

**Minutes of the monthly meeting of the Athy Municipal District held at 11.00 am on Monday, 16 September 2019 in Aras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare**

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

Officials Present: Mr N Morrissey (District Manager), Mr D O'Flaherty (District Engineer), Mr J Coppinger (Senior Engineer), Ms E Wright and Ms M Hunt (Senior Executive Officer), Mr J Murtagh (Executive Engineer), Mr B O'Gorman, Ms F Byrne and Ms S Fitzpatrick (Administrative Officer), Ms A Louw (Senior Staff Officer), Ms A Cummins (Meetings Administrator) and Ms O Mooney (Meetings Secretary)

---

**AY01/0919**

**Minutes**

The members considered the minutes of the monthly meeting of the Athy Municipal District held on Monday, 15 July 2019.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Keatley that the minutes of the monthly meeting of the Athy Municipal District held on Monday, 15 July 2019 be taken as read.

**AY02/0619**

**Matters Arising from Minutes**

**HSE Invitation (AY03/0719)**

The Cathaoirleach informed the members that a meeting had been arranged for 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 2 October 2019 and they were invited to attend. The meetings Administrator informed the members that an email would issue to the HSE confirming this date and time.

**AY03/0919**

**Update on the Athy Municipal District Road Works**

A report from the District Engineer was circulated to the members. The members thanked him for his comprehensive report. Councillor Keatley congratulated the municipal district roads team on summer works carried out and he noted that many of the roads are now in exceptional condition.

The Cathaoirleach asked that a notice in writing be issued via social media before the Ploughing Championships start in relation to traffic management during the course of this event. The District Engineer stated that he had met with the Gardaí regarding traffic management and he confirmed that the traffic management plan would be put in place by Carlow Gardaí.

Councillor Dooley asked for an update on footpaths on Woodstock Street, Athy. The District Engineer stated that the snag list was being completed.

Councillor Behan asked for an update on the R418 Tullow to Castlefen Road. The District Engineer stated that he had met with the contractor to put a non-slip surface on this road. The report was noted.

**AY04/0919**

**Taking in charge of Castleraven and Cois Caislean Estates in Nurney, Co Kildare**

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Wall:  
Can the council give the up to date position with the taking in charge of Castleraven and Cois Caislean estates in Nurney, County Kildare?

A report was received from the Building and Development Control Section informing the members of the following;

**Castleraven**

Castleraven, Nurney was on the councils list of proposed estates for taking in charge for 2019. The council are committed to progressing all of the estates on the proposed list for taking in charge. However due to the increase in workload from new, active estates and recent staffing vacancies the taking in charge of Castleraven, Nurney may not be completed by the end of 2019.

**Cois Caislean**

The Development Control Section had received a Section 180 request from the owners to take in charge the estate. We have received the €40,000 bond which would be used to fund site investigation works on site as part of the taking in charge process. The Development Control Section was under significant pressure due to the increase in workload from new, active estates and recent staffing vacancies but we would endeavour to progress the site investigation works.

The report was noted.

**AY05/0919**

**Safety Audit on the new car park at Churchtown School and Graveyard**

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

That the council carry out a safety audit on the new car park at Churchtown School and Graveyard.

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

A report was received from the Environment Section informing the members that arrangements had been made to carry out the audit as requested. It was agreed that this was a priority issue particularly in light of the proximity of the school

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr Boland, Director of Service and Mr Dunne and the contractors on the great work carried out on the new carpark to date. He added he would await the audit being carried out as this new car park would make a great difference to the area.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Wall , seconded by Councillor Breslin that the safety audit be carried out and the report be noted.

**AY06/0919**

**Road and Village Centre works in Narraghmore**

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

That the council complete the road and village centre works in Narraghmore.

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

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that works in the centre of Narraghmore would be recommenced after design of this area had been completed.

Councillor Keatley asked for a timeline for the design of the completion of this square as he needed to go back to the Development Association in order to apply for award schemes etc.

