



**Minutes of the monthly meeting of the Athy Municipal District held at 10.00 a.m. on Monday 15 July 2019 in Aras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare**

Members Present: Councillor M Wall (Cathaoirleach), Councillors V Behan, A Breslin and B Dooley

Apologies: Councillor I Keatley

Officials Present: Mr N Morrissey (District Manager), Mr D O'Flaherty (District Engineer), Mr J Coppinger (Senior Engineer), Mr L Dunne and Ms E Wright (Senior Executive Officers), Mr D Keogh (Road Safety Officer), Ms A Louw (Senior Staff Officer), Ms A Corbett (Senior Community Worker), Ms A Cummins (Meetings Administrator) and Ms O Mooney (Meetings Secretary)

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**AY01/0719**

**Minutes**

The members considered the minutes of the annual meeting of the Athy Municipal District held on Monday 17 June 2019.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Dooley that the minutes of the annual meeting of the Athy Municipal District be held on Monday 17 June 2019 be taken as read.

**AY02/0719**

**Presentation on the Kildare Age Friendly County Programme: Athy Age Friendly Town**

Ms Corbett gave a presentation to the members outlining that the overall aim was to make Ireland a great place in which to grow old. She outlined the following;



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- Age Friendly Ireland Shared Service with Meath County Council.
- National programme/31 County & City Councils. Each one has an Strategy, Alliance, Older Persons Council and Programme Manager
- National Implementation Group
- World Health Organisation framework 8 thematic areas/ Positive Ageing Initiative
- Outdoor spaces & Buildings

### **Some Initiatives include**

- Housing & Public realm training/Age Friendly Ireland were involved in the development of the new Housing Options for older people strategy with the Department of Housing & Planning & Local Government.
- Healthy Ireland roll out.
- Dementia Awareness Campaign/Understanding together/National Safeguarding Committee for vulnerable adults etc.
- Developed guidelines and tool kits on their website

### **Athy Age Friendly town process/Best Practice Guidelines from Age Friendly Ireland**

**Step 1.** Review research to date/identify gaps

**Step 2.** Walkability audit facilitated by Kildare Programme Manager and attended by Kildare Older Persons Council, Accessibility groups, Municipal District Engineer, relevant staff, Gardai, elected members and other relevant bodies depending on the town. Preliminary date of 9th Sept to be confirmed.

**Step 3.** Establish Action Group to implement the action plan and will dovetail with the new town team in Athy.

**Step 4.** Identify funding opportunities and other public realm projects to help implement the plan e.g. Celbridge/Leixlip Municipal District set aside a sum of money for three years in a row for the Municipal District offices to implement car parking spaces and Age Friendly seating etc.



Road/ Footpath improvements were informed by the consultation during the Walkability audit.

Age Friendly Library is already in place and currently looking at other opportunities to incorporate Age Friendly principles where possible.

First Age Friendly Walkability Audit is to be held in September 2019 and Ms Corbett stated that she would revert to the members with the date and invitation.

The members thanked her for the presentation.

### **AY03/0719**

#### **Matters Arising from Minutes**

#### **HSE Invitation (AY21/0918, AY03/1118, AY02/1218, AY03/0119, AY02/0219, AY27/0319 & AY02/1419**

Under the progress report, the members were informed that the Head of Primary Care and Addiction Services, HSE were unable to meet the members on the 10 July 2019 and the meeting had to be rescheduled. The Meetings Administrator to email the members with possible dates and times and the members to revert back to her.

#### **WOW Days (Walk on Wednesdays) - Athy Municipal District (AY10/0319)**

Mr Keogh gave a presentation to the members as follows;

WOW - Walk on Wednesday takes place in most schools in each county on each Wednesday. The National Walk to School Week took place from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> to Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May and national WOW day was held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May. The council invited all primary and secondary schools in Kildare to participate in the National Walk to School Day and to encourage more schools to take up the WOW Days during normal weeks.

Walking to school was a healthy and sustainable option for students and it also reduces congestion at schools and on school routes. By walking to school students are more alert and active when they get to schools, towards students who are driven to school or arrive by bus.



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An Taisce's Green Schools committee are the lead-agency for national WOW Day, and Local Authority Road Safety Officers and Community Gardai provide support and assistance on the day.

