

**Minutes of the Athy Municipal District Meeting held at 11.00 am on
Monday, 12 March 2018 in Aras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas**

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

Officials Present: Mr J Boland (District Manager), Mr D O'Flaherty (District Engineer), Mr C Flynn (Senior Executive Engineer), Mr P Makhuza (Executive Engineer), Ms E Wright (Senior Executive Officer), Ms A M Conneely (A/Senior Executive Officer), Ms A Low (Senior Staff Officer), Ms P Berry (Marketing Officer), Ms F Byrne (Meetings Administrator) and Ms O Mooney (Meetings Secretary).

AY01/0318

Suspension of Standing Orders

The Cathaoirleach proposed to suspend standing orders for 10 minutes in order to facilitate the completion of an informal presentation which was taking place.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Miley, seconded by Councillor Breslin that standing orders be suspended for ten minutes.

AY02/0318

Suspension of Standing Orders

The Cathaoirleach proposed to suspend standing orders for a further 10 minutes in order to facilitate the completion of an informal presentation which was taking place.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Redmond, seconded by Councillor Wall that standing orders be suspended for ten minutes.

AY03/0318

Suspension of Standing Orders

The Cathaoirleach proposed to suspend standing orders for a final 10 minutes in order to facilitate the completion of an informal presentation which was taking place.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Wall, seconded by Councillor Dalton that standing orders be suspended for ten minutes.

AY04/0318

Minutes and Progress Report

The members considered the minutes of the monthly meeting of the Athy Municipal District held on 19 February 2018 together with the progress report.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Miley, seconded by Councillor Breslin that the minutes of the monthly meeting of the Athy Municipal District held on 19 February 2018 be confirmed and taken as read. The progress report was noted.

AY05/0318

Update on the Municipal District Road Works

The District Engineer circulated a progress report to the members at the meeting. Councillor Miley stated that the last ten days or so were very testing and demanding during the snow storms and it was great to see the roads cleared in relatively good time. He thanked all those concerned including farmers, neighbours and the community at large who helped to clear roads and those who helped elderly persons during the recent bad weather.

Councillor Miley asked for an update with regard to works to be carried out at Narraghmore. The District Engineer said some works were held back due to drainage issues and snow but he hoped that works would be done in April 2018.

AY06/0318

Athy Distributor Road

Ms Wright stated that Mr Coppinger gave his apologies as he was unable to attend the meeting. She stated there was no further progress to be reported since last month and she confirmed that the preliminary works would start shortly. Councillor Wall asked whether tenders were back yet and whether contractors had commenced. Ms Wright stated that the members would receive an update at the next meeting.

AY07/0318

Road Traffic Act 1994 - Section 38 - Proposed Accessible Parking Bay at Bigstone National School, Ballyraggen, Rathvilly, Co Kildare

The members considered the draft Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act 1994 for the proposed accessible parking bay at Bigstone National School, Ballyraggen, Rathvilly, Co Kildare.

Councillor Keatley gave some background to this school stating that it was a small school of currently 20 pupils and it had a good contingency of junior infants starting this year.

Councillor Miley stated it was good to see rural schools being supported in this way.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Keatley, seconded by Councillor Miley and agreed by all members, that the Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act 1994 for the proposed accessible parking bay at Bigstone National School be approved.

AY08/0318

Safety of road users on the old N7 Road from Monasterevin to Kildare

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

That the council improve the safety for road users on the old N7 Road from Monasterevin to Kildare, given the ongoing problems with traffic ignoring the right of way.

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 item can be examined by TAAG as it was on the R448.

Councillor Breslin stated the safety issues on this road were very serious as traffic was ignoring the right of way at this location and she had concerns as to how long it would be in the TAAG system. Councillor Wall added that there had been near accidents coming from both the Kildare and Monasterevin direction and that traffic need to obey the rules of the road. He confirmed that the Kildare-Newbridge Municipal District Engineer had stated that he would investigate this issue and come back to the members.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Wall that the Kildare-Newbridge Municipal District Engineer would investigate the improvement of safety for road users on the old N7 road from Monasterevin to Kildare and come back to the members.

AY09/0318

Yellow Box at the side of the Heritage Centre, Athy

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

That the council install a yellow box at the side of the Heritage Centre Athy to alleviate the ongoing traffic congestion in this 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 a design was being carried out in relation to this area, in conjunction with the design for Emily Square.

