



## Minutes of the Athy Municipal District held at 10.00 am on Monday 18 January 2021 via Microsoft Teams

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

**Officials Present:** Ms A Aspell (District Manager), Mr D O'Flaherty (District Engineer), Mr D Reel (A/Senior Engineer), Mr J Murtagh (Executive Engineer), Mr S Deegan (Climate Action Officer) Mr C O'Toole (A/Staff Officer), Mr B McGrath (Meetings Administrator) and Ms O Mooney (Meetings Secretary)

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### AY01/0121

#### Suspension of Standing Orders

The Cathaoirleach proposed to suspend standing orders at 10.00 am for ten minutes.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Leigh and all the members agreed that standing orders be suspended for ten minutes until 10.10 am. The meeting commenced at 10.10 am.

### AY02/0121

#### Minutes and Progress Report

The members considered the minutes of the monthly meeting of the Athy Municipal District held on Monday 14 December 2020 and the progress report.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Leigh, seconded by Councillor Keatley and agreed by all the members that the minutes of the monthly meeting of the Athy Municipal District held on 14 December 2020 be adopted and the progress report was noted.



**AY03/0121**

**Athy Municipal District LPT Schedule of Works 2021**

The Cathaoirleach asked that this matter be deferred to the February monthly meeting of the Athy Municipal District as the members were still having informal discussions in it.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Leigh, seconded by Councillor Keatley and agreed by all the members that this item be deferred to the February monthly meeting of the Athy Municipal District.

**AY04/0121**

**Update on finished, unfinished and estates under construction**

Mr Murtagh circulated a comprehensive report to the meeting which included finished, unfinished and residential estates currently under construction since 2012.

The members raised the following points;

- It was asked whether estates such as Branswood and Shanrath would be taken in charge.
- It was asked whether the remainder of the €45,000 allocated to minor works in estates from last year would be allocated this year to older estates which require minor works such as footpath repairs, surveys etc as an indication would help at Budget time.

Mr Murtagh informed the members;

- that some estates would be taken in charge. However, some have certain issues and need final approval from Irish Water.
- Irish Water are understaffed at the moment, they have three Engineers nationally, each covering a third of the country.
- The council send in applications but they are slow coming back from Irish Water.
- With regard to budgets, the budgets for 2021 were not calculated yet. He said he would carry forward the remainder of the €45,000 to 2021 and would work further on this for the next meeting.



## Kildare County Council

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The District Engineer stated once the estates were taken in charge, they become a liability for the Athy Municipal District Roads Office. Therefore, the council need to minimise residual works to be carried out.

The report was noted.

### **AY05/0121**

#### **Taking in Charge of the Friary Estate, Castledermot**

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

Can the council update members on what progress has been made in relation to the taking in charge of the Friary Estate, Castledermot?

A report was received from the Building and Development Control Section informing the members that there were no immediate plans to take in charge the housing estate known as The Friary, Castledermot as the estate was unfinished with substantial and costly infrastructure to be completed within the estate. The original developer was in receivership, there was no development bond and the estate had been sold as part of a portfolio of investments.

The Development Control Section had been in contact with the new owner of The Friary and it was their intention to complete and sell the vacant units to finance the completion of the estate to the required taking in charge standard. The new owner had made initial contact with Housing with a view to selling units for social housing.

Councillor Breslin asked for this matter to be followed up as the residents were anxious to get this estate taken in charge.

Mr Murtagh replied that lights had been upgraded to LED and that he would follow up with the developer this week.

The report was noted.



**AY06/0121**

**Athy Municipal District Roadworks**

The District Engineer stated that a report had been circulated to the members providing an update on works which had been undertaken prior to and since their December meeting and also details of future planned works. The members thanked the District Engineer and his team for all the work they had completed in 2020 given the difficult circumstances.

The members noted that funding had been allocated to Athy Municipal District for two bus shelters in Castledermot for 2021. Athy Municipal District had contact with the Local Link Team with a view to looking at these bus shelters in addition to bus stops along the new routes.

Councillor Keatley understood the Roads Programme was extensive but he was trying to get bus stops on both the 883 and 880 links especially in rural areas.

