



**Wicklow County Council
Chomhairle Chontae Chill Mhantáin**

ARKLOW MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

MINUTES OF DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18th OCTOBER 2017

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

Officials Present: Mr. Frank Curran, CE Wicklow County Council
Mr. Michael Geaney, District Manager
Mr. Brian Gleeson, HOF Wicklow County Council
Ms. Linda McDonald, District Administrator
Mr. Jack Kelly, District Engineer
Ms. Sinéad Boddy, Assistant Staff Officer

Item 1 - Vote of Sympathy:

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

Margaret (Dolly) Browne, Robert Burns, Margaret Byrne, Mary Driver, Catherine Fitzgerald, Margaret Fitzgerald, Maureen Frawley, Bridget Going, Daniel Hall, Andy Hemenstall, Jean Holt, Gerard Kavanagh, Eileen Kearon, Gerard Kelly, Mary Mates, Edward O Byrne, Marie O Hart, Paul Reuter, Bruce Rumbold, Stephen Sheppard, Piotr Skotarski, Bernard Keogh (father of Fergal Keogh Senior Planner with WCC).

A minutes silence was observed.

Cllr Annesley congratulated all the rowers from Arklow Rowing Club for competing in France recently. Cllr's Fitzgerald and Bourke congratulated the AGB u-14 team in their victory over Michael Dywer's u-14's, and congratulations to the u-12's boys and girls teams also.

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 13th September 2017 were proposed by Cllr Fitzgerald and seconded by Cllr Murphy.

Item 3 – Matters Arising:

No matters arising.

Item 4: To receive a presentation from the Chief Executive & Head of Finance on the General Municipal Allocation.

CE Frank Curran reported that the first stage of the budget process – LPT – had been agreed and there was to be no change from last year. The second stage would be to discuss and agree the proposed General Municipal Allocation. The schedule of municipal works will be decided early 2018. He also noted that this year's GMA for Arklow Municipal District is €11,000 more than last years at €48,000. The allocation is a draft and the funds can be moved around and spent where it is most needed.

Cllr Kennedy said that the Members had decided not to increase the LPT and now he would question that decision, other LA's increased their LPT and are receiving more funding as a result. Cllr Kennedy said it would be hard to reach all areas with the funding allowed. Cllr Fitzgerald said it would be difficult for the members to agree anything with this amount as the expectation was there that the funding should be increased. How are we to fund footpath repairs? CE Frank Curran said that there was no guarantee on funding for footpaths but if there is money left over it can be used. The best advice he could give was to look ahead and to start preparing communities and projects now so that they are ready and can be submitted for various streams of funding that may be advertised during the forthcoming year.

HOF Brian Gleeson gave a brief outline of the overall budget process and highlighted the areas of higher costs including on-going commitments and payroll. The deficit of €7.75m will need to be found to balance the budget. The HOF also mentioned that the following will have a negative impact on finding the shortfall –

- NPA – only 70% from DOE (€856,000.00)
- Pensions – Age profile of staff
- Income – IPB dividend down 70%
- Required remediation of social housing and swimming pools

Cllr Bourke asked what the immediate plan was to raise the shortfall and the CE and HOF said that they would be meeting with the each section head and also liaising with the Department and that a balanced budget would be presented.

Cllr Fitzgerald said that there was also an expectation that Discretionary Funding would increase county wide, Jnr Minister JP Phelan had announced that there would be more funding for MD's and that there were many infrastructure changes required in the District therefore the Members may not agree on the proposed €900,000. He acknowledged that €48,000 was an increased amount but was disappointed that the Dept. has reduced funding. He enquired about the extra cost of storm Ophelia and the CE indicated that funding will be available and there is the need to ensure that the Discretionary Funding is well spent on significant projects. He also said it would be difficult to retain the €900,000 on balance over the 5 Districts.

Cllr Kennedy welcomed both the CE and HOF to the meeting and stressed that the funding level should be maintained as it would be very difficult to vote it in otherwise. Every village deserves to get some little thing. Wicklow received very little funding under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme and what did ye do in Leitrim that we didn't do in Wicklow. The CE said that the scheme was advertised. Cllr Fitzgerald added that the members knew very little about it. The CE said that you need to look at next year and choose the projects early, especially in the public realm area. Make your presentations to members and carry out the public consultation process and designate staff to this. The grants will come around again and are community driven.

