



**Wicklow County Council
Chomhairle Chontae Chill Mhantáin**

ARKLOW MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11th NOVEMBER 2015.

Present: Cllr. Sylvester Bourke, Cathaoirleach
Cllr. Tommy Annesley
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald
Cllr. Pat Kennedy
Cllr. Mary McDonald
Cllr. Miriam Murphy

Officials Present: Mr. M. Geaney, A/District Manager
Mr. J. Kelly, District Engineer
Ms. L. McDonald, District Administrator

Item 1: Confirmation of Minutes

It was proposed by Cllr. M. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald and agreed to confirm and sign the minutes of meeting of Arklow Municipal District held on the 14th October 2015.

Item 2: Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Item 3: Presentation on Local Authority Housing in the AMD

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Sylvester Bourke welcomed Mr. Joe Lane, Director of Housing & Corporate Estate and Breege Kilkenny Senior Engineer to the meeting. Cllr. Bourke outlined the current housing crisis in Arklow in relation to lack of housing, overcrowding and homelessness.

Other concerns raised by the Members were:-

- The length of time taken to relet vacant houses.
- Wicklow County Councils policy on the sale of vacant houses.
- Tenants paying rent but houses not being maintained to the standards required.

- It was noted that only eight houses were built in Arklow during the period 2012 to 2014
- Members asked why the Homeless Officer held clinics in Bray and Blessington but not in Arklow.
- Concerns re the number of pending repossessions in Arklow on privately owned properties.
- A lot of money has been spent on the Emoclew site in the past by ATC but still no houses have been built.
- Lack of budgets for central heating programmes and window and door replacements.
- Status of fabric upgrade works.
- The members asked about the process involved if a developer wished to sell new houses to the Council.
- The Members are fearful that the lack of sewerage treatment plant in Arklow was holding up future building of houses.
- It was suggested that the construction of smaller units for one or two persons be considered by the Council in order to free up two and three bedroom units.
- The Members acknowledged the work being done by the staff both in AMD and the housing section of Wicklow County Council.

Breege Kilkenny outlined the central heating programme and stated that there were currently approximately 150 houses in the AMD without central heating. She suggested that as there will be no budget for 2016 to provide central heating that the members of each Municipal District consider setting aside a small amount from their discretionary funding for same.

In relation to the building of social housing in Arklow Ms. Kilkenny stated that Arklow had not been forgotten – houses being built in Rathdrum. The members were informed that the construction of social housing at Brewery Bends in Rathdrum will commence in 2016. Wicklow County Council are in discussions with the department in relation to the construction of social housing on the Emoclew site. It was agreed that the Architects would update the Members on this scheme at the January/February meeting.

It was acknowledged that the Housing Maintenance budget was not adequate for the county and that window and door replacements don't fall into general repairs. The Members were informed that it was proposed to increase the Housing Repair budget by 5% for 2016. It was noted that about 100 houses would be included in a fabric upgrade (Phase 1) by the end of 2015; these would be mainly in the rural area. Phase 1 includes attic insulation, draught proofing and cavity wall insulation. Phase 2, when introduced, will include windows and doors.

The Director of Housing reminded the Members that the full Council agreed the current construction programme for the county. He also stated that WCC would be interested in purchasing blocks of four houses from private developers. Mr. Joe Lane stated no information in relation to allocations will be passed to Councillors unless written permission is received from the applicant due to data protection legislation.

It was noted that the reason for delays in allocating relets is due to the fact that they have to be brought up to certain standards before reletting. A new national tenant purchase scheme is due from the department any day now. In relation to Part V housing it was noted that WCC want units rather than land of money.

The Cathaoirleach thanked the Director M. Lane and the Senior Engineer Ms. Kilkenny for attending the meeting.

Item 4: Presentation from Lorcan O'Toole on Arklow Harbour

Cllr. Bourke welcomed Mr. O'Toole to the meeting and asked what business could be brought to Arklow Port. Lorcan stated that dredging was not completed but large ships could be brought in if this work was to be completed. He stated that a narrow piece of silt 3-4 meters wide from 1st to 2nd pier causing problems – employ large boat to plough it out. Arklow Marine Services cannot repair large ships which would bring a large amount of employment to the town. Lack of interest from Marine Development Group in Wicklow County Council to develop Arklow Port which has deeper water close to shore, more land, good for ferry service. The Members of AMD offered their support to Mr. O'Toole on the issues raised.

Item 5: To consider a Garden of Remembrance Initiative for the AMD

It was suggested that a portion of the Memorial Park, in Rathdrum be used to provide a Garden of Remembrance for the AMD and Cllr. Pat Kennedy agreed to contact the Rathdrum Development Group in relation to same and report back to the Members at the next meeting.

Item 6: Update on progress of the following projects:

(1) Bridge Street Junction –

Linda McDonald advised the Members that work on this project will commence on the 23rd November and end of the 19th January 2016. For the Christmas period 11th December to 4th January the works will cease. All the underground work will be done before Christmas and the over ground (footpaths and surfacing) after Christmas. It was also noted that this work is to be undertaken at night.

Cllr Tommy Annesley stated it would be detrimental to the town to have such works going on at this time of year and could work not be shelved until January 2016. Mr. Michael Geaney, A/District Manager stated that it was imperative that the works go ahead as funding would be lost. Mr. Jack Kelly, District Engineer stated there was no choice but to commence.