Walk to School Week was the annual celebration of sustainability on the school run. At a time when climate change has entered the national conversation through student action, children have been showing their desire for clean air and reduced congestion at the school gates through promotion of walking and other sustainable travel modes.

Road Safety Officers and the Green-Schools Travel coordinators encourages schools and students to switch to a greener and more sustainable travel modes, and WOW Days are the main magnet for such initiatives which encourages students and parents/guardians to consider walking, cycling, scooting or other options like carpooling and park 'n' stride in place of their private car.

The benefits are enormous and communities in which children can walk to school are happier, healthier ones, with cleaner air and reduced congestion.

Dozens of schools in County Kildare took part in WOW Day and we would hope that even more schools will participate in it next year too.

Councillor Dooley stated this was a great initiative for the municipal district and he would encourage all schools to take part. Councillor Breslin stated there were issues at some of the schools especially Scoil Mhicil Naofa and schools on the campus in regard to parking and double parking and parents and children should be encouraged to walk to school. The Cathaoirleach concurred with this great initiative and he hoped that other schools would follow suite and he thanked the school wardens for carrying out their duties.

### **Wastewater Treatment Plants - Villages of Timolin, Moone, Narraghmore, Kilmeade, Kilberry and Kildangan (AY10/0519)**

Mr Dunne stated that Irish Water were agreeable to meet with the members with regard to underlining issues in their municipal district. Irish Water confirmed that the Timolin project would proceed following planning approval. Mr Dunne suggested that Irish Water would meet the members after their September meeting and the time would be set by Members Services.



**AY04/0719**

**Update on the Athy Municipal District Roadworks**

A report from the District Engineer was circulated to the members prior to the meeting. The members thanked him for his comprehensive report.

Councillor Breslin asked for an update on the speed indicators for Kilberry. The District Engineer stated that speed boxes had been installed to check the speed of cars. The outcome was that most of the cars were driving over the speed limit. He added that these checks were carried out periodically. He added that enforcement was an issue as the signs were not working. He stated that Kilberry would be looked at under the Speed Limit Review. Councillor Breslin stated that the motion was passed to install speed indicators and it needed to be enforced before an accident happens. The District Engineer stated he would review this issue again. Councillor Wall stated the Gardai could not be there twenty-four seven and that these speed indicators would help the situation.

Councillor Dooley asked whether the yellow box at the Kildare Road junction would be remarked. The District Engineer stated that he was waiting on the contractor to align a number of junctions.

Councillor Wall asked whether the protection barriers at the Kildare Road junction would be replaced as a number of people had contacted him in this regard. The District Engineer stated he was meeting with the TII and this matter would be discussed.

The report was noted.

**AY05/0719**

**Update on Community and Development Issues**

A report was circulated by Ms Berry to the members prior to the meeting and the report was noted.



**AY06/0719**

**Payment of Allowance to the Cathaoirleach of the Athy Municipal District**

A report was circulated to the members from Corporate Services prior to the meeting informing them that Section 143 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended refers to the payment of an allowance to a Cathaoirleach. Part IV of Circular LG01/2018 sets out the maximum amount of an allowance payable to Cathaoirleach of Municipal Districts.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Dooley, seconded by Councillor Breslin that this be approved.

**AY07/0719**

**Remedial Repairs to the footpaths and roadway at the row of houses in Kilkea**

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

That the council carry out remedial repairs to the footpaths and roadway at the row of houses in Kilkea.

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

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that this would require a survey of all roads and footpaths at the row of houses in Kilkea. A costing of the works would be necessary and a budget would be required for works to be carried out. The inclusion of these works can be considered under LPT funding in 2020.

Councillor Breslin stated that the paths were in poor condition and the area was used by older people with and without disability aids.

The Cathaoirleach stated that the community council had highlighted these issues with the District Engineer and the members need to know how much LPT monies would be required so a costing was necessary.



The District Engineer said he would look at these older housing estates with regard to roads and footpaths and they would be prioritised and costed and then a source of funding identified.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Dooley that the roads and footpaths in these older estates would be prioritised and costed and then a source of funding would be identified.