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

AY10/0318

Special Meeting with National Transport Authority and Iarnrod Éireann

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

Can the council urgently write to the National Transport Authority and Iarnród Éireann asking their representatives to a special meeting to discuss urgent issues regarding pricing and overcrowding for Monasterevin and Athy rail users as well as other commuting concerns at both these rail stations?

A report was received from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department informing the members that at a recent meeting held in January with Irish Rail representatives (Service Manager for Heuston Station and Corporate Communications), the council was advised that pricing was a matter for the NTA and not within the control of Irish Rail. With regard to overcrowding and facilities for commuters, Irish Rail advised that they are examining options for increasing capacity along existing commuter routes. Facilities and infrastructure at rail stations are under continuous review and the issue of anti social behaviour was also discussed. If the members are in agreement, a letter can be sent to Irish Rail to bring the members concerns regarding Monasterevin and Athy rails stations to their attention.

Councillor Wall stated he was not fully happy with the reply. He asked where the meeting was held and who was at the meeting. He added it was not acceptable that commuters had to pay full fees while only getting standing room on the train. He noted that some mornings there could be a large queue waiting to get tickets with one or both ticket machines not working.

Ms Wright stated that the meeting in January was with the Kildare-Newbridge Municipal District and Irish Rail. The members agreed that a letter issue to Irish Rail and the NTA regarding their concerns about pricing and overcrowding for Monasterevin and Athy rail users as well as other commuting issues at both these rail stations and that an invitation be sent to them inviting them to attend a future meeting of the Athy Municipal District.

The report was noted.

AY11/0318

Plans for renovating and upgrading social housing properties in the Athy Municipal District

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

That the council confirm what plans it has for renovating and upgrading its social housing properties in the Athy Municipal District area, given the agreed increase in the council budget for such works. Can the council also confirm the estates and properties where it will carry out this work and any timelines it has for completing such work.

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

A report was received from the Housing Section informing the members that the Housing Maintenance budget was increased in 2018 due to the increased number of houses in our stock, the increasing cost of bringing vacant houses up to the higher standards required under the new rental regulations and the climbing cost of response maintenance. The revenue budget adopted by the elected members would be utilised in the most efficient and economic manner available to fund all necessary response and planned maintenance works. It would also help supplement any necessary support to Department funded schemes such as Housing Adaptation works and the Voids and Energy Upgrade Programmes. Works had already started on energy upgrade works within the Athy

Municipal District and it was expected that a sizeable volume of response and planned maintenance work would be delivered on within the municipal district throughout the year, with works prioritised based on the circumstances pertaining plus available funding. Should the members have queries on any of the schemes, or wish to make representations on any particular issue or scheme, please make contact with the Housing Maintenance Department.

Councillor Wall thanked the Housing Maintenance Section for all the great work they do. He asked where the increase of €918,000 would be spent and he hoped that the Athy Municipal District would get a share of these funds.

Councillor Breslin stated that the report should be more detailed stating that replacement/repair of windows and doors was an issue with tenants.

Councillor Redmond asked how much money would need to be put aside to carry out necessary housing works.

Mr Flynn stated that housing maintenance was a very difficult area to budget for and it was necessary to assess works and then prioritise them. He informed the members that 294 energy upgrades had been carried out and that 89 houses had window and or/door replacements. He stated that the council always prioritise works to be carried out in houses being turned around for tenants. The council now have to follow legal requirements to bring elements such as electric, plumbing, decoration up to standard before letting out again to other tenants. He added that the budget last year was €1.29 million for refurbishing and this year it is €2.4 million. He added that there were many houses in poor condition and that older houses would need more funding.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr Flynn for his attendance and asked him to keep concentrating on turning around council houses to alleviate the housing crisis in general.

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

AY12/0318

Fallout from recent bad weather in Athy Municipal District

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

That this municipal district look at the fallout from recent bad weather and write to the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment with our views on where positive changes can be made.

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

Councillor Redmond thanked the District Engineer and his outdoor staff, Civil Defence and the Emergency Services for their hard work during the recent bad weather. He stated that there were a number of people in the Athy Municipal District who received no social welfare payments and he had contacted the Community Welfare Officer who tried their best to help those affected. He noted that the council staff were out day and night clearing roads and helped elderly persons to collect medical supplies at times. He noted that during the red warning status, the Civil Defence were told to stand down unless it was an emergency to transport persons. He asked that a letter issue to the Minister for Social Welfare expressing the gratitude of the Athy Municipal District members to the Community Welfare Officer who went over and above to help people.

