

**Minutes of the Athy Municipal District Meeting
held at 10.00 am on Monday, 21 February 2022
on Microsoft Teams**

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

Officials Present: Ms A Aspell (District Manager), Mr D O’Flaherty (District Engineer), Mr S Deegan (Senior Engineer), Ms O McGee (Administrative Officer), Mr B McGrath (Meetings Administrator), Ms M Richardson (Meetings Secretary) and other officials.

AY01/0222

Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations from the members of pecuniary or beneficial interests under Section 177 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended.

AY02/0222

Minutes and Progress Report

The members considered the minutes of the monthly meeting of the Athy Municipal District held on Monday, 17 January 2022 together with the progress report.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Leigh and seconded by Councillor Dooley that the minutes of the monthly meeting held on Monday, 17 January 2022 be confirmed and taken as read. The progress report was noted.

AY03/0222

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

AY04/0222

Municipal District Road Works

A report on the municipal district road works was circulated to the members in

advance of the meeting and the District Engineer went through the report with the members. The members made the following points:

- The Cathaoirleach thanked the District Engineer and the Municipal District team for their work, particularly in the wake of the recent storms. He also expressed his sympathy and that of the members to the family and colleagues of a Wexford County Council member of staff following his tragic death as a result of the storm.
- Many bins in the Athy area needed replacing as they were in a bad condition.
- Could a recent item regarding the bridge at Kilkea be added to the progress report.

The District Engineer responded as follows:

- A survey had been done on the bins and 10 new improved bins had been purchased and were due to be delivered the following week. A meeting could be held to prioritise their placement and all bins would be replaced incrementally.
- Signage had been improved at the bridge at Kilkea but in the long term, a new bridge was required. Kildare County Council were only responsible for the parapet walls and not the walls coming up to the bridge, which were the responsibility of the landowner.

AY05/0222

LPT Schedule of Works

To agree and approve the Athy Municipal District LPT Schedule of Works 2022.

The Cathaoirleach stated that a list of works needed to be agreed and asked that the members be supplied with a copy of last year's list. Councillor Dooley informed the members that a sum of €5k would be required from LPT funds to go towards the visit of the Lord Mayor of Manchester, Councillor Judge, Grand Marshall visit the following month. The District Manager clarified that the amount would be allocated to Athy promoters for Lord Mayor, Councillor Judge's visit in March. The Cathaoirleach suggested that a meeting of the municipal district committee be held prior to the February full council meeting to agree the list of works for 2022

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Dooley and seconded by Councillor Behan and agreed by all members that a list of works be agreed as soon as possible and that the sum of €5k be allocated to Athy Promoters for the visit of Councillor Judge in March.

AY06/0222

Athy Distributor Road

The District Engineer advised that he would provide the quarterly update on the Athy Distributor Road the following month.

AY07/0222

Fibre Cables in Housing Estates

The members considered the following motion in name of Councillor Leigh. That the council outline and implement all necessary actions to facilitate the laying of fibre cables in housing estates not yet taken in charge in the Municipal District.

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

A report was received from the Building and Development Control Section informing the members that if estates were constructed, they could use their Eircode on the National Broadband Ireland website to see if they were in the intervention area of the National Broadband Plan. If they were not, then it was considered that there were sufficient providers in their area to offer a service. Sky, Virgin etc were currently all upgrading their networks. One would imagine new estates being constructed were most likely providing the ducting, etc for providers to come and install broadband services and this was dealt with through the planning process with appropriate conditions attached.

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

AY08/0222

Pedestrian Crossing at the new Centric Medical Clinic

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Dooley. That the council install a pedestrian crossing on the Carlow Road, Athy at the new Centric Medical Clinic to support the safe crossing of both elderly and young families and to help control vehicular movement on this very busy regional road.

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

A report was received from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department informing the members that the lands made available for the delivery of the proposed scheme were a distance away from the Centric Medical Centre. It was not possible for a crossing at this location to be considered as part of the Athy Distributor Road.

The members raised the following points:

- As two further doctors had moved into the Centric Medical Centre it was now extremely busy and many people were parking in the housing estate across the road.
- The centre now had in excess of 4k clients and the proposed crossing at the Athy Distributor Road would be too far away.
- Traffic in the area had dramatically increased recently and although the area was a 50kph zone, speeding was an issue.