The District Manager noted the members comments and stated he would have a discussion with the District Engineer and he would come back to the members.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Keatley, seconded by Councillor Breslin that the District Manager would revert with details of timeline and design.

### **AY07/0919**

#### **Athy Distributor Road**

Mr Coppinger informed the members that the project was going to plan, that the archaeology work was completed and they were waiting on the final report. The council can now gain access to all land required. He added that some preliminary contracts had to be sorted, for example, gas and ESB. The members were delighted that all was going to plan and thanked Mr Coppinger for his update.

### **AY08/0919**

#### **Overgrown Hedgerow on the Ballybarney to Ballymount Road**

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

That the council cut the overgrown hedgerow on the Ballybarney to Ballymount Road that continues to cause serious problems and safety issues for road users.

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

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that public notices would appear in newspapers in the coming weeks informing landowners of their responsibilities in relation to hedge cutting. Landowners would be approached in relation to the said hedgerows . If no action was taken, the landowner

would be issued with a Final Notice to cut said hedgerows. In the event of no work being carried out, Kildare County Council would carry out work and recoup the costs from the landowner(s).

Councillor Keatley commended staff who had been in discussions with this landowner, however, the hedgerow now was causing the road to be impassable and unsafe for road users. He asked that the hedgerow be cut and he asked for a timeline for this to be carried out. He stated that the Final Notice to the landowner should be sent by the council today.

Councillor Behan re-iterated that road safety had to be prioritised and that this hedge should be cut.

The members all agreed that this matter be finalised and that this hedge be cut.

The District Engineer stated it was an extremely sensitive matter. He stated that the Final Notice would issue in a day or so and if no action comes from that then the issue would be handled by the council.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Keatley, seconded by Councillor Behan that the report be noted and that the Final Notice be issued to the landowner.

### **AY09/0919**

#### **Prevention of Giant Hogweed, Ragwort and other such toxic plants**

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

That the council develop an information package, or program, for this municipal district, to help the public identify and prevent the spread of giant hogweed, ragwort and other such toxic plants.

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

A report was received from the Planning Section informing the members that this issue was not within the remit of the Heritage Officer. However, the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine had already produced a range of information leaflets and advice on invasive species such as those mentioned in Councillor Behan's notice of motion. These are readily

available on the Department's website at

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/dontriskit/alieninvasivespecies/>

Further information was available from Invasive Species Ireland, National Biodiversity Data Centre, (E-mail: [invasives@biodiversityireland.ie](mailto:invasives@biodiversityireland.ie))

Councillor Behan understood that there was information online regarding toxic plants in public areas. However, she asked that the matter be further advertised to educate young people.

Councillor Dooley stated that Inland Waterways and Waterways Ireland might be able to help with this issue.

The Cathaoirleach stated that the council had a role to play if the toxic plants were near roadways.

The District Engineer stated that when issues are reported to him, he would bring in specialists in this area to carry out their investigations and treat for three/four years.

The District Manager stated that awareness was forefront and to get funding to treat. He stated he would ask the Environment Section to report on this matter for the next meeting.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Behan, seconded by Councillor Dooley that the report be noted and that a report be prepared by the Environment Section for the next meeting.

#### **AY10/0919**

#### **Road Widening Works and Remedial Works to the L8073 Road up to the Junction with the N78**

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

That the council carry out road widening works and remedial works to the L8073 Road up to the junction with the N78.

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

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that this road had been surfaced in recent years and was not included in the current 3 year upgrading plan 2019/2021. This road can be included in the next 3 year plan.

Councillor Breslin suggested that early next year, the members convene a special meeting with the District Engineer to draw up a three year roads plan as the roads are now heavily relied upon and need upgrading.

Councillor Keatley asked how the programme would be compiled and that he would like to make an input when the time comes.

