



**Minutes of the Athy Municipal District Meeting  
held at 10.00 am on Monday, 16 September 2024  
in the Council Chamber**

**Members Present:** Councillor A Breslin (Cathaoirleach) V Behan, B Dooley. And Councillor M Leigh.

**Online:** Councillor I Keatley

**Officials Present:** Mr A Dunney (District Manager), Mr K Dunne (District Engineer), Mr D Conlan (Senior Executive Engineer), Ms A Keaveney (A/Senior Executive Officer), Mr M McLoughlin (Senior Executive Officer), Ms S Walsh (Executive Engineer), Ms M O'Brien (LPT Coordinator), Mr K Kavanagh (Senior Executive Officer), Mr B McGrath (Meetings Administrator), Ms A Noone (Meetings Secretary) and others.

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The Cathaoirleach welcomed everyone to the September meeting of the Athy Municipal District. She wished to express condolences on behalf of the members to the family of Rainsford Hendy RIP who during his time as a member of Kildare County Council was heavily involved in the community. He was passionate about public service and continued to highlight local issues and campaigned long after his own career in local government had ended. The Cathaoirleach then asked the members to observe a moments silence. A moments silence was observed.



### **AY01/0924**

#### **Declaration of Conflicts or Pecuniary Interests**

Declarations of (a) conflicts of interest or (b) pecuniary or beneficial interests under section 177 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended.

There were no declarations made.

### **AY02/0924**

#### **Minutes and Progress Report**

The members considered the minutes the Athy Municipal District meeting held on Monday, 15 July 2024 and the progress report was noted.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Leigh seconded by Councillor Behan and agreed by all members that the minutes of the Athy Municipal District meeting held on 15 July 2024 be adopted and the progress report be noted.

### **AY03/0924**

#### **Municipal District Roadworks Update**

The members received an update on the municipal district road works.

#### **National Transport Authority (NTA) – Active Travel Measure Updates**

No update since the last Athy Municipal District meeting. Project Team dealing with this.

#### **Department of Transport – Climate Adaption Projects**

No projects completed in Athy Municipal District.

#### **Municipal District Restoration Improvement Works – RI Program**

R418 – Fontstown to Rathskillagh –complete.

R418 – Kilkea Village – Works in progress.

L8079 – R418 to Bolgers Cross – completed.



L8079 – Bolgers Cross to Burtown Cross – completed.

L8080 – Grangenolvin – completed.

L8076 – Rosetown Snugburrow – completed.

L8040 – Back Moone – completed.

L8045 – Commonstown Killelan – complete.

L8031 – Milltown – completed.

L8094 – Coltstown Knockfield – completed.

### **Municipal District Restoration Maintenance Works – RM Program**

R448 – Moyle Abby to Inchaquire - complete.

R417 – Levittstown to Maganey - complete

L8008 – Calverstown to Narraghmore - complete

L8069 – Geraldine Clogorow - complete

L4007 – Geraldine road towards Skerries North - complete

L4008 – Gallowshill - complete

L8044 – Moone to Killelan - complete

L8042 – Bolgers Cross to Belan. complete

L8062 – Goulyduff - complete

L4006 – Woodstock North Kilcrow - complete

L4006 – Goulyduff to County Boundary - complete

L8031 – Milltown Cardington - complete

Ballyhade Area - complete

Grading edges of all Restoration Maintenance (RM) roads listed - complete.

### **Local Improvement Schemes**

Grangecoor: Drainage works required, Tender complete

Golf Amenity Area: Tender complete

### **Community Involvement Schemes**

No update for 2024.



## **Footpath Upgrades / Surveys**

Convent Lane – completed.

Ballyroe – Complete.

Kilmead Newline Road – complete.

Kilmead Newline Grove – complete.

Ballitore Main Road and junction – surveying and design works.

Barnhill – Report received and under review.

Surveys are underway in a number of estates.

Prussellstown - complete

Janeville - complete

Installing pedestrian crossing points in Mansfield Grove - complete

Castleroe West - Under construction

Abbeylands Castledermot - Pre tender award clarification.

Crookstown - Pre tender award clarification.

## **Signage Works**

Continuing our update of signage in the Athy Municipal District

Upgrading signage on completed resurfaced roads - ongoing

Signage works R-417 for Tankardstown – completed.

Signage Works R415 Cuckles Corner – completed.

Walterstown junction all signs renewed.