Cllr Murphy asked can we promote the schemes – we should have the projects ready by now – could they be streamed through the PPN. The CE said you could arrange to present them to the PPN. Cllr Murphy said that the regime for the applications is very severe and Cllr Kennedy said that a certain skill set was required. The CE said that standard forms would be ready. Cllr Kennedy asked if there was a plan to meet with Dail Deputies and the CE said that they would be meeting in December to set out their stall for infrastructure projects including the WWTP in Arklow. Cllr Kennedy said that the small village of Aughrim is not considered high profile and it has taken 2 years to get an answer from Irish Water on the situation there. He further stated that the restraints in the planning process are the real problem, the Dept needs to put pressure on. The CE replied that there would be feedback from the meeting in the report which can be circulated.

Cllr Murphy said that it was indicated that an OPW grant would be available for the North Quay Coastal Protection Walk but we were turned down three times and we need our TD's to push this on as it is a Health and Safety issue. The CE asked if it was a case for a Part VIII and DE J Kelly replied that it was not as it was rock armour defence and all applications have come back saying it's a maintenance issue. Cllr McDonald said that Deputy Brady was raising this at Dáil level.

Cllr McDonald asked if staff retiring are to be replaced and the HOF said that we will need to provide for this and the cost is lump sums, pension costs constantly increasing and is not sustainable in the long term. Cllr Annesley asked why we were taking on retirees in consultancy roles and why are we not taking on younger staff. The CE said he couldn't answer that but that younger staff were coming in at CO and

GO level. He agreed that we do need to take on younger staff. Cllr Murphy asked how we compare nationally and the CE replied not too bad, the Workforce Plan has been agreed with the Dept. and that the pension bill is the problem area for costing.

Cllr Kennedy said that there are 23 acres in Rathdrum that could be driven on the marketing side and that the site could be so attractive. The CE said that people are coming in from the UK looking for sites and that the lower cost base is a definite attraction. Cllr Kennedy praised the joined up thinking in Gorey in relation to “The Hatch Project” and the CE said we should use this as a model. Cllr Fitzgerald said that there is Ballynattin and Kish also and the CE asked if the WWTP had any impact on these Cllr Fitzgerald said that a lot of people are commuting to Dublin because it was difficult to get fulltime employment locally and prospects for local employment would improve with the completion of the WWTP.

Cllr Annesley said that the harbour and port had been neglected as an area for investment and Arklow has been sharing a Marine Officer with Bray and Wicklow. DM M Geaney said that the post of Marine Officer for Arklow was due to be filled.

Cllr Kennedy asked how much AMD take in parking fees and the HOF advised that the budget for 2017 is €195,000 which is currently 93% is expended. Ms McDonald said that the income in the previous year had been in the region of €220,000. Cllr Fitzgerald said that there would be no increase in parking charges in Arklow with the new bye-laws. DM M Geaney said that there were other costs to be considered. Cllr Kennedy said savings could be made there and Ms McDonald confirmed that the contract was going out to tender. Ms. McDonald said that the income received from fines was part of central funding.

Following a discussion on this item the adoption of the GMA as presented to the Members was proposed by Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald and seconded by Cllr. Pat Kennedy.

Item 5 : To receive an update on Local Authority Housing Schemes within AMD.

Ms McDonald read the housing report for the District and Cllr Fitzgerald said that the progress was to be welcomed and that there had been no local authority housing built in Arklow since 2007 until the current schemes. Cllr Kennedy also welcomed the progress and commended the housing staff for their work in bringing the schemes along.

Item 6: To discuss the proposed 3 year Roads Programme.

DE J Kelly said that the current programme had 1 year to run and that the report circulated is the multiannual programme and would welcome comments. Cllr Fitzgerald said the works so far look great on the north side of the town giving a good image on the route into the town. Cllr Bourke asked about the works for the last stretch and DE J Kelly said that the proposal was to carry out night works which should keep disruption to a minimum. Cllr Bourke asked if the list could be added to

and DE J Kelly said that observations would be taken first. Cllr Bourke said that the Ballydonnell road in Redcross, Templeraíney and Templemichael areas needed attention. DE J Kelly said that the programme would follow the rating system for the County and that the programme was still provisional. Cllr Annesley said that Abbey Street was also in bad condition and it might be possible for Roadstone to assist here as he believed Roadstone traffic was the major cause of the damage. DE J Kelly said he would look at these areas and that the WWTP would affect which areas could be done.

