



**Wicklow County Council
Chomhairle Chontae Chill Mhantáin**

ARKLOW MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8th NOVEMBER 2017

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

Officials Present: Mr. Michael Geaney, District Manager
Ms. Linda McDonald, District Administrator
Mr. Jack Kelly, District Engineer
Ms. Carmel Hecker, Clerical Officer

Paul Conlon – Vision Landscape Solutions

Item 1 - Vote of Sympathy:

The Members expressed votes of sympathy to the families of the following, who recently passed away:

Joe Byrne, Mary Nolan, Bridie Murphy, Elizabeth Humphries, Jim Tyrrell, Eamonn McDonald, Sean Kenny, Margaret Kennedy, David McAllister, Ken Doyle, Paddy Currid, Scott Fredericks, May Nolan, Alison O'Neill.

A minutes silence was observed.

Item 2 – Confirmation of Minutes of the Arklow Municipal District Meeting, held on the 12th of July 2017.

The Minutes of the Arklow Municipal District Meeting held on the 18th October 2017 were proposed by Cllr Bourke and seconded by Cllr Murphy.

Item 3 – Matters Arising:

Cllr Kennedy requested a ten minute discussion on the National Planning Framework at the end of the meeting. The Members agreed to this request.

Item 4: To receive a presentation on the proposed redevelopment of the Parade Ground.

Paul Conlon – Vision Landscape Solutions gave a presentation on the plan for the redevelopment of the Parade Ground. The overhaul is to include the area between Bank of Ireland and St. Mary's Road. He said that the area was car dominated and did not encourage tourism. He also suggested highlighting the Ormonde Castle wall as a feature. The members said the area would provide an ideal public space for future community and outdoor events and welcomed the design of the project. All said it would be possible and that a phased development could be considered starting with the courthouse area. All agreed that the plan should go out to a public consultation process to get the views of the community.

Item 5 : To receive an update on the Roads Programme 2017.

Jack Kelly gave his report and said that works were currently underway at Castlemacadam and that there would be two improvement schemes coming up with one to start before the end of next week. Cllr Kennedy said that the roads in the Ballycoogue area are in a very bad state and Jack Kelly replied that repairs would hopefully start there next week, using two contractors and the works should be completed by Christmas. Cllr Annesley agreed that they were in a bad state.

Jack Kelly said that the value of the works carried out on the footpaths was in the region of €40,000 with AMD contributing €8,000 and the balance was a goodwill contribution from Moriarty's. Cllr Fitzgerald said it was a great job.

Item 6: To discuss the future of the Coastal Path Walk in Arklow.

Cllr Fitzgerald proposed that the coastal walk be closed in the interests of public safety and Cllr Bourke seconded this. Cllr Fitzgerald said that tar should not be laid there again. Cllr Kennedy expressed concerns that signage would not be enough to keep the public off the walkway and he would be concerned that small children would try and use the path. Cllr Fitzgerald said that it was not accessible to wheelchairs. Cllr Annesley stated that he would be reluctant to close the walk and this issue should remain on the agenda as it would be a shame to lose this precious amenity and was aware that safety was paramount at this stage. Cllr Murphy said that the signs would need to be large.

Cllr Fitzgerald also mentioned that following the storm sand had built up around the South Quay area and cars were getting stuck. Jack Kelly DE said he would look in to it.

Item 7: To update the Members on the AMD Revenue Expenditure for 2017.

Ms McDonald DA circulated the report to the members. Queries were raised re the income generated by the pay parking scheme while it was noted that 98% of the budget for the operation of the pay parking scheme was spent. It was pointed out that this expenditure covers the cost of Parkrite, leasing of the machines and signage. She also mentioned that 3 new machines are needed and the operation of the scheme is currently out to tender. Ms Donald DA said that AMD do not see any of the income from parking fines and that the income on parking fines had dropped. A copy of the figures per district would be requested.

It was noted that 82% of the street cleaning budget was spent. Cllr Annesley said that the town has a serious litter problem at the moment and he commented on the lack of bins along the Main St to Ferrybank. Jack Kelly DE undertook to note the number of litter bins in the town and their location. Cllr Annesley asked that he also check that they were in the right places.