Kilkea signage on approach to bridge – completed.

Installed signs at junction in Burrows, Calverstown - completed

Completed renewing of signage to Corballis Crossroad.

Installed new stop sign in Towns Park, Athy - completed

Commence signage renewal to Barrowhouse Road bend - completed

Repairs carried out to signage on the Tullow Road - complete

Geraldine Cross - completed

Fontstown Crossroads, Pre Tender award clarification stage



## **Road Markings**

Upgrading road junction markings.  
Upgraded road marking in Calverstown Village - complete  
Rheban Manor - complete.  
Kildangan Cross - completed.  
Corballis Cross - completed.  
Barrowhouse Road - completed.  
Convent View - completed.  
All Restoration Maintenance (RM) roads are now completed  
School zones have started in Castledermot  
School Zone, Kilkea to be completed.

## **Drainage Works**

Several villages have had drainage systems cleaned.  
Jetting drainage lines on various roads – ongoing.  
Cleaning gullies – ongoing.  
Carrying out water cuts along roads – ongoing.  
Completed drainage works at Mullaghreelan.  
Completed drainage works at Kilgowan / Usk.  
Drainage works completed at Mullamast.  
Completed drainage works along L4009 Castleroe.  
Installed non-return valve at Abbeylands.  
Completed drainage works to Sweep Lane, Nurney.  
Completed drainage works to all RI roads.

## **Road Patching**

Carrying out patching along various sections. – ongoing.  
Nurney R415 centre line repairs.  
N78 – Athy.



### **Street Sweeping**

Street sweeping to areas – ongoing.

Bin collection – ongoing.

Completed installation of ten new bins along Leinster Street and Duke Street, Athy.

### **Community Works**

Meeting with Nollen Keatley re “Welcome to Castledermot” signs.

### **General Maintenance**

Hedge cutting along Regional Roads.

Hedge Cutting for the Restoration Improvement works - completed

Hedge cutting for the Restoration Maintenance works - completed

Hedge cutting at junctions.

The members raised the following:

- Thanked the Municipal District Engineer and office for all their ongoing works, their attention to detail and how well it was received by the community.

The report was noted.

### **AY04/0924**

#### **Reassignment of LPT**

The members considered the considered the reassignment of LPT 2024.

The LPT Coordinator went through reassignment of the following LPT:

**2024** Reallocation of **€1000** from Kilkea Community (declined) to be reallocated to Greise Youth Theatre.



**2022** Reallocation of **€1,900** from Athy Rugby Club (declined) to be reallocated to the Andrew Amenity Site

**2022** Reallocation of remaining declined monies from Athy Rugby Club of **€200** also to go to Greise group

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Dooley, seconded by Councillor Behan and agreed by all members present that the reassignment of the above mentioned LPT be approved.

#### **AY05/0924**

#### **National Cycle Network (NCN) Road Space Re-allocation Pilot (R448) Moone to Timolin**

To note Section 38 of the Roads Traffic Act, 1994 (as amended) – National Cycle Network (NCN) Road Space Re-allocation Pilot (R448) Moone to Timolin.

Mr D Conlan advised that a lot of the concerns previously raised had been addressed and they were now looking to proceed with the Section 38.

The members raised the following:

- Thanked Mr D Conlan for his work.
- Welcomed this type of infrastructure in the Municipal District.
- There were two existing amenities on this route, a walkway from Timolin to Moone and Fortfield Park. Would pedestrians still be prioritised.
- Concerns were raised around parking at Fortfield Park, which was the home of Moone Celtic Soccer Club, the problem could be exacerbated by this project, this needed to be followed up during the construction stage.
- It was disappointing not to get to vote on the Section 38, as local representatives, the members were the ones who would be held accountable on the outcome of the projects in the Municipal District.
- Concerns were raised by the members of the methodologies employed by TII as there were constraints.



Mr D Conlan reiterated that the intention of the scheme was to be used by both pedestrians and cyclists. He also mentioned that he would be happy to work with the members regarding the parking at the soccer club.

The report was noted.

### **AY06/0924**

#### **Athy town Parking Byelaws**

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Dooley.  
That the council carries out a review of the Athy town Parking Byelaws.

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

A report was received from the Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces Department informing the members that the review of the Athy Parking Bye-Laws is listed on the parking bye-law review schedule for Kildare County Council as previously submitted to all members. Athy Parking Bye-Law review will commence as soon as resources become available. The Transport Department cannot give a specific time frame for the review at this stage.

