



Minutes of the Athy Municipal District held at 10.00 am on Monday, 12 October 2020 in the Council Chamber, Aras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare

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

Officials Present: Ms A Aspell (District Manager), Mr T McDonnell (Director of Services), Mr D O'Flaherty (District Engineer), Mr L Dunne (Senior Executive Officer), Mr B Leonard (Administrative Officer), Mr B McGrath (Meetings Administrator) and Ms O Mooney (Secretary)

AY01/1020

Minutes

The members considered the minutes of the monthly Athy Municipal District meeting held on 14 September 2020 and the progress report was noted.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Dooley, seconded by Councillor Keatley that the minutes of the monthly Athy Municipal District meeting held on 14 September 2020 be taken as read and the progress report was noted.

AY02/1020

Vote of Sympathy

The Cathaoirleach paid tribute to the late Ms Mary O'Sullivan, former town councillor of Athy Urban District Council, who passed away recently. She said Mary had served as a member of Athy Urban District Council/Athy Town Council for a long number of years and many other organisations as well. She had been unwell over the last two years and recently was informed that treatment was no longer an option. She informed the members that Mary had written a number of letters to the councillors, the Lions Club and other



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organisations during her illness and she wished that the members letter be read following her death.

The Cathaoirleach read the letter in full to the members and all present.

All present at the meeting stood in silence as a mark of respect.

Councillor Keatley spoke fondly of Mary who was a lovely, kind lady who worked tirelessly for the council and was an active member of the Fine Gael Party and Lions Club where she organised the Lions Club Food Appeal every year. He also stated that he had known Mary and her family long before politics and she would be sadly missed by all concerned.

Councillor Dooley stated he had a lovely conversation with Mary a few weeks ago. She told him she was in the process of organising the Lions Club Christmas Food Appeal this year. She also told him that last Winter, she had come across a family in dire need and had asked for help and before you know it, she had organised food, fuel etc for this family.

The Cathaoirleach and members sent their condolences and sympathy to her husband Martin and their daughters, Rosemary, Louise and Marina at this very sad time and it was agreed that a letter of condolence would issue formally to the family.

AY03/1020

Update on the Athy Municipal District Roadworks

The following report from the District Engineer was given to the members:

Pedestrian Works

- Pedestrian works will commence later in the year in housing estates that have had surveys carried.

NTA – Active Travel Measures updates

- Moone schoolworks gone out to tender.
- Castledermot schoolworks out to tender.



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- Crookstown schoolworks out to tender.

Preparatory drainage works being carried out on the NTA works prior to going out to tender.

Bus Shelters

- No funding for bus shelters was allocated to Athy Municipal District.

Municipal District Road Improvement Works 2020

- R-428 Brackney to Cardenton.
- R-418 Gallowshill to Russelstown.
- L-8037 Timolin to Wicklow bounds.
- L- 8100 Graney to Plunketstown.
- L-7071 Ironhills to Eagle Hill.
- L- 4010 Newtownallen.
- L-4011 Mill road, Castledermot.
- L- 8073 Russelstown to Inch.
- L-8028 Broomfield to N-78.

Aftercare works been undertaken on a number of the above works.

Local Property Tax (LPT)/Carpark Funded Works 2020.

- Kilberry housing estate roads/footpaths.
- Mount Hawkins/Kirwins lane drainage/roads/footpaths.
- Garter lane drainage/roads.
- L-4009 Abbeylands, Castledermot.

Municipal District Road Surface Dressing Works 2020.

- R- 415 Booleigh to Fontstown.
- R-415 Walterstown to Mullane.
- R- 417 Kildangan to Cloney.
- L- 8007 Ballyshannon to Martinstown.
- L- 8006 Martinstown to Crawnglass.
- L- 7055 Duneany to Walterstown.



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- L-7066 Walterstown to Nurney.
- L-7072 Martinstown to Newtown.
- L-8009 Tippenan to Whitehouse.

Aftercare works been undertaken on a number of the above works.

National Secondary Resurfacing Works South of Athy have commenced and should be completed in the next couple of weeks.

4 No. CIS jobs have been completed.

- Ballybough, Athy.
- Belan, Athy.
- Pit lane, Kildoon.
- Brennan's lane, Kilcrow.