The District Engineer stated that good lighting was required and the community needed a safe place for a bus to stop. He suggested that existing services need to be utilised rather than creating new ones.

Councillor Keatley asked that a list of bus stops in villages be drawn up and an estimated costing be prepared for the next meeting.

The District Engineer stated that he would review this matter with Mr Alan Kerry, Local Link and they would start working out costings.

The report was noted.

**AY07/0121**

**Athy Distributor Road**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Mr Reel to the meeting as the new Senior Engineer in charge of the delivery of the Athy Distributor Road and she wished him well and looked forward to



## Kildare County Council

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working with him. Mr Reel thanked the Cathaoirleach and the members and stated he would endeavour to get the job done. He gave the members a brief update as follows. Stage 2 Tender Documents were submitted to the Department for Transport before Christmas and the council were still waiting on his response. He understood they were being reviewed by the Minister this month. The landowner agreement was ongoing and it was 75% completed. The council were close to agreement with CIE regarding the bridge and the gas main and culvert were completed.

The Cathaoirleach stated that at the last meeting, the members requested that the Minister be invited to visit the town of Athy and she asked whether this invitation had issued.

The Meetings Administrator stated he would check whether this invitation had issued and he would come back to the members after the meeting.

The Cathaoirleach asked how quickly the contractors would be on site. Mr Reel stated that he hoped the contractors would be on site by the fourth quarter of 2021.

The report was noted.

### **AY08/0121**

#### **Safety Issues – Cross in Narraghmore known locally as “Keatley’s Cross”**

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

That the council make safe the cross in Narraghmore known locally as "Keatley's Cross" turning right from the Wood Road onto the R415.

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

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that this was the junction of the L8030 and the R-415 and this would require a design to improve sight distance when coming from the L8030 onto the R-415. This would also require land take to improve sight distance.



## Kildare County Council

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Councillor Leigh said great work had commenced on many roads in South Kildare but this cross was dangerous as the sight line was bad. A design was required and he asked that the council be pro-active not re-active.

Councillor Keatley stated that the junction was wide but the sight lines need to be improved as the hedges would grow out in due course.

The District Engineer stated that the municipal district office had no design facility for small projects. He stated land take was required and cutting back of hedgerows was also necessary. He added there were a number of junctions which require a small amount of work to be carried out and he hoped to get through them in due course. He added a design, land take and a source of funding would require to be identified in order to carry out this work.

Councillor Leigh stated he would have to consider this matter further.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Leigh, seconded by Councillor Keatley that the report be noted and that a design, land take and source of funding be identified to carry out this work.

### **AY09/0121**

#### **Poor Visibility Issues at the Shed Road and Carlow Road Junction, Athy**

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

That the council address the poor visibility issues at the Shed Road and Carlow Road junction Athy.

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

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that this was the junction of the L8085 and the R-417 and this would require a design to improve sight distance when coming from the L8030 onto the R-415. This would also require land take to improve sight distance.



The following points were raised;

- There is very poor visibility at this junction
- The low Railway Bridge caused difficulties as HGVs had to reverse to turn when they realised their vehicle would not fit under the bridge
- Water flows down into field beside this junction then freezes and causes difficulties

The District Engineer stated that there had been issues at this location over the years. Signs were installed indicating the height of the bridge. He stated he would review the possibility of further works at this location but added a design, land take and a source of funding would need to be identified in order to carry out this work.

Councillor Keatley asked if a landowner was agreeable to take a ditch out and put in a railing, would these works require a design.

The District Engineer stated that a design would be required.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Behan, seconded by Councillor Leigh that the report be noted and that the District Engineer review this junction again.

### **AY10/0121**

#### **Invitation – Transport Manager – Local Link**

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

That this council invite the Transport Manager from Local Link to an Athy Municipal District meeting to give an update on the services available and those under review.

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

Councillor Dooley stated that Mr Kerry had met with the members before Christmas regarding the 883 and 880 routes and it would be important to know whether people were using these systems.



## Kildare County Council

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**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Dooley, seconded by Councillor Behan that an invitation be issued to Mr Kerry to attend their next meeting via Teams.