Councillor Dooley advised that there would be a large reduction in car parking spaces in the town in the next number of weeks and there were areas that needed to be tackled. Firstly the big blue signage to inform people of where parking was located in the town. Secondly the current signage needed to be upgraded to show people that there was free parking on the weekends. Regarding free parking at Christmas, there should not be a change to the parking rules but maybe an alteration to free parking times all year round could be looked at and changed to 30 free minutes.

Councillor Behan noted that she had received many queries regarding the loading bay at Emily square and also expressed that better communication around parking in the town was needed.





Mr M McLoughlin advised that there was no way to amend the current bye laws and the members had to be conscious that works around Emily Square needed to be taken into consideration. He took on board the comments on signage and would look into that.

Councillor Breslin supported the motion, she noted that Athy was currently going through a time of great change and the Public Realm team had committed to moving the loading bay in question. She asked was there a timeframe for the review.

Mr Mr McLoughlin advised that he did not envisage it would be carried out in 2024.

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

#### **AY07/0924**

#### **Speed Reduction Measures at Skenagun and Barnhill**

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

That the council implements speed reduction measures at Skenagun and Barnhill on the R448, Castledermot.

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

A report was received from the Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces Department informing the members that the Municipal District Office are investigating the matter, however, speed is an issue for An Garda Síochána.

Councillor Behan accepted the report. Signage was effective. Speed mitigation measures would be welcome. Could some sort of design feature to help modify driver behaviour. They wanted to encourage walking. There were children walking to school at both locations, some speed mitigation measures would be helpful. She would continue working with An Garda Síochána on the matter.



Councillor Dooley supported the motion and advised that driver behaviour was out of the control of the council but the new electronic signage at Geraldine Cross had proven to be very successful and could work at that area too. Number of fatalities not only in the Municipal District but all across the country. Could they roll out that type of signage across the Municipal District.

Mr K Dunne advised that he would come back to the members with a design.

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

#### **AY08/0924**

##### **Street Lights on the Upgraded Junctions at Fontstown**

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

That the council installs street lights on the upgraded junctions at Fontstown, Athy.

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

A report was received from the Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces Department informing the members that the request will be added to the Kildare Lighting Infrastructure Priority Scheme (KLIPS) register and ranked in accordance with set criteria. The provision of lighting will depend on the request's KLIPs ranking and availability of funds.

Mr M McLoughlin advised the members that the energy upgrade across the county was currently ongoing.

The District Manager advised that he would follow up with Mr D Reel and asked Mr M McLoughlin if he could get an estimated price on works.

Mr M McLoughlin agreed to come back to the members with a price.



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

**AY09/0924**

**Back lanes in Castlepark, Kildangan**

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

That Kildare County Council carries out remedial works to the back lanes in Castlepark, Kildangan.

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

A report was received from the Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces Department informing the members that the Municipal District Office will review and add this to the maintenance list.

Councillor A Breslin thanked the Municipal District Office for the report and noted that monies had previously been set aside and a list of lanes had been identified a number of years ago, could the Municipal District office look to put together a new list of lanes that needed upgrade works.

Councillor Behan agreed and advised that anti social behaviour had become an issue on some of the back lanes in question. They were overgrown and under cared for.

Mr K Dunne agreed to do up a list of backlanes which required remedial works and come back to the members.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Breslin and seconded by Councillor Behan that the report be noted.



### **AY10/0924**

#### **Road Repair of the Junction at the Three Counties, Maganey**

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

That the council carries out repainting and road repair of the junction at the Three Counties, Maganey.

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

A report was received from the Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces Department informing the members that this junction is part of the low-cost accident scheme and work will be carried out once a design is completed.

Councillor Behan asked that the line markings on this road be repainted as it was a busy junction.

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

### **AY11/0924**

#### **Junction and footpath works in Ballitore**

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

Can the council update members on progress of junction and footpath works in Ballitore to include the main village and Cockpit Lane?

A report was received from the Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces Department informing the members that the design is complete and is currently being reviewed.

The report was noted.

The members took item 13 and 14 together.



## **AY12/0924**

### **Streetlights at Duke Street**

#### **Item 13**

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

Can the council explain why streetlights have not been fixed in Duke Street, Athy for over 3 months?

