

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF ARKLOW MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 9TH JULY 2014**

Members Present: Cathaoirleach Pat Fitzgerald
Cllr. T. Annesley, Cllr. S. Bourke, Cllr. P. Kennedy,
Cllr. M. Murphy, Cllr. M McDonald,

Officials Present: Mr. Michael Nicholson, Director of Service Housing
Mr. M. Geaney, A/District Manager
Ms. Linda McDonald, District Administrator
Mr. Jack Kelly, Municipal District Engineer
Mr. Ruairi Hanlon, Arklow Area Engineer
Mr. Sean Dunne, Executive Technician
Ms. Annette O'Donovan, Staff Officer

1. Confirmation of minutes of the meeting of the Arklow Municipal District held on the 13th June 2014.

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Arklow Municipal District held on the 13th June 2014 were confirmed, proposed by Cllr. Sylvester Bourke and seconded by Cllr. Miriam Murphy.

2. Presentation on Housing from Michael Nicholson, Director of Services

Mr. Michael Nicholson gave a presentation on Housing to the Members and stated that there is a housing crisis in the country at present. He made the following points in relation to housing in County Wicklow.

- There is no new building taking place and County Wicklow has no ghost estates from which to take stock. The Government has introduced a special measure for the retrofitting of void properties and are also focussing on energy efficiency works. The Department is granting permission for one-off builds for special cases, three have been granted in the County, two of the families have health issues.
- County Wicklow has land banks and talks are ongoing with Developers with a view to building and leasing back the properties for ten years to the Council. No planning applications have been received to date.
- On the issue of leasing from private Landlords, there has been no response to advertisements in the local papers.
- On the 1st January 2015 the Housing Assistance Payment will transfer to the County Council. The present rate of assistance is not enough to cover the rent charged in County Wicklow. In January those in receipt of rent supplement will be considered as having their housing needs met and will be removed from the housing list. It will no longer be a question of giving people houses, it will be giving people accommodation. There are currently 700 applicants on the housing list inclusive of those on rent supplement. The list when rent supplement applicants are removed could be as low as 50 applicants.

Mr. Nicholson concluded his presentation and questions were invited.

Cllr. Annesley asked was Wicklow County Council going to proceed with the purchase of ten houses for Arklow Town to which the Department had given approval before the abolishment of the Town Council. Mr. Nicholson stated that he had been given no instruction to purchase the houses and that Wicklow County Council would have to look at their financial balances and if the houses were to be purchased this would only happen if there is a credit balance. There is a major job being done in finance and the figures would be available on the 21st July.

Cllr. Annesley then asked why did Arklow not buy and was informed by Cllr. Fitzgerald that no instruction to purchase had been given. This is to be raised at the full Council meeting on the 21st July.

Cllr. Murphy wanted to know what happens if a Landlord sells a house and the occupants become homeless. Mr. Nicholson said that if it is a RAS house the onus is on RAS to accommodate them and people will be given accommodation in the area in which they live.

Cllr. Kennedy wanted to know were there any builders coming through the system for the building to lease scheme. Mr. Nicholson stated that one or two seemed interested. Cllr. Kennedy asked could this be brought to the attention of the Department considering the fact that we do not have ghost estates and have a large housing list. Wicklow's T.D's should also be asked to join in on this.

Cllr. Bourke asked were HAP applicants being dealt with efficiently.

Cllr. Annesley asked for an update on the houses at Emoclew. Ms. Annette O'Donovan informed him that the Department had looked for a project appraisal.

Mr. Nicholson said that housing repairs were an issue. The budget was very small and the Department is saying that there is no money for repairs but six million a year is collected in rents. The budget needs to be increased for housing repairs and this is something the Councillors can look at.

Cllr. Annesley asked are housing loans available from the Council. Mr. Nicholson stated that four were given out last year.

It was noted that there are new National Guidelines on Differential Rent Schemes being introduced next year and also a new tenant purchase scheme being introduced.

3. **Establishment of a Traffic Committee and appointment of nominees.**
There was a general discussion as to who should be appointed onto the committee to include Gardai, Chamber of Commerce, Traders and Development. Committees. Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald suggested that each group be contacted with a view to obtaining a nominee for the Committee. This was agreed.

4. Establishment of a Burial Ground Committee for St. Gabriel's Cemetery Arklow and appointment of nominees.

Cllr. Fitzgerald advised that there was a list of people who look after the cemeteries and he asked if there was a need to extend this list and appoint a committee from the Councillors.