### AY11/0121

#### **Speeding and Road Curvature Issues – Carlow to Athy Road**

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

That the council address the speeding and road curvature issues along the Carlow to Athy Road between the Shed Road junction and Bestfield, halting site Athy.

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

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that the bends on the R-417 (Carlow/Athy) road would require a design and finance to improve sight distance. The speed of the traffic on the road was a matter for the Gardai.

Councillor Behan clarified that the area in question was between Tankardstown Bridge and the Jerusalem Halting Site. She stated there had been many accidents on this section of road over the years and she added that many of the landowners were happy to work with the council, Irish Water and/or Waterways Ireland as speeding and bends on this road need to be addressed.

The District Engineer stated that the Athy end was developed and widened near Grangemellon and stopped at Levinstown Bridge. He added that the area in question needed to be re-designed, however, the road surface was in excellent condition. Traffic surveys had been carried out and speeds were in line with the 80 kph generally. He reiterated that a design and source of funding would need to be identified and that the speed issue was a matter for the Gardai to enforce.

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





**AY12/0121**

**Remedial Works – Boundary Wall – Abbey’s Row, Ballitore**

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

That the council carries out an evaluation on the boundary known as Abbey's Row, Ballitore with the intention of carrying out remedial works to the wall.

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

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that this Estate was taken in charge a number of years ago, part of this estate had no development on it and the boundary wall was in a very bad condition. These works can be considered as part of LPT.

Councillor Breslin stated that the area around the boundary wall was heavily pedestrianised due to two housing estates close by. She asked for a costing to be prepared to repair this wall and maybe the council could use some LPT funding.

Councillor Leigh stated that safety was a major concern here and agreed that the wall should be repaired.

Councillor Keatley requested that the Housing Section would help to find out who owned the site and to find out the owners intentions for this site as the whole site was in a bad condition.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Leigh that the report be noted and that the District Manager follow up with the Housing Section to find out the owners intentions for this site for the next meeting.

**AY13/0121**

**Detailed Survey from St John’s Lane to Greenhills Estate, Athy – Upgrading Works**

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



## Kildare County Council

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That the council carries out a detailed survey from St. John's Lane to Greenhills Estate, Athy with a view to carrying out upgrading work to the footpaths, public lighting and fencing along the route and within the estate.

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

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that a survey had been carried out on Greenhills. It would need to be completed to where it links up with St John's Lane. Lighting at this location would need a full redesign and installation of additional columns and lanterns. As this requires additional columns, the location had been entered onto KLIPS register. The lighting within KLIPS would be installed as and when funds become available and depending on where the request sits within KLIPS.

The following points were raised by the members;

- Public Lighting was badly needed in this area.
- The Residents Association had been trying their best to look after this estate but extra works were required.
- Local Property Tax funding from last year and this year could be used as a full design was required.

Mr O'Toole stated that there were currently three lights along the route and in order to light the area to current standards, the council would have to remove the existing three lights and install six new columns and lanterns which would cost in the region of €15,000 to €20,000 in total.

The District Engineer stated that the walkway was surrounded by properties and the whole area needed to be looked at not just one area in isolation. It was built by Athy Town Council some years ago and no design was carried out at the time. He added there was scope for development in the area and it would be important for the Housing Section to look into its development as it might be suitable for elderly people as it was close to the town.



## Kildare County Council

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**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Leigh that the report be noted and that the Housing Section examine this area in regard to future development.

### **AY14/0121**

#### **Update on survey of all damaged footpaths in the Athy Municipal District**

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

Can the council give an update on how the survey of all damaged footpaths in the Athy Municipal District is progressing?

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that a survey had been carried out on Greenhills and Pairc Bhríde and a survey on part of Mc Donnell Drive had been completed.

Councillor Leigh stated that a survey for all damaged footpaths was requested.

The District Engineer stated that surveys had been carried out on the older estates and some were not as bad as others. Some road surfaces were actually worse than the footpaths. He added that the some road surfaces, footpaths and over matured trees may need replacing and the overall situation needed to be considered. He stated surveys had been done and videos taken of the areas in question showing condition of roads, footpaths and where trees had raised up footpaths.

The report was noted.