#### **Item 14 - Public lighting in Athy**

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

Can the council confirm when the public lighting will be repaired in the town of Athy given that large areas ie Duke Street, Greenhills, Townspark, Carbury Park, have been left without public lighting for several weeks and explain why repair work has taken so long?

A report was received from the Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces Department informing the members that when the new public lighting maintenance contractor started to work on July 15th, they inherited a backlog of 464 faults. Electricity Supply Board (ESB) also requires that electricians be audited before they are allowed to work on ESB network poles. Newly appointed electricians must spend at least six months with their employer before they can attend a course which will enable them to work on the ESB Network lights. The contractor has made progress, with active faults now reduced to 313.

The members raised the following:

- This was a huge issue and lots of complaints had been made.
- Duke Street had been blacked out all Summer and the members had been inundated with questions as to why.
- People felt unsafe walking there at night.
- Could it be prioritised.
- How were the previous contractors allowed to leave such a backlog of work.
- Duke Street had been an issue for some time.
- Issues with lighting in Greenhills had been reported around six times in the past two years.



Mr M McLoughlin took on board the members comments and advised that the reason for the delay was that the previous contractor pulled out of the Irish market. As the report stated the new contractor was currently working through the backlog and they would be back to less than 1%.

The report was noted.

### **AY13/0924**

#### **Lighting in Rural areas with housing clusters**

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Dooley.  
Can the council outline its policy for lighting in Rural areas with housing clusters?

A report was received from the Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces Department informing the members that generally, Kildare County Council does not light rural areas, but each lighting request is assessed based on the Kildare Lighting Infrastructure Priority Scheme (KLIPS) criteria. The nature of the scoring system determines that rural areas will invariably get very low rankings.

Councillor Dooley suggested that solar led lighting be looked at in these types of rural areas and asked if an estimated price could be provided. Lighting in these areas would help older and vulnerable residents feel safe.

Mr M McLoughlin advised that they would not be keen on that type of lighting in rural areas.

The report was noted.



## **AY14/0924**

### **Electrical car charging points in Meeting Lane**

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

Can the council outline the reasons why the electrical car charging points in Meeting Lane Car Park in Athy have been out of commission for over 3 months and when will they be back in operation?

A report was received from the Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces Department informing the members that the EV charging points at Meeting Lane are included in a forthcoming tender and will become operational again once this process is completed. He was hopeful they would be in operation before the end of the year.

Councillor Breslin stated that it was a great mystery as to why there weren't working and asked for clarification as to what occurred. Thanked Mr M McLoughlin for the report and requested a timeframe.

Mr M McLoughlin advised that there had been some anomalies so they were turned off. There was currently a tender being carried out and that when the chargers were operational it would be with a fee.

Councillor Breslin stated that a number of people relied on those charging points and soon a large number of car parking spaces would be gone from the town and asked that they come back with a timeline.

The District Manager advised that transport were carrying out a countywide EV charging programme and that the overall approach would be looked at through the Transport SPC.

The report was noted.



### **AY15/0924**

#### **Parking Plan for Castledermot**

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Behan  
Can the council confirm if a parking plan will be developed for Castledermot?

A report was received from the Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces Department informing the members that Castledermot is listed on the Parking Bye-Law review schedule for Kildare County Council as previously submitted to all members. The making of Castledermot Parking Bye-Laws will commence as soon as resources become available. The Transport Department cannot give a specific time frame for the review at this stage.

Councillor Behan advised that each of the councillors had received complaints on this issue, especially parking at the playground in Castledermot. She noted that the parking warden had recently been giving tickets and felt as though it was disingenuous as there were no byelaws in Castledermot. There were also bus stops there, a park and ride facility was needed in the area. What was the timeline for the parking plan.

Mr M McLoughlin advised that just because there were no parking bye laws in Castledermot did not mean it was a free for all and people could park anywhere. He would speak offline with the councillors regarding the parking at the playground.

The report was noted.

### **AY16/0924**

#### **Suspension of the Parking Byelaws at Meeting Lane**

The members considered the suspension of the Parking Byelaws, relevant to particular parking bays at Meeting Lane, to facilitate ESB works necessary for the Shackleton Museum and Emily Square projects.





**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Breslin and seconded by Councillor Dooley that the Parking Byelaws, relevant to particular parking bays at Meeting Lane, to facilitate ESB works necessary for the Shackleton Museum and Emily Square projects be suspended.