Cllr Kennedy said that Wood Lane was also an issue and that the bus driver was threatening to pull the service and mentioned the Cappagh to Balleshal Road in Aughtim. Cllr Fitzgerald said that the Kish/Rock Road also needed repairs and DE J Kelly said that the stretch of road was fifth on the list. Cllr Fitzgerald said that a contribution should come from Roadstone. Cllr McDonald requested that the Whitebridge to the Meetings area be looked at also.

Item 7: To receive a presentation on the proposed renovation of the Parade Ground area.

This item was deferred to the November meeting.

Item 8: To consider sources of funding for the commissioning of a Ronnie Delany Sculpture.

Ms McDonald stated that sponsorship has come in and that 3 separate sponsors, Arklow Town Traders, Roadstone and CCSD have given funding totalling €28,400 and that a further €51,600 is required. Letters have also issued to companies in the town looking for sponsorship. Cllr McDonald asked where the proposed site was and Ms McDonald said at the Parade Ground. The CE suggested Leader funding and asked was there a deadline and Cllr Fitzgerald said Ronnie Delany was 83 years old. The CE said it is a great project.

Item 9: To discuss traffic calming measures for Woodlands Grove, Arklow.

Ms McDonald stated that his matter had been previously deferred pending the receipt of a Garda report which had now been circulated to the Members. Cllr Fitzgerald suggested that discretionary funds could be used and DE J Kelly said he would review it and cost any works for the January meeting. Cllr Bourke suggested moveable ramps and DE J Kelly said these would not work.

Item 10: To receive an update on the following –

a) Abbey Graveyard

It was noted that one final quotation was awaited for the rebuilding of the wall in the Abbey Graveyard. Once that quotation is received we will then be in a position to select the most economically advantageous tender. It is hoped to commence these works the end of the year however this will depend on the schedule of the preferred contractor.

b) Arklow Town Team

The next meeting is scheduled for the 25th October 2017.

LEADER – 8 Expression of Interest applications have been submitted for funding.

Towns Matter presentation to take place on the 27th September 2017 – C Bofin consultant appointed by tender to carry out a health check for Arklow.

BOI National Enterprising Town Awards 2017 – awards night to be held in Tullamore on the 15th November 2017.

c) Arklow Courthouse

A contractor has been appointed to compile a fire assessment report for the courthouse building. This report is required to ascertain how much work needs to be carried out to the building to make it comply with the fire regulations. Once the report is completed it will then be possible to more accurately tender for the refurbishment works. Our hope is that the tender documents will be issued to contractors before the end of the year. When quotations are received for the works we will then be in a position to hold discussions with the Court Services.

d) Parade Ground

AMD has engaged the services of a landscape architect to devise a design for the Parade Ground area. Currently in discussions with this company about the key requirements for the design of the area. It is hoped to have a finalised design completed before the next district meeting with a view to lodging the Part VIII planning documentation before the end of the year.

e) Coastal Protection Works on the North Beach

Talks are ongoing with Virgin Media about the possibility of them making a contribution towards the repair of the coastal path on the North Beach. Other options are also being explored with the OPW in terms of obtaining funding from them for the upgrade of the rock revetment.

Cllr Annesley said that huge investment is now needed for this repair following storm Ophelia. Cllr Fitzgerald asked for a message to go out to the public of the dangers of the walk during the storm, he couldn't believe the number of people there on the day of the storm. Cllr Murphy asked if it should be closed off and DE J Kelly said that people would try anyway. Cllr McDonald asked if we would be liable. DE J Kelly stated that while there is signage there he would look at reviewing same.

f) Halloween Festival

Halloween brochure has been printed and will be distributed to 5,000 homes in Arklow. The main events will be running from Friday the 27th to Tuesday the 31st October and signage has been erected on the approach roads into the town. Social media and radio interviews are also been used to promote the festival.

