcomed the scheme and stated that it would be of great benefit to all who apply.

The report was noted.

AY32/1609

Development of a Council App

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Redmond:
Following the introduction of free wifi and being a town that has had many firsts in the last few weeks, perhaps it's time that we call on the amazing staff in the council's IT department to develop a Kildare County Council app which could coincide with the wifi roll out to Castledermot and Monasterevin.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Miley and seconded by Councillor Dalton.
A report was received from the Head of Information Systems and Procurement informing the members that following a review period of the pilot implementation of the public WiFi Access point in Emily Square in Athy, the IT Department would develop a schedule of further sites in consultation with library staff as the primary source of broadband connectivity and with the

municipal districts. This would happen in early 2017. As to the development of an app, we would welcome feedback on the proposed functionality of such an app and are open to further discussions on this matter at the member's convenience.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Miley and seconded by Councillor Dalton that the report be noted and taken as read.

AY33/1609

Request to hold the Athy Municipal District Meeting in Monasterevin

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Keatley:

That the council hold a monthly meeting of the Athy Municipal District in Monasterevin.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Keatley and seconded by Councillor Wall.

The meetings administrator suggested the December meeting of the Athy Municipal District and it was agreed that it would be held in the CYS Hall in Monasterevin.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Keatley, seconded by Councillor Wall that the December meeting of the Athy Municipal District be held in the CYS Hall in Monasterevin and this was agreed by all.

AY34/1609

Other Business

The cathaoirleach congratulated the Kildare Girls County Team on their recent win in Croke Park and asked that a letter issue to the County Board.

The meeting then concluded.