



**Wicklow County Council
Chomhairle Chontae Chill Mhantáin**

ARKLOW MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

**MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING HELD IN THE McELHERON CHAMBER ON THE 12th July
2023**

Present: Cllr. Tommy Annesley, Cathaoirleach
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald, Leas-Cathaoirleach
Cllr. Pat Kennedy
Cllr. Sylvester Bourke
Cllr. Peir Leonard
Cllr. Miriam Murphy

Officials Present: Ms. Leonora Earls, District Manager
Ms. Avril Hill, District Engineer
Ms. Lorraine Hayes ASO

Apologies: Alvina Brehony

Press: Eoin Mac Raghnaill

Public: None

Presentations: Jason Smith - Homeless Outreach Officer WCC
Michael McNamara - AO Environment WCC
Deirdre Whitfield - SEO TWES WCC

Item 1: Votes of Sympathy.

The members expressed votes of sympathy to all families who have recently lost a loved one, those mentioned were –

James Byrne, William Connolly, Marie Tyrrell, Charles Byrne, Thomas Kennedy, Nicholas Loughlin, Patrick Nagle, Vincent O’Sullivan, Joe Holt, Pat Kavanagh, Michael Heffernan, Kitty Byrne, Mary Byrne, Pierce Glynn, Patrick Geoghan, Kathleen Staunton, Thomas Corr, Colin Furlong.

A minutes silence was observed.

Item 2: Confirmation of Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Municipal District of Arklow dated 13th June 2023

The minutes of the Arklow Municipal District Annual Meeting held on the 13th June 2023 were proposed by Cllr Leonard and seconded by Cllr Bourke.

Item 3: Confirmation of Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Arklow dated 13th June 2023

The minutes of Arklow Municipal Ordinary Meeting held on 13th June 2023 were proposed by Cllr Kennedy and seconded by Cllr Bourke.

Item 4: Matters Arising

Cllr Leonard asked for an update on the traffic survey. L Earls DM said the study was nearly complete and would follow up with Declan O'Brien on its final date.

Cllr Leonard asked about the planter in the loading bay which had been moved on request, however now delivery drivers cannot park there as they can't get into the loading bay.

A Hill DE said she wasn't aware of the issue and would look into it.

Item 5: Consideration of Reports and Recommendations.

❖ **Michael McNamara – AO Environment delivered a presentation on St. Gabriel's Cemetery, Arklow.**

Following consultation with the registrar M McNamara said there are approximately sixty burials per annum of which approximately 40 would be new graves. He stated there is four to five years capacity in the graveyard by using the area at the back wall and along the Coolgreany wall.

Contact had been made with Church of Ireland to discuss shared use of the graveyard. M McNamara acknowledged another graveyard will be needed in the future. Wicklow County Council is looking for sites either north or south of the bridge. Any area selected for a new burial ground would need to be zoned in order to facilitate it.

Comments:

Cllr Fitzgerald disagreed with the amount of available space and life span of graveyard quoted by M McNamara, he believes there are less than four years left due to previous correspondence and feels decisions need to be made now. He also felt the area by the back wall would create flooding problems beyond the boundary of the graveyard.

Cllr Leonard said an alternative site is needed now. Having spoken to the Registrar she believes there are two to three years left at most. She asked the environment regulations regarding extra graves at the back, M McNamara stated burials could take place anywhere within the graveyard boundary. She suggested there could be liaison with the clubs bordering the graveyard to see if any would potentially move to allow expansion of the graveyard. If none are agreeable then a new site is needed urgently. Reassurance is needed that this will be actioned.

Cllr Bourke stated it took five years to extend Castlemacadam Cemetery so we need to move on it. Doesn't feel the area at the back wall will be practical. Stated this is now an emergency and feels no ownership has been taken, particularly as once the WWTP is complete there will be a huge expansion of the population.

Cllr Kennedy was told several year ago there were five years left in the capacity of the graveyard, so being told now there were still 5 years left doesn't add up. He asked for a commitment from M McNamara to come back in six months with an update. M McNamara agreed.

Cllr Annesley asked if there was a policy on trees in graveyards and if potentially some trees could be removed to make more space. Cllr Leonard was opposed to this as the trees have both historical and heritage value and that any tree removal should be a last resort. Cllr Fitzgerald stated removing the trees would be preferable to running out of space.

It was also pointed out that the land for a new burial ground would need to be in the Arklow Parish, not any neighbouring parish.