It was agreed to establish a Burial Ground Committee for St. Gabriel's Cemetery and all the Councillors were appointed to same.

5. Update on Road Projects within the Arklow Municipal District.

Ruairi O'Hanlon, Area Engineer read out an update on the road projects and showed a sketch of the proposed changes on the Main Street Junctions. Mr. O'Hanlon answered queries raised by the Members.

6. Update on Water & Sewerage Projects within the Arklow Municipal District.

A report was circulated to the Members on the status of the Capital Works Programme and an update on the Rural Water Programme for the AMD. It was noted that no more planning applications would be granted in Avoca until the Sewerage Scheme was in place.

Cllr. Bourke asked for an update on the Hazel Hill estate and the connection to public water supply. Michael Geaney advised that the Planning Section was in Court and Developers were to produce an agreement from Coillte for access. This is still awaited. Cllr. Bourke requested that this be sorted as a priority.

Linda McDonald, District Administrator, advised that Irish Water are currently finalising a proposal with regard to starting a new planning process for the Arklow Sewerage Scheme.

7. Update from Irish Water.

Cllr. Fitzgerald had a query regarding a major leak on the Dublin Road on Friday 4th July. Irish Water was unable to fix the leak until Monday but the Council stepped in and fixed the leak, he wanted to know what the procedure would be for emergencies. Mr. Geaney said that the old procedures still stand at present.

Cllr. Kennedy said that people in Annacurra were without water for five weekends out of six recently and that something had to be done. Mr. Geaney agreed to investigate this matter. Linda McDonald reminded the Members that Notice of Motions in relation to Irish Water issues have to go through the full Council.

8. Correspondence

1. Correspondence received from David Bourke, Beech Road, Arklow, looking for a contribution towards the cost of representing Ireland in the DTL Clay Pigeon Shooting in England.

It was agreed that a contribution of €500 be given to Mr. Burke, proposed by Cllr. Annesley and seconded by Councillor Fitzgerald.

2. Correspondence from Helen Purcell, Wicklow, stating that it is a matter for each Municipal District to set the rate up to a maximum of €6,000 for the payment of the Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District. It was agreed that the rate be set at €6,000 for the payment to the Cathaoirleach of AMD, proposed by Cllr. Bourke and seconded by Cllr. Annesley.
3. Correspondence received from Dave Thomas requesting permission to erect Rainbow Flags and paint the pedestrian crossing at Upper Main Street in rainbow colours for the month of July for Arklow Pride Month. Linda McDonald advised that she had spoken to Mr. Thomas and advised that approval could not be given at this time to his request. An agreement has been made to meet with Mr. Thomas in August to discuss his proposals.
4. Correspondence received from Patrick Martin requesting further ramps be installed in Woodlands. A discussion ensued in regard to the ramps. The Area Engineer stated that Wicklow County Council has a policy in place on ramps. The matter to be discussed at the Traffic Committee meeting.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Bridge railings

Tenders for the bridge railings had been received and a tender was recommended.

Marsh Committee

The Marsh Committee has requested a meeting as soon as possible. Cllr Annesley has asked that the District Manager be in attendance.

New VEC School

Cllr. Fitzgerald notified members that there was an open night in the VEC for local residents to discuss the building of the new school.

Trimming of Ditches

Cllr. Bourke was concerned about the failure of Coillte to trim roadside ditches. He asked that Coillte be written to about this. Jack Kelly to get list from Cllr. Bourke. He informed him that they were only allowed to cut ditches between 1st September and the last day of February.

Removal of seats

Cllr. Annesley enquired about the removal of seats and also the lack of bins. He was informed that Arklow could look at providing more seating. Sean Dunne to discuss this with the District Administrator. A discussion was held in relation to the lack of

bins. There is no legislation to provide bins but there is legislation for shop keepers to provide bins.

Travellers at Kilcarra bends

Cllr. Annesley stated that there are travellers on the roadside at the Kilcarra bends. It was noted that the Area Engineer had notified Wicklow County Council Housing Section and Linda McDonald agreed to get an update from the Housing Section on same.

Burial Ground Meeting

Meeting to be arranged for the 2nd or 3rd week in August.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

Minutes confirmed at Meeting held on Wednesday 10th September 2014

Signed: Cllr Pat Fitzgerald
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald, Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District

Signed: Linda McDonald
Linda McDonald, District Administrator