The District Engineer stated that the use of rumble strips would not be feasible in this area due to the proximity of houses. As the Athy Distributor Road would cross the regional road it would cause a slowdown of traffic as they would not have right of way. He advised that any sort of crossing would require a design as the road was wide with a lot of entrances coming onto it.

The Cathaoirleach suggested that if an appropriate location and design could be agreed it could be added to the schedule of LPT works.

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

AY09/0222

Parking Spaces for Wheelchair User Vehicles

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Leigh.
That the council put in place the extra large parking spaces required for wheelchair user vehicles in Athy, as promised for 2022.

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

A report was received from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department informing the members that this work would be considered as part of the Athy parking bye law review.

The members made the following points:

- When exactly would the parking bye law review take place and how long after that would works be completed.
- Many of the extra large parking spaces were not in the correct location.
- Athy was an age friendly town and with branches of KARE and Irish Wheelchair Association in the town, works needed to take place as a matter of urgency.

Ms C Whelan advised that she would relay the members comments to the relevant team and an update would be provided.

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

AY10/0222

Safety Measures at Ballyshannon National School and Community Hall

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Keatley.
That the council carry out pedestrian safety measures at Ballyshannon National School and community hall.

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

A report was received from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department informing the members that this needed to be examined further in conjunction with the Active Travel Team. In the interim it was noted that:

- There was a rear pedestrian entrance to the school via the adjacent estate which presumably negated the need for children to enter the premises via the R418.
- There appeared to be approx. 20 perpendicular parking spaces to the front of the school – to make that area safer for pedestrians those spaces would have to be removed.
- The cars were currently parking on what was in essence the footpath (or at least the space for pedestrians to circulate), which would normally provide space along the front of the school, the community centre, and the pub to the junction at the L8007.
- The location appeared to have relevant signage to alert drivers of speed limits and presence of school.
- It was unclear where the school bus parked for collection/drop off.

Provision had not been made in the road design projects budget for a scheme at this location and any such scheme for this location would be quite complex and involve inputs from various stakeholders including a number of third party landowners.





The members made the following points:

- The flashing lights outside the school were not always functioning.
- The road was used as a ratrun and speeding was an issue.
- The area was very busy and with a school, community centre and local pub footfall had increased.
- A serious accident had occurred in the area the previous week.
- Landowners in the area had expressed a willingness to engage with the Roads Department with a view to making the area safer.
- A cycle rack recently installed at the school was pointless as no child could safely cycle in the area.
- The area between the school and Carrigill needed to be made safer for cyclists and pedestrians.

The District Engineer stated that upgrade works had been carried out in the area in the past year but agreed that there was a need to link all the agencies involved from the Active Travel Team to the National Transport Authority and an overall plan needed to be put in place.

The Cathaoirleach requested that a meeting between the school and adjacent landowners be organised, and an agreement made to meet with the other agencies. He requested that the item be added to the progress report.

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

AY11/0222

Completion of Works in Narraghmore Village

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Keatley.
That the council give a timeline for the completion of works in Narraghmore Village in preparation for the Pride of Place competition.

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

A report was received from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department informing the members that the Athy Municipal District Office had pencilled this work in for March/April 2022. It would be ideal if other developments could be carried out at the same time.

The members made the following points:

- A timeline for completion of works was needed.
- Could a meeting be organised to finalise the works.

The District Engineer stated that works needed to be co-ordinated as they could not be overlapped. There were two areas to be completed. There was a need to look at the issues and resolve them but this needed to be done correctly from the outset.

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

AY12/0222

Traffic Calming Measures on the Rockfield Road

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Behan.
That the council install traffic calming measures on the Rockfield Road, Athy as many motorists are ignoring the continuous white line and overtaking at concealed entrances.

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

A report was received from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department informing the members that there were no traffic calming measures proposed for

Rockfield. This was an issue for An Garda Síochána. If people were overtaking on a continuous white line, it should be reported to An Garda Síochána.

Councillor Behan stated that residents in the area had previously contacted An Garda Síochána but driver behaviour needed to change. She requested signage be erected advising of the concealed entrances and advised that she would raise the issue at the next JPC meeting.