The report was noted.

AY04/1020

Athy Distributor Road

The members thanked Mr McDonnell for all the projects he worked on over the years concerning Athy Municipal District and noted his forthcoming retirement.

Mr McDonnell thanked the members for their comments.

In regard to the Athy Distributor Road, he stated that the council were currently going through the tender process at the moment and hoped to issue tender documents/pricing in the next few weeks. He hoped to have a contractor on site by Quarter 1 2021.

The following questions were raised by the members;

- How many tenders were sent out?
- Is the council confident that funding was in place?
- Will the road go ahead?
- How long for failed tenders to appeal?



The following were clarified by Mr McDonnell;

- He stated that there were 11 submissions, five were invited and 6 not shortlisted.
- In regard to funding, this year was extraordinary due to Covid 19 but this scheme was earmarked to go ahead. Funding would be provided by the Department of Transport who are awaiting their allocations from the Budget 2021. He was confident that this scheme would go ahead.
- Delays this year were partially because of Covid 19 and operations on site would take longer.
- Failed tenders have until the end of the week to challenge the decision.

The Cathaoirleach asked for confirmation that the secondary works had finished and Mr McDonnell stated they were almost finished.

AY05/1020

Update on LPT Expenditure 2020

Mr Leonard informed the members that he had to follow-up with a number of departments and he suggested that a team's meeting be arranged for later in the week to update the members further. It was agreed that the teams meeting would take place at 4 pm on Friday, 16 October 2020.

AY06/1020

Waterways Memorial

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

That the council in conjunction and agreement with Athy Angling Club, erect a fitting memorial to all the people who have unfortunately passed away on the waterways of Athy to replace the current one which has sadly faded over the years.

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



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A report was received from the Corporate Services Section informing the members that the council's Civic Memorial Policy sets out the basis for consideration of any proposal of this nature. This would include, inter alia:

- That the memorial would need to be maintained in perpetuity by the sponsor, not being Kildare County Council.
- The landowner, on whose property it was proposed to erect a memorial, would have to afford consent.
- The memorial would need to be costed and a funding stream identified.

A report was received from the Community and Cultural Development Section informing the members that this request can be investigated and would be subject to the Civic Memorials Policy. Also, as the Grand Canal was under the jurisdiction of Waterways Ireland, the matter may have to be considered by that agency. A source of funding would need to be identified.

Councillor Leigh asked that this matter be addressed as the original memorial was faded and falling apart.

The District Manager stated that as this matter was under the jurisdiction of Waterways Ireland, it would be up to Waterways Ireland to liaise with Athy Angling Club and the Council concerning any works to this memorial.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Leigh, seconded by Councillor Dooley that the reports be noted.

AY07/1020

Pedestrian Bridge in Athy

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

That the council address the surface and gradient of the pedestrian bridge in Athy over the marina along the barrow.

Councillor Dooley withdrew his motion.



AY08/1020

Drainage Maintenance Work to eradicate flooding problem

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

That the council carry out drainage maintenance work at the junction of the L8027 and the N78 to eradicate the problem of flooding.

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

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that this work would be carried out as part of routine maintenance.

The Cathaoirleach asked for a timescale of when works would commence. The District Engineer said works would be done within a couple of weeks.

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

AY09/1020

Sight Distance Lines – Junction of the R417 with the R427

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

That the council improve the sight distance lines at the junction of the R417 with the R427.

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 work would require a design to be carried out. Land would need to be acquired. The works need to be quantified and costed and a source of funding identified.

The Cathaoirleach stated that this area needed to be looked at due to poor sight lines. She asked that this junction be put on the list for design. The District Engineer said he would refer this matter to Road Design for design and costing.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Dooley that the report be noted and that the matter be referred to Road Design for design and costing.



AY10/1020

Update on Roadworks on the L8097 from the Pyke Crossroads up to Carrigean Hill

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

Can the council provide an update on road works on the L8097 from the Pyke Crossroads up to Carrigean Hill, including Mayo Lane?

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that there are no roadworks proposed to be carried out on this road at the present time. The issue with this road was HGV's and farming vehicles meeting on a narrow public road.