### **AY08/0719**

#### **Taking in Charge of Abbeylands Barnhill Estate**

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Wall:  
Can the council confirm when Abbeylands Barnhill estate will be taken in charge?

A report was received from the Building and Development Control Section informing the members that Abbeylands, Castledermot was on the councils list of proposed estates for taking in charge by the end of 2019. The council are committed to progressing all the estates on the proposed list for taking in charge. However, due to the increase in work load from new active estates and recent staffing vacancies, the taking in charge of Abbeylands, Castledermot may not be completed by the end of 2019.

The District Manager stated that the section looking after this issue were down two staff members over the last year and a half and the positions were still not filled.

The Cathaoirleach stated that the official looking after this issue was very hard working and that he had met him in a number of estates. He added that when the full team was in place, he was hopeful that great work would be carried out.

The report was noted.

### **AY09/0719**

#### **Ramp and Road in Abbotts Wood Estate in Kildangan**

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Wall:  
Can the council investigate and make good the ramp and road in Abbott's Wood estate in Kildangan?



A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that this issue can be investigated as part of Routine Maintenance.

The report was noted.

**AY10/0719**

**Drug Squad - Athy Municipal District**

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

That this Municipal District Committee request the Chief Superintendent of An Garda Síochana to establish a Drug Squad for the Athy Municipal District.

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

A report was received from the Community Section informing the members that, at the request of the Athy Municipal District members (at their last meeting with An Garda Síochana on 13 May), correspondence issued to Chief Superintendent Sutton on this subject. A response was received which was presented to the Athy Municipal District members at the JPC meeting on 15 July in advance of their regular monthly meeting.

Councillor Breslin stated she was trying to pre-empt the petty drug crime in the district before it became a major problem as it was already causing major concerns. She asked that a letter issue to the Chief Superintendent to try and find a solution to the drug problem in the district as the dealers were preying on young people in the towns and she stated that she already had the support of the Superintendent in Athy through the Joint Policy Committee meeting held earlier.

Councillor Dooley added that Athy was no different from other towns. Drug use would have a huge effect on society and our aging society in towns. A team of four or five garda personnel working together as a drug squad would clean up the areas over a period of a year or so. He asked that the new Garda Commissioner be written to highlighting the members request.





The Cathaoirleach stated that the Gardai would continue to patrol the town but a dedicated team was required to stop the drug problems in the district.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Dooley that a letter issue to the Garda Commissioner and the Chief Superintendent requesting a drug squad to be established for the Athy Municipal District.

### **AY11/0719**

#### **Future Housing Developments/Equal Distribution of Homes for private sale, social affordability and social housing**

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Dooley:  
That this Municipal District Committee write to the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, An Bord Pleanála and our own planning department outlining how critically important it is that any future housing developments in the Athy Municipal District have an equal distribution of homes for private sale, for social affordability and social housing similar to developments in the rest of the county outlining that the Athy district needs socially sustainable housing developments.

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

A report was received from the Housing Section informing the members that while the main emphasis of the councillor's motion relates to Planning, the following are some comments from the Housing Department, with regard to the provision of social and affordable housing in the Athy Municipal District, in the context of future delivery of private housing developments.

Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires a developer of 9 or more units to agree a mechanism for delivery of 10% of the overall development for social housing. This would normally result in the construction and transfer of on-site units to the housing authority, however, it should be noted that there are other options available to the developer including off-site provision of units, land or leased units.

In relation to affordable housing, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, had recently announced an affordable purchase scheme and at the May



plenary council meeting, the members adopted a scheme of priority to facilitate the purchase of such units when they become available. In considering the delivery of affordable housing from our land bank, a financial/economic assessment of a site must be undertaken to provide an evidence base to demonstrate that the provision of affordable homes is economically viable on the site in question and that there was a broader housing affordability issue within the area. Economic assessments had been carried out to date on two sites in the county ie. Naas and Celbridge, but no approval had been received as yet from the Department for delivery of affordable homes. It was unlikely that a site in the Athy Municipal District would pass the financial/economic assessment.