#### **AY17/0924**

##### **Traffic Calming Measures to allow Traffic Flow at the Junction of Barrow Quay**

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

That the council, with works ongoing in both Emily Square and at the Shackleton Museum, puts in place traffic calming measures to allow traffic flow at the junction of Barrow quay and traffic lights at the Junction of Emily Square Athy.

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

A report was received from the Strategic Projects and Public Realm Department informing the members that the Shackleton Museum and Emily Square projects are progressing in what is a very condensed space in the centre of town. Both projects were deferred until the opening of the Athy Distributor Road was completed, to assist with the flow of traffic in the town. The Athy Distributor Road provides alternative routes for people living, working and visiting the town without the need to access the town centre. The work programme of both projects has been carefully managed and is continuously monitored to ensure delivery in the shortest reasonable timeframe. The Strategic Projects and Public Realm Team, the Municipal District Office and the contractors work closely together to minimise disruption in the town centre and will continue to do so until both projects are completed in 2025.

The members raised the following:

- Thanked Ms A Keaveney and the Public Realm team for the huge body of work they were undertaking in Athy.
- Traffic turning at Barrow Quay was a huge issue. This needed to be addressed now.
- The level of development currently ongoing in the town was causing congestion, especially in the morning at Barrow Quay.
- Could the sequence on the traffic lights be looked at for the mornings.



- Several capital projects ongoing meaning that many construction workers were coming into the town every day.
- Over 40 million had been spent on the Athy Distributor Road yet HGV's were still using the town.
- Planned on bringing a motion to ban HGVs in the town.
- Had been liasing with Mr D Conlan and Mr K Dunne on the issue around HGVs.
- Could the sequence on traffic lights be changed for the full day, not only in the morning.
- The outcome of this project would deliver a comprehensive upgrade of the square.

The District Manager reminded the members that there was a huge body of work happening in Athy Municipal District at the moment and to keep the narrative positive.

Ms A Keaveney advised that in the long run they would look at signalising, cost for the design, waiting on TII to come back to them. Would talk to Mr J Walsh in the meantime.

Mr D Conlan advised that it would be logical to implement some sort of HGV ban.

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

#### **AY18/0924**

#### **Pet Policy in AHB over 55 Units**

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

That Kildare County Council calls on AHB's to reconsider their policy on not allowing pets ie dogs in their over 55's units in the Athy Municipal District.

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



A report was received informing the members that the Housing Department has engaged with the relevant AHB on this matter and a response is awaited, once received an update will issue to the Members.

Councillor Breslin thanked the Housing Department for the report and advised that she had been liaising with the SEO to work on this. There was one AHB in particular that didn't allow pets. It was unfair on the older residents. Dogs and pets were a great comfort and company for older people.

Councillor Behan noted that pets supported older residents and had a positive effect on mental health. She also mentioned that due to the rule of no pets, a lot of animals had be brought to shelters and it was a very sad situation for people to have to give up pets.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Breslin and seconded by Councillor Behan that the report be noted.

#### **AY19/0924**

#### **Taking in Charge of Castleraven, Nurney**

The members considered the taking in charge of Castleraven, Nurney, Co Kildare.

A report had previously been circulated to the members for their consideration.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Dooley, seconded by Councillor Behan and agreed by all members that Castleraven, Nurney be taken in charge.

#### **AY20/0924**

#### **Taking in Charge of Castlewood, Kilkea**

The members considered the taking in charge of Castlewood, Kilkea, Co Kildare.



A report had previously been circulated to the members for their consideration.

Councillor Breslin thanked Ms S Walsh and praised the team for the huge body of work. She noted that extra staff resources put in that section had been a key factor in the teams progress.

The District Manager also thanked the Building and Development Control team for their great work especially on the legacy estates.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Leigh, seconded by Councillor Behan and agreed by all members that Castlewood, Kilkea be taken in charge.

#### **AY21/0924**

#### **Ownership of White's Castle**

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

That the council looks at ways of bringing White's Castle into the ownership of the people of Athy.

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

A report was received from the District Manager informing the members that the members will be aware of the significant capital programme for the Athy Municipal District that will see over €14 Million euros invested in the Municipal District over the period 2024 – 2026 across a number of projects including the Shackleton Experience (construction ongoing), Emily Square (construction commenced), the Food and Drinks Innovation and Skills Hub in the old Model School (construction ongoing) and the Athy Flood Relief Scheme (at design stage). These projects are in addition to a significant housing programme in the Municipal District, including at Andrew Halting Site, the Dominican Lands in Athy, the old Garda Station and Tanyard in Ballitore, Canalside in Athy and others and also to the recently completed Athy Distributor Road, proposed upgrades to Leinster and Duke Streets and the



provision of amenity and sports facilities at the Ardrew Lands in Athy, which is the agreed priority project for the term of the current Municipal District.