The District Engineer stated that the funds would come from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) and there was a grading system for roads and the council would have to present a case for all the works required. He stated a special meeting could be arranged. He added that the current or next year's programme could be amended subject to any works that would need to be prioritised.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Behan that the report be noted and that a special meeting be convened early next year with the District Engineer to discuss the three year roads programme.

### **AY11/0919**

#### **Timeframe - Remedial and Resurfacing Works - N78 from Emily Square to the roundabout at Leinster Street, Athy**

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

Can the council give a definitive time frame for when remedial and resurfacing works will take place on the N78 from Emily Square to the roundabout, Leinster Street, Athy?

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that a consultant had been engaged by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) to carry out a survey and audit on remedial and resurfacing works in Athy.

Councillor Breslin noted that these works were to be carried out over the summer months and she asked for a timeline for these works.

The District Manager added there was a major opportunity now to carry out works that would make the main street of Athy look well and finish the job in one project.

The District Engineer stated he was looking at everything along the N78 such as lighting, traffic crossings, pedestrian crossings, road surfaces etc. He stated there was a long term solution to works to be carried out not a quick fix. He added that the TII would cover some of the costs and then the District Manager would find the remainder of the funds. The report was noted.

**AY12/0919**

**Provision of Safety Measures at Kildangan Bridge and the provision of a public carpark for the village**

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Wall:  
Can the council give an update on the provision of safety measures at Kildangan Bridge and the provision of a public car park for the village?

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that tenders had been received for works on the Kildangan Bridge and subject to funding, it was anticipated that works would commence in 2019. Further work on the provision of a public car park opposite the school had not progressed at this time due to staffing constraints.

The Cathaoirleach understood that the council already had the funding via LPT and commitments from other departments. He asked whether staff matters had been resolved.

The District Manager stated that tenders were in, however, more funding was required as it proved more costly than anticipated. He confirmed that staffing was still an issue as there was a problem filling the posts but the posts were being re-advertised again shortly. The report was noted.

**AY13/0919**

**Rent Pressure Zones**

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

That the members of the Athy Municipal District immediately call on the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government to declare the Athy Municipal District and the town of Monasterevin and the surrounding area including Kildangan as rent pressure zones as these areas are currently excluded.

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

A report was received from the Housing Section informing the members that to date, Rent Pressure Zones were declared in areas where the Rental Tenancy Board (RTB) determine that the rent was above the national rent level and have experienced rental inflation of in excess of 7% in four of the last six quarters. The decision to write to the Minister was a matter for the members to agree.

The Cathaoirleach thanked the Housing Section for the report and he understood the pressure Athy was under at the moment. He noted people could not afford private rents as landlords were increasing their rents from €600 up to €1200 per month.

Councillor Breslin stated that this issue was the biggest crisis so far and that rent pressure zones would help resolve this problem.

Councillor Keatley stated that rent levels were reaching an all time high and Kildare were willing to work with Carlow and Laois County Councils via the HAP scheme to help resolve this problem.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Wall, seconded by Councillor Breslin that the report be noted and that a letter issue to the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government to declare the Athy Municipal District and the town of Monasterevin and the surrounding areas including Kildangan as rent pressure zones as these areas were currently excluded.

### **AY14/0919**

#### **Audit/Survey of the Number of Derelict Private Houses in Athy and Castledermot**

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

That the council carry out an audit/survey of the number of derelict private houses in Athy and Castledermot in order to either bring them into the ownership of the council or where necessary initiate a process of penalties or fines for the owners that neglect their properties.

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

A report was received from the Environment Section informing the members that the Environment Department had investigated a number of reports of derelict sites (private houses) within the Municipal District area. A number of houses had been entered in the derelict sites register and a levy imposed. This had resulted in some houses being renovated and are no longer considered derelict. Details of derelict houses are notified to the council's Housing Department to consider if suitable for acquisition by Kildare County Council.

Councillor Dooley stated there was a large number of houses in estates with nobody living in them. Some owned privately and some owned by the banks.