A discussion ensued and the following points were raised by the members;

- no communication from developers as to what they are building
- need a report from Planning as well as Housing
- affordability projects need to be outlined
- large housing list - houses need to be balanced to cover all types of housing
- need to build social houses
- house purchase loans and affordable housing need to be reviewed.
- still waiting on houses to be built in Flinter's Place
- 25 houses to be built in Dominican Lawns for older people
- those working and want to buy homes in the towns where they were brought up are unable to do so
- the affordable model passed by the council would do nothing to help the housing crisis in Athy.

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

### **AY12/0719**

#### **Review and Revise Fishing Bye-Laws - Athy Municipal District**

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Dooley:  
That the council write to Inland Fisheries Ireland and the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment asking them to review and revise the fishing bye laws, with



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all the stakeholders and that the anglers have a "catch and release" clause along all the waterways in the Athy Municipal District.

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

A discussion ensued and the following points were raised by the members;

- fish are being taken from waterways illegally
- anglers take pride in their sport
- fishermen coming into Athy from abroad to enjoy this sport and use the facilities of the town and this brings in revenue to the town.
- need to address this issue and support the anglers
- had annual barbeque this weekend and it was a great family day

The Cathaoirleach suggested that a meeting be organised with the District Manager and Inland Fisheries Ireland and the stakeholders, then adapt the bye-laws accordingly.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Dooley, seconded by Councillor Breslin that a meeting be organised with the District Manager, Inland Fisheries Ireland and the stakeholders to discuss the review and revision of fishing bye-laws to include a catch and release clause along all the waterways and then adapt the bye-laws accordingly.

### **AY13/0719**

#### **Athy Distributor Road**

Mr Coppinger gave the members an update and he stated the project was moving according to plan. He added that CIE were taking up the railway lines and a notice to treat was served on CIE. Discussions were ongoing with CIE every month. He said he would be meeting with CIE and the consultants in the next few days to push works along and to take possession of their land. Preliminary contracts would then take place and the existing contract was nearly completed. He said he would have to discuss the funding for next year with the Department and he would come back to the members when he had this agreed. He added that some archaeological and fencing works would commence shortly and underground wiring would commence in the soccer pitch and this was agreed by the soccer club. Councillor Dooley asked when the main contract would be signed. Mr Coppinger said



he would need to agree funding for next year first. His aim was to go to tender at the end of this year for the main contract. Councillor Behan asked for an overview of the situation at present. Mr Coppinger stated that CIE need to remove the railway lines first, then the council would take over the land and carry out their works and this would be agreed by both sides. He added that funding for this year was agreed but he had to make sure, the council had enough for next year.

The Cathaoirleach stated the project was positive and on target and he thanked Mr Coppinger for engagement with soccer club and Tegral.

The report was noted.

#### **AY14/0719**

#### **Upgrade the roads and footpaths in the Castleroe West Estate, Levitstown, Maganey, Athy**

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

That the council undertakes works to upgrade the roads and footpaths in the Castleroe West Estate at Levitstown, Maganey, Athy.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Behan and seconded by Councillor Dooley.

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that these works would require a survey of all roads and footpaths in the estate. A costing of the works would be necessary and a budget would be required for works to be carried out. The inclusion of these works can be considered under LPT funding in 2020.

A discussion ensued and the following points were raised by the members;

- older estates and problems getting ambulances and fire services access to houses.
- roads and footpaths need upgrading

The Cathaoirleach stated that the District Engineer would be reviewing older estates and this estate would be included on his list.



**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Behan, seconded by Councillor Dooley that this estate be included in the review of older estates in the municipal district.

#### **AY15/0719**

#### **Repair to Levitstown Bridge and re-developing this bridge with a view to widening it to accommodate a footpath from Castleroe West Estate to Parish Hall in Levitstown**

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

That the council carry out a study on the fractures within the Levitstown Bridge and to redevelop the bridge with a view to widening it to accommodate a footpath from Castleroe West Estate to the parish hall in Levitstown.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Behan and seconded by Councillor Dooley.

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that this would require a survey of the bridge/parapet walls and all ancillary structures. On completion of the survey, a design and costing of the works would be required, and the identification of a source of funding.

A discussion ensued and the following points were raised by the members;

- since March 2019, the bridge has deteriorated further
- fractures on both sides of bridge
- very unsafe
- needs to be investigated urgently

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Behan, seconded by Councillor Dooley that this matter be referred to the Bridge Section for inspection.