Councillor Miley complimented council staff and members of the public who helped in any capacity during the recent bad weather.

Councillor Wall stated that community spirit was alive and well during the storm. He thanked all those concerned for their help and he added that the Civil Defence got to the most vulnerable and the community welfare officer did her best but ran out of money.

The Cathaoirleach stated that the whole programme of works for the duration of the storm was very good and warnings were given and adhered to by the public.

The District Engineer stated that the council contacted the contractors earlier in the week and brought them to Gallowshill and divided them into districts within the municipal district. His staff were out for eight days and the main roads were done first and some roads were one-lane for a short duration. He added that due to the fact that these weather conditions

are temporary, the purchase of snowploughs would not be feasible as they would rust and that was why contractors were used.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Redmond, seconded by Councillor Miley that a letter issue to the Department of Social Welfare expressing the gratitude of the Athy Municipal District members to the Community Welfare Officer who went over and above to help people during the recent adverse weather event.

AY13/0318

St Pauls Secondary School, Monasterevin

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

That we as a municipal district support the plight of the Monasterevin constituents in their need for a new school and write to the Minister for Education to emphasise the crisis in Monasterevin.

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

Councillor Redmond stated the current condition of the school was deplorable for the staff and children and he stated that this new school had to be built. He asked that a letter issue to the Minister for Education outlining his disappointment that school children and staff had to work and study in these conditions. He stated that the Environmental Health Officer had been emailed in which the problems with the current school were outlined.

Councillor Miley stated the problem here was the acquisition of the site which was the old Moore Abbey site in Monasterevin. The issues between the vendor and the Department of the Education need to be dealt with and progressed as soon as possible. He added that the students had no proper classrooms, heating or facilities. He said the new school was originally to be finished by 2020 but this was not now the case.

Councillor Wall stated there were serious concerns with the current school and he had attended a public meeting recently and people were irate and understandably so. He added there were 227 boys in the current school who had to share one toilet. He stated he had contacted the Minister for Education and Skills and the Minister had stated that the site acquisition was well advanced but the school would not be built until 2021.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Redmond, seconded by Councillor Miley that a letter issue to the Minister for Education asking for a full update on the progress at this site and that the six members of the Athy Municipal District support the building of a new school for St Paul's and that the Minister for Education be invited to visit the current school and see the conditions for himself.

AY14/0318

Clean-up of Green area - William Pearse Terrace, Castledermot

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

That the council work with the residents of William Pearse Terrace, Castledermot to clean up the green area where illegal dumping is taking place.

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

A report was received from the Environment Section informing the members that the Environment Section would assist local residents with the removal of collected material from the estate. Reports of illegal dumping and litter should be made to the Council's litter report freephone 1800-243-143 for follow up by the Area Community Warden Team.

Councillor Miley stated that there was a fantastic Residents Committee in this estate and he was glad that the Environment Section would help them. He added that there was a large green area further down the estate and it needed a fence and hedging to divide the green which might alleviate illegal dumping at this location. He stated that signage needed to be erected to help with the illegal dumping issues.

Councillor Redmond stated that the residents had great pride in their estate and he was glad that the council were going to help clean up the green area.

Councillor Wall stated that the residents do so much work themselves and rarely look for help from the council and he was glad that assistance would be given to them.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Miley, seconded by Councillor Redmond that report be noted and that signage be looked at to help alleviate illegal dumping in this estate.

AY15/0318

Upgrade of the sewage system in Timolin

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Miley:
Can the council give an update on the upgrade of the sewage system in Timolin?

A report was received from the Water Services Section informing the members that the design for this project was ongoing. On completion, Irish Water would manage the tender process. It was anticipated that a contractor would be on site by late 2018.

The District Manager stated that he would try to expedite the situation in some way.

The report was noted.

AY16/0318

Update on the sewage system in Moone

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Miley:
Can the council give an update on the sewage system in Moone? (location provided)

A report was received from the Building and Development Control Section informing the members that the Moone Village development was granted planning permission for the development of six terraced houses in Moone (pl ref. O2/2447). The sewerage system for the development consisted of a foul sewer pumping station located at the low point of the site, which pumped up to a proprietary wastewater treatment system located at the top of the site. In 2012, due to ongoing issues with the foul sewer pumping station, the council called in the bond and a new pumping station was constructed from the funds available. At present, the Building & Development Control Department contracts out the routine maintenance and de-sludging of the wet wall tank in the pump station. The proprietary wastewater treatment system was in a poor condition and needed to be upgraded. Presently, the main obstacle preventing Moone Village development being taken in charge was that Irish Water had a policy not to take in charge developer lead water/wastewater infrastructure which did not connect to the public system.