The Cathaoirleach stated that great work was being done by the council in getting people back living in derelict sites on Woodstock Street. He added that the banks are waiting on house prices to increase in order to sell their properties.

Mr O'Gorman stated the Environment Section would investigate all cases coming to them and they would work with the Housing Section to review and carry out investigations.

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

### **AY15/0919**

#### **Purchase Loan Scheme**

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

Can the council confirm what is the up to date position of securing additional monies from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government for the Housing Purchase Loan Scheme?

A report was received from the Housing Section informing the members that as of August 2019, Kildare County Council had been advised that their total capital allocation, for the period 1 February 2018 to 31 December 2019, for the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans (RIHL) was €20,909,445. This overall allocation incorporates loans already issued since

the inception of the scheme, loans which would be drawn down on foot of approvals already issued and projected loan demand for the rest of 2019. A loan facility of up to €15million had been approved by the members of Kildare County Council. Any extension of this would require further council approval.

The report was noted.

**AY16/0919**

**Taking in Charge of Moone High Cross**

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

Can the council confirm what progress has been made on the legal procedure which began many years ago, to allow the Office of Public Works to take in charge Moone High Cross?

A report was received from the Heritage Officer informing the members that a reminder letter issued on the 19 August 2019. A reply was received from the OPW dated 22 August 2019 acknowledging our letter and stated that a substantive reply would be given shortly. A letter issued to the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht on 28 August 2019 also and we are awaiting a response on same.

Councillor Keatley received a reply from the Office of Public Works stating the responsibility lay with the council. He said he had spoken with the Heritage Officer and she was to contact the Office of Public Works, with regard to the High Cross. She added that locals had opened a shop and he asked that the council work with this group to upgrade the shop and carry out other works in the area.

The District Manager stated he would contact the Heritage Officer in this regard.

The report was noted.

**AY17/0919**

**Extension of Opening Hours of the Recycling Centre in Athy**

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

That the council asks AES to extend the opening hours of the Recycling Centre in Athy.

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

A report was received from the Environment Section informing the members that the Environment Department was in discussions with AES to extend opening hours with a view to extending the current arrangements to now include Wednesdays (8am to 3.45pm). The centre would then be open Wednesday to Saturday (4 days). The proposed change would be for a trial period (3 months). The relevant usage/ tonnages, etc would be assessed in line with the increased cost to the Council. Regrettably, the council would not be in a position to support an ongoing subvention after the trial period.

Councillor Breslin noted the report and stated the trial period was not long enough and asked for an extension until after the Christmas period. She asked for this matter to be looked at again as clean-up costs incurred by the council each year were very high and the extension of opening hours at this recycling plant would alleviate some of these costs.

The following points were raised at the meeting;

- more promotion required
- recycling plants needs to be utilised properly
- needs to be advertised in the schools as children would pass information to their parents

Mr O'Gorman noted the members comments.

Councillor Breslin asked the Environment Section to come back to the members with an update before the trial period was over.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Dooley that the Environment Section come back to the members with an update before the trial period ends.

### **AY18/0919**

#### **Strategic Projects and Public Realm Team Update**

Ms Hunt attended the meeting and the Strategic Project & Public Realm Team to the members. She stated that each member of the team took the lead on a project with input from the rest of the team as required. Ms Hunt outlined the funding streams available and current projects for the Athy Municipal District. She informed the members that there were

eight projects in hand, with one recently completed. Ms Hunt stated that in relation to the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2019, the following applications had been made for works in Athy such as health checks and urban design analysis and a town renewal plan for Athy and to develop a plan for refurbishment of second Tanyard building in Ballitore. She informed the members that the total value of projects in the Athy Municipal District was €11.1 million . In relation to the Athy Shackleton Museum, a detailed design was to commence once a design team had been procured. In relation to the Emily Square upgrade, the Part 8 was approved in November 2018 and a detailed design was underway. In relation to Athy Public Realm Dominican Lands, the rural regeneration and development fund was approved in February 2019. In relation to the Barrow Blueway, the application for the rural regeneration and development fund was submitted in August 2019. She stated she would come back to the members with a further update on all projects in December 2019.