Cllr Bourke asked if there was funding still available on the graveyard maintenance code could AMD get an external contractor in to clean up St Gabriel's Cemetery. Ms McDonald said funding had been set aside for the repairs on the Abbey Graveyard and the repairs to the collapsed wall. Jack Kelly DE said that the owner had been contacted and that the budgeted funds pay for the caretaking of the graveyard. Cllr Fitzgerald said that the old part of St Gabriel's was in bad condition and the grass is very difficult to cut. The new part isn't as bad but the trees need cutting. Is there any grant scheme available as the caretaker is currently out sick which has led to further neglect and it is understood that an employment scheme is not possible. He said he was not casting aspersions on council staff. He said volunteers are doing what they can.

Item 8: Staffing levels in Arklow Municipal District (indoor and outdoor).

Cllr Annesley informed the members that he had noticed that the DA had to man the front desk on Friday last due to lack of staff and that more staff was needed indoor and outdoor. Michael Geaney DM said staff moves should be happening from next Monday. Cllr Fitzgerald asked why nothing had progressed with getting the landline back to Arklow rather than the calls going to Wicklow first and Michael Geaney DM said that he had raised this and it is a work in progress and the issue should be resolved sooner rather than later. Cllr. Fitzgerald said that there was no means of contact for staff working in Arklow in the event of an emergency. Cllr Kennedy said this has been very frustrating, especially for the elderly and someone needs to take responsibility for this.

Cllr Kennedy asked when would the vacancy in Rathdrum be filled – the previous staff member had retired in April. Jack Kelly DE said that two people on the panel had turned the post down and HR hope to have the matter resolved by Christmas.

Item 9: To discuss traffic the recent Business Information Meeting held on the 19th October 2017

Ms McDonald said that the information meeting unfortunately clashed with the meeting in Aughrim about the proposed greenway from Shillelagh to Arklow.

The event was held on the 19th October in the Arklow Bay Hotel. In addition to the talk by David Fitzsimons of Retail Excellence Ireland, there was a presentation on commercial rates, online trading vouchers for retailers and a presentation on Age Friendly Business at this event.

Attendees on the night were very impressed with the presentation given by David Fitzsimons Chief Executive of Retail Excellence Ireland which provided an insight on how to survive and thrive in retail and learn how changing consumer behaviour will impact retail in the future. It also highlighted what retailers must do to remain relevant and who is winning in retail and why.

Item 10: To discuss actions from Town Team presentation held on the 25th October 2017.

a) The introduction of a painting grant scheme.

Cllr Annesley said he was disappointed with the attendance of councillors at the last Town Team meeting. It had been proposed to introduce a painting grant scheme to encourage business owners to maintain properties on the Main St. Cllr Fitzgerald said that the discretionary funding needed to be increased for the district. Jack Kelly DE said that a figure would need to be proposed – say €30,000.

Ms McDonald said that vacant/ Derelict properties needed to be cleaned up and Cllr Fitzgerald said that 90% of these properties were with NAMA and the owners no longer had control over them. It was agreed that the members need to agree on a scheme that would work for the town.

b) To explore the possibility of WCC purchasing 56 Main St.Arklow.

Jack Kelly DE said that the Town Team would not be in a position to purchase and that it may be possible for WCC to purchase it by borrowing with approval from the CE. Cllr Annesley said that the plan would be to demolish the building and create an amenity space and it would not be an option for housing. Cllr Fitzgerald said that the discussion should be deferred to the January meeting as active negotiations were underway on the possible sale of this property.

c) Letter to issue to owners of run down/vacant properties in Arklow Town.

Cllr Annesley asked who would take on this task as AMD staff were already overloaded. Jack Kelly DE said the letter should be considerate and just request that the owners paint their premises. Cllr McDonald proposed that this could be looked at again in January.