Councillor Dooley stated he had received numerous emails from concerned residents regarding the condition of this road. He asked for some patching works to be carried out here as the road was narrow and hilly and heavy machinery were cutting up the grass verges.

The District Engineer stated that he was looking at this road. He added that at this time of the year, agricultural machinery use the road and can leave the roads very dirty. He added that maybe An Garda Síochána could address this issue with the local farmers.

The members agreed to bring this matter up at the next meeting of the Athy Joint Policing Committee.

AY11/1020

Proposed Pedestrian Crossing in Athy on the Carlow Road

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

Can the council confirm if there has been a design for a pedestrian crossing in Athy on the Carlow Road?



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A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that the junction of the Carlow Road and the Athy Distributor Road was designed as a signalised junction which includes pedestrian crossings.

The report was noted.

AY12/1020

Footpath in Dun Brinn Estate, Athy

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

Can the council confirm if the footpaths in Dun Brinn Estate, Athy will be included in the survey of footpaths that the Council is carrying out?

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that at the moment, the council was carrying out surveys of older housing estates where improvements can be affected in the short term. In the longer term, the council would get to all housing estates in the Athy Municipal District Area.

The Cathaoirleach stated that she visited this area with some of the residents and the problem was that trees were planted on the right side of the estate and the footpaths were left in a terrible condition. The estate was taken in charge recently and the footpaths cannot be left in their current state.

The report was noted.

AY13/1020

Grant/Incentive – Vacant Commercial Units

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

That the council write to the housing minister advocating for a grant and or incentive to the owners of vacant commercial units in town centres of the Athy Municipal District, that have been vacant for over 12 months, to be changed to residential units.

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



A report was received from the Planning & Strategic Development Section informing the members that the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) changed to provide for exemptions in certain instances on the conversion of vacant units to residential. Therefore, in the absence of funding grant scheme, this in itself was a significant cost saving for owners of such properties as owners would not have the costs associated with making a planning application. If the motion was agreed, a letter would issue to the Minister.

Councillor Dooley stated that many businesses would never re-open in town centres and it was important that we look into whether incentives would become available to change from commercial to residential units.

The Cathaoirleach mentioned that compliance with relevant fire regulations could be a challenge with these premises.

The District Manager stated that there were schemes in place for social housing such as Repair and Lease Schemes.

Ms Hunt stated that the Town & Village Renewal Scheme would allow for grants to allow for over shop units to be renovated for residential use.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Dooley, seconded by Councillor Behan that the report be noted and that a letter issue to the Minister for Housing asking whether incentives or options being considered to change commercial premises into residential units.

AY14/1020

Update on Public Realm Projects

Ms Hunt circulated her report to the members prior to the meeting.

The following matters were raised by the members;

- That excellent work was being carried out in small towns and villages throughout the municipal district.



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- In regard to maintenance of the Blueway, who would be responsible i.e. the council or Waterways Ireland.
- Update on Horse Bridge
- Emily Square – can this project move ahead with design.
- When would the Castledermot survey happen?
- Quarry dust surfaces on Blueway.
- What are the options for Kilmead Village?

The following matters were clarified by Ms Hunt;

- Maintenance of the Blueway would fall to the Council. She added that the Roads and Finance Sections were aware of this and in two/three years' time, they would have to allow this in their budgets.
- In regard to the Horse Bridge, LPT was approved and would be used to develop the link to the Blueway.
- In regard to Emily Square, the Council had carried out surveys looking at trying to progress this project.
- In regard to quarry dust on surfaces of the Blueway, she would circulate the layering effect to the members.
- In regard to Castledermot survey, there were problems with Covid restrictions which were proving challenging.
- She understood Kilmead did not require a health check. A design and costing were required.

The report was noted.

AY15/1020

Carpark beside Skate Park on Meeting Lane

The members considered the following adjourned motion in the name of Councillor Behan: That the council erect tall boundary fencing and gates at the carpark by the skate park on Meeting Lane, Athy to prevent antisocial behaviour while maintaining access for permit holders.

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



A report was received from the Senior Executive Parks Superintendent informing the members that there were no plans to erect railings and gates at this location. Previous experience with gates and railings are they do not stop antisocial behaviour. The Council would discuss the issue with local gardai to see if a solution can be found.