The District Engineer advised that he would look at the line markings in the area.

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

AY13/0222

Works to the Bridge and Roadway between Cloney and Derryouchter

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Breslin. That the council carry out remedial/restoration works to the bridge and roadway between Cloney and Derryouchter.

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

A report was received from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department informing the members that this work was included in the 2022/2023 Restoration Improvement Projects.

The members raised the following point:

- The road was built on a bog and needed upgrade works as soon as possible in 2022 and not wait for 2023.

The District Engineer advised that works would be undertaken from Kildangan to the Cush then on to Derrymills and then Derryouchter. How much of the works were completed depended on the ever increasing cost of bitumen as increased costs would impact on this.

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

AY14/0222

Horse Bridge in Athy

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Dooley. Can the council confirm who is responsible for maintaining the Horse Bridge in Athy, in particular providing surface dressing and the removal of ivy and growth from the walls?

A report was received from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department informing the members that the Horse Bridge in Athy traversed the River Barrow therefore, responsibility for the maintenance of Horse Bridge fell to Waterways Ireland.

Councillor Dooley stated that he would contact Waterways Ireland as this was an important part of the Blueway.

The report was noted.

AY15/0222

Completion Date for Road Works in Moone and Timolin

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Keatley. Can the council give a completion date for road works that were started in 2020 in Moone and Timolin?

A report was received from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department informing the members that the work undertaken at this location was part of a Covid-19 stimulus scheme. No further funding was available from the NTA. The Sustainable Transport Team would liaise with the Municipal District Office to prepare an outline design for the completion of the scheme and the Sustainable Transport Team would bring it forward to the NTA for consideration.

Councillor Keatley stated that he was surprised that there was no funding for this as he thought it should have carried over and as the original amount was in millions it warranted further discussion.

The District Engineer stated that works could not be completed due to Covid as there had been no design and no plan to work to. The funding was not on the list provided but he would check this out.

The report was noted.

AY16/0222

Replanting of Hedges and Trees

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Leigh. Can the council confirm if there are plans to replant hedges and trees to replace those that had to be removed, to facilitate the new Athy Distributor Road?

A report was received from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety Department informing the members that there was extensive planting proposed for the area adjacent to the new roundabout following the completion of the ADR. The boundary treatment proposed was a post and rail fence erected between the green area in Shanrath and the proposed footpath linking to the new road with some hedgerow planting.

The report was noted.

AY17/0222

St Mary's Cemetery in Athy

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Breslin. That this council formally writes to the HSE to ascertain its future intentions regarding the upkeep, maintenance and improvement of St Mary's cemetery in Athy and the availability of all historical records relating to interments.

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

A report was given at the meeting by the Meetings Administrator informing the members that if the members were in agreement, a letter would issue to the HSE. The members raised the following points:

- Councillor Breslin thanked the members for their support and praised the work of Marian Higgins and Mario Corrigan
- There was a serious lack of engagement from the HSE which was causing frustration and a lack of progress.
- There was a duty to ensure that those interred in the area were not forgotten.
- Councillor Leigh offered his support as a member of the Regional Health Authority.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Breslin, seconded by Councillor Keatley that a letter issue to the HSE to ascertain its future intentions regarding the upkeep, maintenance and improvement of St Mary's cemetery in Athy and the availability of all historical records relating to interments.

AY18/0222

Ernest Shackleton

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Breslin.
Can the council confirm if it intends to commemorate and recognise Ernest Shackleton's connection to Kilkea in conjunction with other relevant bodies?

A report was received from Community and Cultural Development Department informing the members that Kildare Library and Arts Service and County Kildare Decade of Commemorations Committee had been promoting Shackleton's connection to Kilkea and to Kildare for years and would gladly continue to promote this connection. 2022 marks the 100th anniversary of the explorer's death and we published original newspaper articles, obituaries and other information to highlight this historic event. Kildare County Council commissioned the statue in Athy which was unveiled in 2016 and the project was overseen by Kildare Arts Service. Any plans for a Civic Memorial, including an information board, plaque or road sign should take the official Kildare County Council Civic Memorial Policy into consideration.