Item 11: To receive an update on the following –

a) Abbey Graveyard

Jack Kelly DE said that two quotes had been received for these works and one more was due in. It is hoped that the works would begin shortly and be completed in 3/4 weeks.

b) Arklow Town Team

Covered by Item 10.

c) Arklow Courthouse

It was noted that the fire assessment report was awaited. This report will then determine the scope and cost of the works to be carried out.

d) Coastal Protection Works on the North beach

Covered by Item 6.

e) Halloween Festival

Cllr Annesley said the festival was a big success and everyone deserved a clap on the back. He thanked Rob and the AMD staff for their hard work. Cllr Fitzgerald said he had never seen anything like it before and that it would be bigger and better next year and it was a great boost for the town.

f) Christmas Festival

Ms McDonald said that the lights would be turned on in the town on the 25th November and the Christmas market would be held on the 9th December in the park. Leaflets would be delivered to householders and signs erected on the approach roads into town.

g) Rathdrum Square

Ms McDonald said that the sculpture was with the foundry to be cast. There also needed to be a follow up with the ESB in relation to public lighting connection.

Item 12: Notices of Motions:

In the name of Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald

- a) *“ That funding is allocated as soon as possible for a pedestrian crossing at the point where residents including many young schoolchildren exit from Woodlands on the Coolgreaney Road” (Received 31st August 2017)*

Cllr Fitzgerald said that the road was too narrow at Woodlands for a footpath.

The District Engineer Jack Kelly stated that he had already submitted an application for the funding of a Pedestrian Crossing at this location under the Low Cost Safety Schemes for 2018. Because of the narrowness of the footpath pedestrians from Woodlands have to cross over to the other side of the road.

In the name of Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald

- b) *“ That remedial works are carried out as soon as possible on the footpath that runs from number 2 to number 8 Templeraíney, Arklow.” (Received 26th September 2017)*

The District Engineer Jack Kelly stated that he had examined the footpath in front of No 2 to No 8 Templeraíney Heights, Arklow. It is in reasonable condition and accordingly is recommending that it is not included for works in 2018

Cllr Annesley requested all members to submit notices of motions for future meetings.

Item 13: Correspondence.

There was no correspondence to be discussed.

Item 14 : Any Other Business.

Ms McDonald said that information on the proposed CCTV scheme for Arklow town had been circulated and was now on public display.

The Town Team were being considered for an award at the upcoming Bank of Ireland Enterprising Town Awards in Tullamore and AMD were shortlisted for an award by Chambers Ireland for the George Campbell project celebrating the centenary of his birth in Arklow.

The 2018 Polish visit was discussed and it was agreed that a formal invitation should now issue to the Mayor of Ruda Śląska for May 24th 2018.

Cllr Bourke said that the residents of Abbey St wanted the ramps removed. Jack Kelly DE suggested that the residents write in with their request and that it would probably cost as much to remove the ramps as it was to put them in and would come from discretionary funding.

Cllr Kennedy said that overgrown hedges were a problem in the Rathdrum area and Jack Kelly DE said he would need a list of the landowners in order to serve notice on them. Cllr Kennedy said that car and lorry mirrors were being knocked off.

Cllr Kennedy asked if the Ballinaclash Road junction was on the priority list and Michael Geaney said this had been raised previously. Cllr Kennedy asked if it would come under Low Cost Safety funding and Jack Kelly said that the cost would be substantial and that a rough design was already in place. Cllr Kennedy asked if funding for the design stage would be also required.

Cllr Fitzgerald said that the proposed free parking over the Christmas period would mean that cars would park on Main St all day which would affect business and this needs to be

reviewed. Ms McDonald suggested that free parking be restricted to the car parks only. The members agreed to this proposal.

Cllr Kennedy raised issues with the Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (closing date Friday 10th November). He said that if implemented it would destroy rural life in Wicklow and prevent people from making their homes in the county and would affect farmers giving land to their children to build. Rural Wicklow will become a holiday destination for Dubliners and people should live where they work. All of the members agreed and Cllr Bourke said that the plan was contradictory in giving grants to rural areas. Cllr Annesley suggested writing to the Dail deputies and Cllr Kennedy said that rights were being taken away and that all members should protest. He encouraged all members to e-mail the Dail deputies.

Minutes confirmed at the Arklow Municipal District Council Meeting held on Wednesday the 13th December 2017.

Signed: Cllr. Tommy Annesley, Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District.

Signed: Ms. Linda McDonald, Arklow Municipal District Administrator