The Main St and the Parade Ground will be decorated for the period. Huge support received from groups in the town – East Wicklow Youth Services, Men’s Shed, Schools, Frances Ryan School of Dance, Shelton Abbey.

g) Christmas Festival

Festival dates 25th November and the 9th December.

New Christmas Lights purchased for the town.

Lights also to be erected under the bridge to highlight the arches.

Christmas feature to be hung on the brackets used for the flower basket scheme.

h) Rathdrum Square

The sculpture is being worked on and works will continue and will only be finalised once the proposed plans for the primary care centre off the Square are in place.

DE J Kelly said he would meet with Cllr Kennedy to assess the work to date.

Item 11: Notices of Motions:

(a) In the name of Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald

“That funding is set aside for traffic calming measures outside St. Patricks National School in Avoca”. (Received 20th June 2017)

DE J Kelly said that he would recommend that two tabletop ramps be provided next year from the Discretionary Budget. The estimated cost of the works would be €10,600.

(b) In the name of Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald

“That further improvement works on footpaths on the Wexford Road in Arklow are carried out in 2018”. (Received 25th August 2017)

Cllr. Fitzgerald that that there has been very little funding spent in this area in recent years. DE J Kelly said he would recommend that €30,000 be provided in the 2018 Discretionary Budget towards Footpath reconstruction on the Wexford Road. The exact location can be agreed, when this Budget is been debated by the members.

(c) In the name of Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald

“That the Council examines the possibility of extending the footpath that runs parallel to St. Gabriel’s Cemetery on the road to Coolgreaney”.
(Received 25th August 2017).

DE J Kelly said that there is no footpath on the Coolgreaney Road between its junction with the Emoclew Road and the entrance to the Arklow Celtic grounds. Because of the high volumes of pedestrian and vehicular traffic it would be very beneficial to provide a new footpath at this location.

I estimate the cost of providing a footpath at least 1.4 meters wide at €28,000. I would recommend that it be considered under next year’s Discretionary Program.

Item 12: Correspondence.

Notice has been received that IW would hold a clinic in AMD offices on the 19th & 26th October 2017 from 2pm to 8pm.

A Business Information Evening is to be held in the Arklow Bay Hotel on the 19th October at 7pm. It was noted that this clashed with the public meeting in Aughrim for the proposed Shillelagh to Arklow walk.

Cllr Kennedy said that dates need to be considered for the return trip to Poland for the Polska Eire Festival – 17th of May was suggested and we need to email them. Cllr McDonald said that may clash with the Chateaudun Anniversary celebrations and she agreed to check with Kitty Brennan. Cllr Annesley said that we would be in a position to accommodate officials only.

Cllr Kennedy asked if more festival funding could be found in the budget for Rathdrum to purchase Christmas Lights. Ms McDonald said they had received €500 from the 2017 festival funding and Cllr Kennedy asked if the allocation could be changed and that €20,000 for Arklow seems unfair and changes could be made for 2018. The HOF said he would check if this was financially feasible. Cllr Annesley and Cllr Bourke said that wouldn't be an open competition. Cllr Fitzgerald said he would have no issue in principal to allocating 1/3 of the 2018 funding to this. Cllr Kennedy proposed that €8,000.00 should be allocated to the Rathdrum Festival and Cllr Fitzgerald seconded this.

Item 13 : Any Other Business.

Cllr Annesley said that the Riverwalk area has been neglected and Shelton Abbey could provide the volunteers to clean up under supervision, possibly GO staff. The walk could meet with the planned Shillelagh to Arklow walk and would encourage people to visit the town. There is very little anti-social behaviour taking place in this area. IW should be able to facilitate this project and assistance is needed from AMD. DE J Kelly said he would meet with Cllr Annesley to discuss what could be done. Cllr Annesley said that a tree surgeon has offered assistance. DM M Geaney asked them to note the season dates for cutting back hedges. DE J Kelly said that Gateway staff were no longer available.

Minutes confirmed at the Arklow Municipal District Council Meeting held on Wednesday the 18^h October 2017.

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

Signed: *Ms. Linda McDonald, Arklow Municipal District Administrator*