Councillor Breslin acknowledged the report and advised that she would speak to the Memorial Committee.

The District Manager advised that she would send on details of the policy related to memorials and would speak to Councillor Breslin offline.

The report was noted.

AY19/0222

Housing Turnaround Time for Major Repairs

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

Can the council outline what the estimated turnaround time for a property needing major repairs is, from the moment a construction crew arrives on site, to making the property habitable, in the Athy Municipal District?

A report was received from the Housing Department informing the members that it was not possible to give an estimated turnaround time as that would depend on the nature and complexity of the required works to be undertaken, the availability of the required materials, the availability of the necessary staff/contractors due to competition with the private sector and resulting lead-in times. The nature and complexity of the works required would, in turn, determine whether or not insurance claims and/or tendering for the works were required. Cases where tendering was not required, would still require compliance with public procurement procedures.

Councillor Behan stated that feedback she had received from contractors showed that they took on multiple jobs as it took too long to be paid by the council. This led to a delay with works on council jobs.

The Cathairleach suggested that this item should be revisited as a motion.

The report was noted.

The Cathaoirleach asked to be excused and Leas-Cathaoirleach, Councillor Dooley took the chair.

AY20/0222

Works on the Segment of the Blueway from Athy to Milltown Bridge

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

Can the council confirm the date when works on the segment of the Blueway from Athy to Milltown Bridge will commence?

A report was received from the Planning, Strategic Developments and Public Realm Department informing the members that the unbound surface works on the Blueway would be complete by Quarter 4 2022 (weather permitting). The exact phasing of these works was subject to the completion of the Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) for the remaining areas in Laois and Kildare.

Environmental surveys were soon to commence with the CEMP submission was targeted for Quarter 2 2022. Detailed design on the bridge and bound surfaces was underway and would be tendered end of Quarter 2 2022, with the programme for delivery to be agreed with the contractor once appointed.

The report was noted.

AY21/0222

Mattress Amnesty Day in the Athy Municipal District in 2022

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

Can the council confirm if there will be a mattress amnesty day in the Athy Municipal District in 2022?

A report was received from the Environment Department informing the members that following a public tendering process, the council held a mattress/couch amnesty day for domestic householders in September 2021. This was largely funded from the Anti-Dumping Initiatives Grant Scheme through the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, and should not be seen as an annual event. There were no plans at present to run a similar event in 2022. Any such plans would be subject to available funding and consideration of a suitable location countywide.

The report was noted.

AY22/0222

Athy Civic Amenity Site Opening Hours

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

Can the council confirm if there are any plans for the Athy Civic Amenity Site to extend its opening hours or open for an extra day a week in 2022?

A report was received from the Environment Department informing the members that the council carried out a pilot extended hours trial a couple of years ago where the visitation figures did not result in any significant increase in demand nor justify any grounds for extending the opening on a more permanent basis. The EPA license was clear in terms of opening hours of any CAS. If the council wanted to add a day or extend the hours, this would require a full license review, followed by formal public consultation and then we would be dependent on the EPA to agree to the request. Extending the hours would come at a cost and this would need to be budgeted. There would also be other additional associated costs, eg. signage changes etc. In the circumstances outlined above, there were no plans at present to extend the opening hours.

Councillor Leigh stated that he accepted the report but that the public repeatedly asked the question. The Leas-Cathaoirleach suggested raising the item as a motion regarding a new pilot scheme.

The report was noted.

AY23/0222

County Kildare Just Transition Plan

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Breslin. Can the council provide an update on the County Kildare Just Transition Plan, the actions that pertain to the Athy Municipal District and how this plan will link to the National Just Transition Fund?

A report was received from the Climate Action Office informing the members that they were working closely with the contracted consultant, Urban Foresight Ltd, and stakeholders to finalise the West Kildare Just Transition Plan. The plan was taking longer than expected due to the positive increase in stakeholder feedback and was expected to be finalised in the coming weeks. Given the additional information being assembled, the actions were not finalised and it would be remiss to pre-empt

same. The plan would be a source of supporting information in applying for funding under the Just Transition Fund. The EU Just Transition Fund was out for public consultation until 14 February which would assist the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications in developing a Territorial Just Transition Plan with the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly that would set out how to invest in the region - see link [here](#).