Councillor Keatley commended the team in place. He informed the members that there was a meeting regarding the Shackleton Museum scheduled for the 17 September 2019. He asked whether communities would receive help when putting together applications.

The Cathaoirleach enquired whether the public square in front of the new Library on the Dominican lands would happen. He also looked for an update on health checks in Castledermot.

With regard to Emily Square, the District Manager stated that this project was very close to going to tender. He commended the members for committing €80,000 per municipal district and he stated that this team would be judged on results and delivering the projects. He added he was very happy with the team in place and he added that the type of projects proposed would drive economic activity in the municipal district. He added that next year would be a very exciting year.

With regard to the Cathaoirleach's query, Ms. Hunt stated that the public square in front of the new Library would happen. She added that there was insufficient input in relation to health checks in Castledermot and they would be re-advertised.

The members thanked Ms Hunt and the team for their work noting the exceptional progress being made and the proper public consultation that took place during the Health check process.

The report was noted.

### **AY19/0919**

#### **Update on Possible Industry/business opportunities - Athy Municipal District**

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

That the council invite in the IDA representative for this area to give an update on possible industry/business opportunities for the Athy Municipal District.

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

A report was received from the Enterprise Section informing the members that the Head of Enterprise had requested a meeting with Mr Conor Simpson to visit Athy and that Mr Simpson had agreed once again to visit Athy before year end.

The following points were raised during the meeting;

- sites available to be developed
- looking forward to working with the IDA

The Cathaoirleach complimented the work of the Head of Enterprise. He agreed that a meeting with the IDA, District Manager and the members be arranged to improve what Athy had to offer with regard to business growth and employment.

The District Manager stated he had meetings with the IDA on a regular basis. He added that there had been meetings with landowners and they were currently putting together a report to bring to the members.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Dooley, seconded by Councillor Behan that the report be noted and that a meeting be arranged with the IDA.

**AY20/0919**

**Food and Drinks Innovation Hub**

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

Can the council give an update on the progress, funding and timelines of the food and drinks innovation hub in the model school in Athy?

A report was received from the Head of Enterprise informing the members of the following;  
Athy Food and Drinks Innovation space

<b>Key Dates Launched May 2019</b>	
Jackie Mc Nabb Draft Design Tender	Mid June
Tender Issued	June 27 <sup>th</sup> 2019
Best Practice research conducted and site visit to Drumshanbo food Innovation space	Mid July 19
Best Practice research conducted visit Wicklow Food Space	Mid July 19
Partnership agreement with Kwetb RE training programs to be rolled out Autumn 2020	Mid July
Closing date of Design tender	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
Design Contract awarded to Donnachadh O'Brien	26 <sup>th</sup> July
Design Completion date & full structural costings	2 <sup>nd</sup> week Sept
Complete REDF application for government support deadline	20 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2019
Construction to be completed	q4 2020

In tandem but very much related, we tendered mid July and awarded a contract to James Burke & Associates to carry out a food strategy for the County. We would start on the food service needs piece of work for Athy as the first element of this strategy.

The objective was to conduct a skills needs analysis on the food service sector to determine the training needs of cafes, restaurants and hotels in relation to their potential use of the training kitchen in Athy. The work should demonstrate that industry needs the facility and identify how best it can be structured.

We would include as many verbatim quotes (with permission) about intended usage and frequency of use, as much as possible.

The report was noted.

**AY21/0919**

**Local Rural Transport Link**

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

Can the council confirm if there are any plans for the local rural transport link to be extended into Calverstown, Kilgowan and Ballyshannon?

A report was received from the Manager of the Local Link Kildare South Dublin informing the members that a number of areas in South Kildare were currently under consideration for possible Local Link expansions in the coming 12 - 24 months, but as of yet no budgets had been secured for same.

The report was noted.

The meeting then concluded.