### **AY15/0121**

#### **Footpath in Castledermot from the R448 at Behan's Garage towards the school**

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

Can the council confirm if it has plans to finish the footpath (approximately 40 metres) in Castledermot from the R448 at Behan's garage down towards the school?



## **Kildare County Council**

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A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that the footpath from the Friary to the school was constructed in 2016. A design and land take were required to complete the last final phase of the scheme. A design would now be sought and finances identified in order to complete this work. The report was noted.

### **AY16/0121**

#### **Flooding on the Kildare Road, Athy**

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Breslin: What plans has the council to engage with the relevant landowners to eradicate the problem of flooding on the Kildare Road, Athy adjacent to the estate to Shamrock Drive?

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that a design would be required to access a drainage profile in the area. Some of the area was for planning permission. Athy Municipal District would have to meet landowners with a view to a long-term solution.

Councillor Breslin stated that the council need to have a conversation with the landowner in order to alleviate flooding in this area.

The District Engineer stated that the water was coming from higher ground developments and the road in question was in the middle of two developments with one drain in the charge of one of the developers.

The report was noted.

### **AY17/0121**

#### **Invitation to Bord na Mona re future plans for Kilberry Factory**

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Dooley: That the council invite Bord Na Mona officials to an Athy Municipal District meeting to outline its future plans for the Kilberry factory, its facilities and employees.



## Kildare County Council

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

A report was received from the Head of Enterprise informing the members that an invitation from the Municipal District members would be issued to Bord na Mona to discuss the issues the members would like to discuss regarding the site in Kilberry. This was the format used by other Municipal Districts to pursue lands or property or partnership with Bord na Mona in recent times and Bord Na Mona had attended.

Councillor Dooley stated that the Kilberry Factory had been a source of income for many families in the area for over 70 years and he said the council would need to see a business plan from the new owners. He added that the infrastructure beside the site needed to be utilised. He welcomed a meeting with the officials of Bord na Mona.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Dooley, seconded by Councillor Behan that the report be noted and that an invitation be issued to the officials of Bord na Mona to attend a meeting of the Athy Municipal District via Teams.

### **AY18/0121**

#### **Public Toilet – Athy**

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Dooley:  
Can the council give an update on the situation around a public toilet in Athy, to see if businesses have been asked to offer this service to the public for a reduction in their rates?

A report was received from the District Manager informing the members that on foot of a question from Councillor Dooley to last July's meeting of the municipal district, asking if the council had any plans to provide public toilets in Athy following on from the difficulties experienced by members of the public during the Covid-19 pandemic, the matter was referred to the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee. She understood that the matter was due to be discussed at the next meeting of the SPC in March.



## Kildare County Council

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For information and completeness, the following was the response given to the Municipal District meeting in July 2020:

The council does not have any plans to provide public toilets in Athy. For information, the council terminated the contract for public toilets in various towns throughout the county in 2017 due to the significant operational costs involved. A motion by Councillor Keatley in November 2017 was referred to the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC to consider a scheme to incentivize businesses in our towns and villages to allow public use of their toilet facilities which could replace our current public toilet contract. The matter was referred to the SPC but did not progress further due to the complexities involved.

Councillor Dooley asked for this matter to be referred to the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC to see if anything can be done for businesses who would allow the public to use their facilities i.e. to reduce their rates.

The District Manager stated she had received an email from the Finance Section during the meeting stating that the matter could be considered by the SPC but it was unlikely that rates could be waived.

The report was noted

### **AY19/0121**

#### **Update on Public Realm Projects**

The members were circulated with a report from Ms Hunt before the meeting. The members thanked Ms Hunt and her team for their continued work on these projects.

The following matters were raised by the members;

- €20,000 Health Check – Castledermot – how far along with this?
- Kilmeade – Public Realm Design – Is there an avenue to progress smaller villages.
- Emily Square – Refurbishment - can this be done before the Southern Distributor Road or would it have to wait until after this major project was completed.
- Tanyard, Ballitore – would it progress this year.
- Shackletown Museum – update regarding finance for this project.