A report was also received from the Local Enterprise Office informing the members that Kildare LEO continued to support the actions under the National Just Transition Plan including the delivery of training, mentoring and financial support to businesses in Athy and Kildare. This included the Green for Micro programme which provided businesses with tailored expert advice on how to drive sustainability. Participants in the programme received two days of intensive mentoring including a sustainability audit and action plan, designed to assist in greening their business. Kildare LEO was also supporting the development of the Green Enterprise Zone in Allenwood which received funding under Just Transition. Kildare LEO would also work closely with our partners on any future initiatives or projects that would seek Just Transition Funding. Under our Kildare 2025 Economic Strategy, Kildare LEO were also committed to working with our stakeholders to support the work of the skills agencies in developing programmes that mitigate the impact of Just Transition. Kildare LEO were also working closely with the Climate Action Office to finalise actions in advance of the publication of the West Kildare Just Transition Plan.

Councillor Breslin requested that a briefing or workshop be organised for members to familiarise them with the ongoing works. The Meetings Administrator advised that he would relay the request to the Climate Action Office and LEO.

The reports were noted.

AY24/0222

Lands Beside and to the rear of the Tanyard, Ballitore

The members considered the motion question in the name of Councillor Behan. That the council consider using the lands beside and to the rear of the Tanyard, Ballitore for a playground and wildlife area.

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

A report was received from the Community and Cultural Development Department informing the members that the area would have to be assessed to see it was appropriate for a playground and any proposals would have to be considered in the context of overall plans and potential uses for location.

A report was also received from the Housing Department informing the members that part of this site was being incorporated into our social housing delivery pipeline. Detailed proposals have not been developed at this point.

Councillor Behan stated that a playground in the area would be in the public interest as it would bring extra trade to the area and would also be necessary if social housing was to be developed in the area.

Councillor Leigh advised that he was on the Tanyard Committee and supported the motion.

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

AY25/0222

Grants available to Support Businesses

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Dooley. That the council, through the Local Enterprise Office, writes to all the rate paying businesses in the Athy Municipal District informing them of the many grants available to support their businesses e.g. the Shop Front Grant Scheme.

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

A report was received from the Local Enterprise Office informing the members that due to GDPR restrictions, the Local Enterprise Office was not in a position to use the rate payers database to communicate by direct post to all rate paying businesses in the Athy Municipal District. Kildare Local Enterprise Office worked in tandem with the business community in Athy and helped greatly by the Athy Business Centre

team, providing practical business advice clinics, delivering expert mentoring and tailored training programmes together with a suite of financial supports. The Local Enterprise Office regularly disseminated and informed its clients of the full suite of supports available. From time to time, the LEO would also provide many targeted interventions to assist businesses with supports such as the Shop Front Grant Improvement Scheme, Merchandising Grants, Trading Online Vouchers, Green Vouchers, Age Friendly Initiatives etc. LEO Kildares Communications Strategy took into account the draft National Communication Strategy and would be updated as necessary as the National Strategy was amended and implemented.

Sample marketing activities include, but are not limited to:

- Social Media
- Press Releases
- Website promotion and Twitter
- Database contacts
- Contact with business networks, e.g. Kildare Chamber, Network Ireland etc
- Case studies, for all types of supports. We continue to drive this awareness campaign by working closely with all local community representatives and their teams on the ground in Athy and indeed the whole of County Kildare.

The members raised the following points:

- They acknowledged the great work done by LEO during the pandemic and the huge amount of support that had been provided to local businesses.
- Athy had a very good uptake of the Shop Front Grant
- Not all business owners were internet savvy and would not see press releases or social media posts.
- In person talks and information evenings had been very successful in the past.

Ms McGee stated that there would be an extensive promotional campaign which would also incorporate information evenings as well as radio and print media. She informed the members that filming had just finished of one shop front grant in each municipal district which would soon be launched on social media.

The Cathaoirleach returned to the chair. He thanked the LEO office for all their hard work especially during the pandemic. He advised that Athy had a large amount of vacant premises and there was a need to highlight the vacant premises grant.

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

The meeting concluded