Notwithstanding the above, Kildare County Council has noted the potential / recent establishment of an historic trust in Athy to explore opportunities for bringing White's Castle into the ownership of the people of Athy. The current Athy Local Area Plan contains many policies that serve to support the protection and enhancement of the castle (and all other protected structures) and as such the council will provide any assistance possible to present or future owners of the castle with a view to ensuring it remains a significant part of the landscape of the town.

Councillor M Leigh advised that preserving White's Castle would honour the town's history and provide a tangible connection to the past for future generations. The roof and battlements needed immediate attention and scaffolding needed to be erected as soon as possible. There were also cracks on the riverbank wall and a huge crack over the front door and one of the chimneys looked like it was about to crumble. The castle had been in private ownership for 40 years. A conservation report was needed. A trust or a government agency would have the level of expertise required. To have this in the ownership of the people of Athy would be great, along with the Shackleton museum. He also mentioned that the castle was built in 1527 and it was coming up to its 500 year anniversary. There was never a better time to highlight the importance of the castle.

Councillor Behan advised that she had spoken with the OPW a number of years ago and asked that the council liaise with the OPW on the matter.

Councillor Dooley supported the motion and mentioned that many clubs and organisations in Athy had the castle in their crest. He asked that a meeting be arranged with the owners of the castle. Purchasing the building might not be at an unreasonable cost. It could be repurposed over the next 5 to 10 years. National and international investment could be looked at.



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

#### **AY22/0924**

#### **Future of “The Freedom of the Water” barge**

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

Can the council update members on the future of “The Freedom of the Water” barge in Athy?

A report was received from the Local Enterprise Office informing the members that In quarter 2 of 2024 the “The Freedom of the Water” barge in Athy underwent an engineering assessment to determine its river worthiness

Given the costs associated with putting it back on the river, it was agreed that all parties who previously expressed an interest in operating the vessel back in 2023 were invited to purchase the vessel for a fixed sum. Submissions have been evaluated by an independent panel and scored as follows:

- Applicant has capacity (or access to finance or eligible for funding) to repair and upgrade the vessel
- Applicant is active in tourism industry and likely to operate tourism business in the Athy area
- Tourism operator has marketing plan and awareness of Shackleton Museum offering
- Operator has a relevant qualification indicating capacity to become a trainer for future boat captains, or likely to permit vessel to be used for education/training locally.

As agreed by the elected members and following this process, a preferred operator has been identified to purchase the vessel on the basis that it is purchased as seen, will be removed and repaired / upgraded in a reasonable timeframe and most importantly will remain in operation in the Athy area as a tourism offering for the town.



Councillor Leigh was happy with the positive report and was hopeful it would be operational for the Spring/Summer 2025 season to coincide with the opening of the Shackleton Museum.

The report was noted.

### **AY23/0924**

#### **Mature Trees in areas such as Crookstown Cemetery**

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Behan.  
Can the council confirm if they have a plan to deal with mature trees in areas such as Crookstown Cemetery?

A report was received informing the members that the Environment Department has had no prior report of issues with trees in Crookstown and will look into the matter.

Any works required to trees of any age in parks, open spaces and estates are dealt with by the Parks Section through the annual tree works programme. All requests we get in relation to trees are recorded during the year and then inspected to see what works if any maybe needed and then tendered for a tree surgery company to carry out the works.

Councillor Behan advised that she had sent in many CRMs on trees in the Municipal District. Firstly a mature tree up against a boundary wall at Paddocks Estate which was quite tall and close to properties. Issues also with trees at the Peoples Park and also large trees at Grangemellon, Athy blocking light. The main issue was that the large trees needed to be pruned back throughout the Municipal District.

The District Manager asked Councillor Behan to send on the list of areas and he would forward it to the Parks team.

The report was noted.



The Cathaoirleach and members each wished Mr C Forrest of the Kildare Nationalist all the best on his new career.

The Cathaoirleach wished to express congratulations on behalf of the members to Aaron Shorten and Amy Larn from the Athy Municipal District on their recent attendance at the Paralympics and Olympics in Paris.

The meeting concluded.