## Kildare County Council

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Ms Hunt stated that the Health Check for Castledermot was at draft stage and she would arrange a briefing for the members either before or after their next Athy Municipal District meeting in February and then it would go to public consultation. She stated that in regard to smaller villages, she would be arranging a Teams meeting with the District Engineer within the next week to discuss the possibility of works in such villages. In regard to Emily Square, on foot of Covid Pandemic, the team did a traffic survey and the traffic count was way down, however, traffic at school times was up due to parents collecting their children instead of using public transport. She stated she would be meeting with the Roads Design Team and the results of traffic survey would be discussed. She said she would update the members on the outcome of this meeting at a later date.

With regard to the Tanyard, Ballitore, an on-site meeting was to be arranged and consultant to be procured this year.

With regard to Shackleton Museum, the team were progressing as far as they can and match funding had to be sourced by Heritage Museum Board.

The report was noted.

### **AY20/0121**

#### **Update – Climate Action**

Mr Deegan, Climate Action Officer stated that The Eastern & Midlands CARO, in collaboration with the Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) had created a presentation to the members highlighting the following points:

- It was aimed at encouraging elected members to lead local climate action initiatives at municipal district level.
- It demonstrated examples of local climate action initiatives already piloted/undertaken, namely the Climate Camp pilot held in Kildare Town.
- These examples included the Community Training Programme which resulted from a LEADER/CARO partnership and the development of Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC'S), with a focus on the Maynooth SEC, which was chaired by Councillor Hamilton.
- It focused on the importance of partnerships for community development and local climate action, such as the Partnership for Sustainable Communities,



## Kildare County Council

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- between the GAA and local Government, which would see the development of Sustainable Club Workshops and toolkits under the Green Clubs Programme.
- It recognised the leadership role played by the elected members in communities and within municipal districts, as well as the untapped expertise which existed at local level.
  - It explored how one might connect with their communities and looked at the framework provided by the Climate Action Charter, some of the key actions it contained, particularly the building of a sustained localised citizen engagement model and the importance of connecting with young citizens.
  - The Climate Action SPC of Kildare County Council had provided invaluable feedback and input into the presentation to date, having facilitated presentation of two iterations of the piece, at SPC meetings. The CARO had created a video presentation as a more innovative format of the presentation, which had been made available for rollout from mid-December 2020, at municipal district meetings across the 17 local authorities in the Eastern & Midlands region.

The following points were raised by the members;

- What can the members/council do to help at this stage?
- Woodstock Forum in Athy along with other groups had helped greatly in the past and the council could work with them again.

Mr Deegan stated that there was a blank canvas at the moment and he was trying to get projects up and running and identifying funding at present. He would encourage groups to get in touch with PPN Lineage Group to identify funding.

The report was noted.

### **AY21/0121**

#### **Setting up of Task Force – Dumping and Littering in the Athy Municipal District**

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

That the council, in conjunction with councillors, Environmental Department of the council and all outside agencies i.e. Coillte, An Garda Síochána, Waterways Ireland etc set up a





task force to try and combat the escalating problem of dumping and littering in the Athy Municipal District.

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

Councillor Leigh stated that this problem had escalated over the last year. Every ditch and roadside was littered. He asked that the council seek help from organisation who could help to alleviate this problem which would involve education, enforcing and a major media campaign.

All the members concurred that they were inundated with calls from members of the public regarding this problem and they called for a task force to be set up.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Leigh, seconded by Councillor Breslin that the Environment Section be requested to set up a task force to help alleviate the escalating problem of littering and dumping in the Athy Municipal District.

### **AY22/0121**

#### **Breakdown – Litter Collection and Waste Disposal - Athy Municipal District**

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

Can the council provide a breakdown of the mechanisms of all aspects of litter collection and waste disposal in Athy Municipal District?

A report was received from the District Engineer informing the members that extracts from the Athy Municipal District Section of the County Street Sweeping Plan was circulated to the members. This was last revised in 2015 when Monasterevin and Kildangan were in the Athy Municipal District.

Councillor Leigh stated that he had spoken with the District Engineer and had discussed this matter with him. However, he noted that the Plan was last revised in 2015 and he



## **Kildare County Council**

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required a more up to date report on this matter. He asked that maybe the council could buy some new equipment and make it more effective.

The report was noted.

The meeting then concluded.