Councillor Miley stated that the sewage was starting to run down the street again in Moone. He said the estate was not taken in charge. He asked that the council expedite the taking in charge of this estate, if only the sewerage part of it.

The District Manager stated that he would talk to Irish Water and expedite the situation.

The report was noted.

AY17/0318

Other Business

Update on Part 8 - Emily Square (AY16/0917, AY04/0118)

The District Manager informed the members that he would make a presentation to the members before the full council meeting on the 26 March 2018.

Update on Athy Regeneration Strategy (AY28/0218)

The District Manager informed the members that he would make a presentation to the members on this strategy before the full council meeting on the 26 March 2018.

Update on re-development of Edmund Rice Square, Athy (AY14/1606, AY03/1704, AY14/0517, AY04/0717, AY02/0917, AY03/1017, AY02/1117)

The District Manager stated that if the members were happy with his approach to this development, he would proceed to the next level of design. He stated he would come back to the members at the next meeting. This was agreed by the members.

AY18/0318

Model School - Athy

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

That the council confirm details of their agreement with Kildare Wicklow ETB regarding the Model School in Athy, what stage the Model School is at and can the council request confirmation from the relevant agencies on the plans for such a training centre for our area, given the need for a specific apprenticeship training centre for our municipal district area.

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

A report was received from the District Manager informing the members that the project was currently progressing to tender stage and a design team was currently in place. This was likely to take a number of months in light of the fact that it was a listed building. It was

anticipated that formal agreement with KWETB would be finalised in the interim. It was agreed that this would be a key project for the Athy Municipal District area.

Councillor Wall stated that currently there was a barrier up in front of this school and it looked terrible and needed to be improved. He added that a training centre would be ideal for this building as there was a large number of youth unemployed in this district.

Councillor Redmond stated that people were travelling to Athlone and Drogheda to take up apprenticeships and it would be great to have a training centre based in Athy. He had concerns for the Model School as it was a listed building which limits what can be done to a structure.

Councillor Breslin stated she was a member of the KWETB (Kildare Wicklow Education Training Board) and she would raise this issue at their next meeting.

The District Manager stated there was a good design team in place and the invitation for tenders would go out by the end of April 2018.

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

AY19/0318

Unauthorised Developments - Athy Municipal District

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

Can this municipal district be given a list of all unauthorised developments in our municipal district area since June 2014?

A report was received from the Planning Department informing the members that the council was not in a position at this point in time to issue such a report as that level of detail was not to hand without engaging in a considerable amount of manual research. A report would issue to the April meeting of full council.

The report was noted.

AY20/0318

Upgrading of the inside and outside of Ballitore Library

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

That the council give the Athy Municipal District Committee an update on the upgrading of the inside and outside of Ballitore Library?

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

A report was received from the County Librarian informing the members that the library service commissioned a conservation report on Ballitore Library and the service was currently working with the Architects Department in order to progress recommendations.

Councillor Miley complimented the library service for the new library in Athy. It was opened recently and would be a great asset for Athy. He noted Ballitore Library needed repairs as the outside of the building had deteriorated over the years and the visual side of the building needed work. He welcomed the reply that the council would identify any problems with this building.

Councillor Redmond stated that the library in Ballitore was utilised very well by the residents of Ballitore and others and it would be great to get these repairs carried out as soon as possible.

The cathaoirleach stated that he appreciated the report from the County Librarian and looked forward to works being carried out at this library in the future.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Miley, seconded by Councillor Redmond that report be noted.

AY21/0318

Purchase of House Alarms

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

Can the council give an update on the process relating to the recently agreed assistance for the purchase of house alarms for the most vulnerable in our local communities?

The District Manager stated that the community section were happy to progress this issue and he would come back to the members shortly in this regard. Councillor Wall asked when did he expect these works to happen. The District Manager stated that he would give timelines at the next meeting.

AY22/0318

Athy Primary Health Centre

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

Can this municipal district welcome the plans for the Athy primary health centre and ask the HSE what services are to go into it?

A report was received from the Meetings Administrator informing the members that it was a matter for them to agreed.

Councillor Redmond asked that a letter issue to the HSE asking what services were to be provided at this centre, what is the procedure for getting a GP at the centre and how long this process would take. This was agreed by all the members.

The meeting concluded.