The following issues were raised by the members;

- there was an issue with anti-social behaviour at this location.
- bedding plants were being destroyed and children were congregating on large slab of concrete in the carpark.
- Residents were continually communicating with Gardai to find a solution.
- CCTV does not cover all parts of this carpark – look at increasing number of cameras.
- Youth Café needs to be re-opened – Closed due to Covid 19

The Cathaoirleach suggested that this matter be raised at the next meeting of the Athy Joint Policing Committee.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Behan, seconded by Councillor Dooley that the report be noted and that this matter be referred to the Athy Joint Policing Committee.

AY16/1020

Drainage and Surfacing to Bawn Road, Kildangan

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

Can the council confirm if it has any plans to provide drainage and surfacing to Bawn Road in Kildangan?

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that this road was a cul-de-sac (L-70581-0) close to Kildangan. There were no plans at this present time to carry out substantial works on this road. It could be considered in 2021 for a CIS subject to compliance with the terms of the scheme.

Councillor Behan asked that this road be repaired as there were drainage problems.



The District Engineer stated that he had completed four CIS schemes this year and received a contribution of 15% from local residents for each scheme. He added he would carry out work on this road under the CIS scheme subject to 15% contribution received from locals.

The report was noted.

AY17/1020

Clean-up of Derelict Sites – Athy Municipal District

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

That the council under the “Derelicts Sites Act 1990” get property owners of derelict sites to clean up their properties in the Athy Municipal District and make them presentable aesthetically.

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

A report was received from the Environment Section informing the members that there were a number of derelict sites in the Athy Municipal District which were currently under investigation. A number of the sites in question had received planning permission but work had been delayed primarily due to Covid related restrictions. The members would be aware of the strict statutory process to be followed in addressing derelict sites, and of the challenges presented by issues such as legal disputes over ownership, long term financial issues with banks/ receivers involved in process, estate issues following inheritance, commercial problems, personal issues and property being abandoned. If the councillor had any specific sites in mind, he might contact the Environment Section with any relevant information.

The following issues were raised by the members;

- Many of the abandoned premises/businesses were owned by banking institutions.
- It was important to make these buildings i.e. shop fronts etc more presentable or sell them.



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- The Athy Regeneration Team had started some great work trying to establish the ownership of these buildings, but this problem needs to be tackled further.

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

AY18/1020

Covid-19 Signage in Public Areas

The members considered the following adjourned motion in the name of Councillor Behan: That the council erect Covid-19 signage in areas of public congregation in this municipal district to include areas such as playgrounds, train stations and skate parks.

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

A report was received from the Senior Executive Parks Superintendent informing the members that Covid-19 signage had already been put in place at playgrounds and skateparks. He would check they were still in place and replace any that may have been removed. Signage at train stations was a matter for CIE.

The following matters were raised by the members;

- It was important to keep the message of social distancing and Covid instructions going and to keep these signs in place.
- The District Engineer had called to many of the schools putting in road markings to help with social distancing within the schools.

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

AY19/1020

Walking Trails

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Leigh: Can the council confirm if it has a Trails Officer who may be able to help councillors in Athy Municipal District identify new walking trails and work towards the development of such?



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A report was received from the Senior Executive Parks Superintendent informing the members that there was no Trails Officer for the county. The responsibility for this was undertaken by the Parks Section and Kildare Sports Partnership. Assistance can be provided to identify potential trails. However, this had to be considered in the context of existing commitments both sections had around the county and staff and financial resources to be able to undertake any additional works.

Councillor Leigh said there were many ghost trails in the district which were unknown, and it would be really positive from a tourism point of view to develop these trails.
The report was noted.

AY20/1020

Castledermot Playground

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Breslin:
Can the council confirm what is the up to date position in relation to the playground in Castledermot?

A report was received from the Executive Parks Superintendent informing the members that the playground works were scheduled to commence at the start of November 2020 as the present ground and paving work reach their conclusion.

The report was noted.

AY21/1020

Other Business

The District Manager confirmed that the budget meeting for Athy Municipal District would take place at 1.00 pm on Monday, 19 October 2020 in the Council Chamber in the council offices in Naas.

The meeting then concluded.