(2) South Green and Harbour Road Works

Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald stated that road users were using the Brook to access onto South Quay. Cllr. Mary McDonald stated that the closed road sign was on Harbour Road to South Quay. Cllr. Sylvester Bourke requested that this sign to be removed. Cllr. Tommy Annesley stated that people were still turning down South Quay. Mr. Jack Kelly, District Engineer stated that road markings will be undertaken soon.

Cllr. Mary McDonald asked about road markings on Harbour Road/Tinahask, Mr. Kelly advised the Members that he would look into this.

Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald said that the residents of Harbour Road were not happy with the response to claims re damage caused to their properties. Linda McDonald advised that all claims have been forwarded to Irish Water and are being dealt with accordingly.

(3) Arklow Christmas Festival Committee

The District Administrator gave the following update:-

A number of Churches and Schools within the District have given their details of Christmas events for inclusion on the Christmas Festival website.

The Christmas Market will take place on Sunday 13th December and has been relocated to the River Walk area of the town.

The Art Competition is well underway and over 2000 entry forms are in the process of being delivered to all national schools in the AMD.

Ms. McDonald advised that the Christmas Festival Committee wished to thank the Members of AMD for their additional contribution towards the payment of the Christmas Lights for Arklow Town.

Item 7: Update on 2015 Roads Programme for the AMD

Jack Kelly District Engineer gave the following update on the Roads programme for AMD.

- All road strengthening works in the Arklow Municipal District are complete.
- All surface dressing works in the Arklow Municipal District are complete.
- Discretionary Works – Work commenced on the new footpath on the Avoca Road, Rathdrum last week.
- The two Low Cost safety Schemes are now complete.
- Community Involvement Schemes. The schemes at Ballinaskea, Arklow and at Kilcarra are complete. The scheme at Moneyteigue is due to start on Monday next the 16th November.

Item 8: Survey for footpaths on Wexford Road

The Members agreed to discuss this matter in more detail when considering the Schedule of Municipal District Works for 2016.

Item 9: Proposed Road Traffic (speed limit) County of Wicklow Bye Laws

The Members considered the report circulated on the Proposed Road Traffic (speed limit) County of Wicklow Bye Laws prepared by the Roads Section of Wicklow County Council and agreed to approve recommendation to proceed with the adoption of the proposed bye-laws. Proposed by Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald and seconded by Cllr. Pat Kennedy.

Item 10: Finance – To consider spending remaining Discretionary Funding

Following the consideration of requests received for funding the Members agreed to make the following contributions from the remaining funds from the Festival Funding, Economic Development Funding, Environment/Community Fund and Capital codes

- Woodenbridge Ballycoogue Walk Committee – proposed amount €900.00.
- Rathdrum Business Group – Promotional Brochure – proposed amount €900.00.
- Avoca Tapestry Project – proposed amount €850.00.
- Thomas Moore Project – Upkeep of Park – proposed amount €500.00.
- Street Light at Croomie Lane, Arklow. €2,500
- Arklow Chamber of Commerce (REDZ Project) €15,100.91

Item 11: To discuss the procedure for notifying communities about planning applications for large scale industrial developments

It was agreed to defer this item until the December Meeting.

Item 12: Correspondence

- **Marsh Committee** – Correspondence received requesting a meeting with the Members of AMD, Cllr. Sylvester Bourke suggested meeting the Committee before the District meeting in January.
- **A copy of letter received from Irish Water** in relation to an update on the site selection process for the Arklow Sewerage Scheme was circulated to the Members for their information.
- **Letter received from Patrick Mangan Chief Superintendent** advising that previous correspondence from the Members in relation to the appointment of additional Gardai in Aughrim has been forwarded to the Superintendent in Wicklow.
- **Letter received from the Residents of Woodlands Park** expressing their concerns over the lack of ramps in the area. Mr. Jack Kelly, District Engineer gave a brief outline of the consultation process undertaken by the District during the summer. It was noted that out of 300 letters delivered approximately 30 submissions were received and while half of same wanted ramps the other half did not. Mr. Kelly advised that each ramp costs approximately €5,000. The matter can be reconsidered at the Schedule of Municipal District Works meeting.
- **Correspondence from Andrew Doyle T.D.** was read out in relation to alternative routes for HGVs travelling from Lower Tinahask to Liam Mellow's Ave. Linda McDonald also advised the Members that the Director of Roads has advised that "It is not possible to direct a specific company operation to use a particular route under roads legislation. Proposals for traffic management can be dealt with as

part of the planning process but outside of that the only options would be to restrict all HGV movements and the effects of this on employment and trade would need to be considered carefully prior to any action.”

- **Correspondence from David Jenkins** in relation to the possibility of Arklow Twinning with Aberystwyth in Wales was read out. Cllr. Tommy Annesley informed the Members that a subcommittee of the existing Twinning Committee would be established to deal with this twinning.

Item 12: Any Other Business

- Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald welcomed the commencement of coastal protection at South Beach.

Minutes confirmed at meeting held on Wednesday 9th December 2015

Signed: Cllr. Sylvester Bourke

Cllr. Sylvester Bourke
Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District

Signed: Linda McDonald

Linda McDonald
District Administrator