#### **AY16/0719**

#### **One-off Rural Housing Applications**

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

That the council confirm the number of one off rural housing applications they have received in 2018 and in 2019 to date in this municipal district, confirming how many of them were successful.



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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 following table outlined the number of applications for one off houses in the Athy Municipal District that were decided in 2018 and 2019:

### *2018*

Number Granted: 19

Number Refused: 21

### *2019*

Number Granted: 8

Number Refused: 4

A number of the refusals are repeat applications for the same applicants on the same sites.

A discussion ensued and the following points were raised by the members;

- In 2018, there was a 50% refusal rate on one off houses, now that was reduced to 33% still high but decreasing.
- villages cannot accommodate new houses as sewerage capacity was limited.
- people born in south Kildare had to move away to other counties because they cannot get planning permission to build.
- rural Kildare was under pressure
- not building communities in rural Kildare and therefore people feel isolated.

Ms Louw stated it was important to have pre-planning meetings for one-off rural houses. She stated that there were 137 meetings so far this year.

The Cathaoirleach stated he was happy the refusal rate was going down but it needs to continue.

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



**AY17/0719**

**Dry Dock - Athy**

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

That the council confirm the up to date position with the dry dock in Athy with Inland Waterways.

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

A report was received from the Environment Section informing the members that they would contact Inland Waterways to confirm the use of the dry dock.

A discussion ensued and the following points were raised by the members;

- number of local businesses benefit from this dock being used
- want this facility to be developed
- need to find funding from Inland Waterways

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Wall, seconded by Councillor Breslin that this report be noted and that the Environment Section engage with Inland Waterways to confirm the use of the dry dock.

**AY18/0719**

**Climate Action Plan and establishment of an Interagency Action Group**

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

Can the council confirm what Climate Action Plan it has for the Athy Municipal District and will the council consider the establishment of an interagency action group to develop our own strategy for the crisis we face?

A report was received from the Environment Section informing the members that as part of the adoption of the Council's climate adaptation strategy by the plenary council, it would be necessary to prioritise resulting actions and this motion can be considered in this context.

The matter should also be discussed with the District Manager as climate change was the responsibility of all council departments.



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Mr Dunne stated that this matter would be up for decision at the full council meeting in September and then the members can put in their submissions under their respective municipal districts.

The District Manager said he would discuss the matter of an interagency action group with Mr Joe Boland and he would come back to the members with this response.

The report was noted.

### **AY19/0719**

#### **Development of the River Lerr in Castledermot**

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Behan:  
Can the council make available their plans for the development of the river Lerr in Castledermot, into a usable facility for the community?

The Meetings Administrator informed the meeting that as it was not clear from the question what a usable facility refers to, further information had been sought from Councillor Behan in this regard. Once this has been received, a response to the question would issue.

Councillor Behan stated that the area across from the new playground needed to be opened up and more usable for the community. Ms Behan clarified that plant growth was closing down the river and the banks needed to be cleared.

The Meetings Administrator stated that Councillor Behan's clarification on her question would be referred to the appropriate section for reply.

### **AY20/0719**

#### **Pedestrian and Accessibility Audit in Towns of Athy and Castledermot**

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Dooley:  
Can the council confirm if they have carried out a pedestrian and accessibility audit in the town's of Athy and Castledermot as previously discussed?





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A report was received from the Health and Safety Officer informing the members that a detailed Accessibility Audit was carried out in Athy by DP Chartered Surveying Consultant in October 2007. In addition a meeting was held with Trish Keane ( on Wednesday 9 July 2019) who was a member of the community with disabilities in Athy and who had previously spearheaded the Athy Local Access Group. This group had become dormant over recent years and the purpose of my meeting was to discuss the possibility of re- establishing the Athy Local Access Group and the possibility of carrying out a Walkability audit with all relevant stakeholders (Athy Access Group, the Municipal District Engineer, Access Officer and Age Friendly). A detailed Accessibility Audit was carried out in Castledermot by DP Chartered Surveying Consultant in November 2007.

The report was noted.

The meeting then concluded.