The meeting asked for an update on the Columbarium wall - M McNamara said the contractor had been awarded, the stone is ordered but there is no exact date for work to commence.

❖ **Jason Smith – Homeless Outreach Officer delivered a presentation on the homeless services in Wicklow County Council**

Comments:

Cllr Leonard said her eyes had opened her eyes to the lack of support and services for the homeless in Wicklow since becoming a Councillor. Many people need help and there are huge gaps in the service and not enough accommodation. Councillors need a way to communicate with the Homeless Officer on a local level. More spaces are needed for women and children in Wicklow.

Cllr Fitzgerald said there are simply not enough beds.

J Smith said Friday presentations can be an issue but the service would go out of its way to find accommodation for them. Some accommodation providers may change their minds when they learn the process of being set up as a Supplier.

Cllr Kennedy said could the councillors have a contact number for the Homeless services as particularly on a Friday evening and weekends it can be very difficult to help.

J Smith said he provide his contact details to the Councillors via A Brehony and that he will always try to help out of hours but this is not always possible as it is not a 24/7 service.

Cllr Murphy said Councillors' hands are tied, they feel very responsible for people seeking help outside working hours. Those presenting as homeless with addictions and or mental health issues need a particular kind of accommodation and they need a safe environment. While she acknowledges the work which is being done the Government needs to do more and more accommodation is needed.

Cllr Bourke observed the presentation gave a very depressing picture. The Councillors feel responsible, and on occasion, for the very sad loss of life. He feels powerless at times as they just can't help some people. He is hopeful the homeless figures will drop due to new houses being built.

Cllr Leonard said the Action Resource Centre has tents and other provisions and will give guidance on safe places to pitch them. It might be useful to have a Homeless team representative on the East Coast Drugs Task Force. Also it would be useful to have a leaflet listing counselling, help lines etc. to give to anyone presenting as homeless.

J Smith responded that he is just starting to make the position his own and is trying to get many people involved for a multidisciplinary approach.

Cllr Murphy was concerned the system is weighted against the vulnerable person. There needs to be more communication across the board.

J Smith stated that if a vulnerable person is coming out of an institution he needs around 3 weeks' notice in order to assess them properly for a suitable placement. This doesn't always happen.

Cllr Annesley welcomed Jason and acknowledged the hard work Noelene Roche had done as his predecessor. He felt the homeless were in limbo between Friday 5pm and Monday 9am. He also felt that some private landlords were taking advantage of the vulnerable.

Cllr Bourke asked if a homeless person who was not on the Social Housing list would still be supported.

J Smith said he would try to help them.

The Councillors thanked him for his presentation.

❖ Deirdre Whitfield – Town Regeneration Officer delivered a presentation on the Draft LECP Framework.

D Whitfield, TRO, briefed the Members on the Draft LECP Framework that has been approved by the LCDC and the EDES SPC, both of which have a remit for the development of this document. She outlined the next step was to present it to the MDs and EMRA, then to the full County Council.

Comments:

Cllr Annesley thanked D Whitfield for her presentation.

Cllr Leonard asked if there was any feedback from the MD's. D Whitfield responded that the report is past the consultation stage and this presentation was just for information. Cllr Leonard felt that Arklow was the most disadvantaged of the MD's in Wicklow, and asked how the report related to funding allocations and improvement of the Area. D Whitfield said LEADER should take account of that.

Cllr Leonard noted the area needed capital investment. 4 in 10 Arklow residents commute to work outside the community, there is no sustainability and we need investment in the economy here to keep the community 'alive'.

Cllr Kennedy as Chair of the LCDC noted there was a good amount of consultation throughout the County and that it was a very clear document.

At this point (5.10pm) the Cathaoirleach called for an extension of the meeting to 6pm. All agreed.

Cllr Murphy asked how the LECP would benefit people with disabilities. She stated that she would rather the word 'disadvantaged' wasn't used. On a practical note she found the presentation quite hard to read on the screen. Cllr Murphy acknowledged that there was great value in the document.

Cllr Annesley thanked Deidre and those who worked on the document.

District Engineers Report

A Hill reported that the Dept of Transport had given the Council additional funding to cover inflation costs – so even though the costs have gone up the schedule can be completed now.

Roads

Restoration Improvement

| <i>Proposed Works</i> | <i>Status</i> |
|--|--|
| L-6137 / L-6183 Ballymorris | Complete |
| L-2140/L-6141 Macreddin to Ballyshane | TBC with Contractor |
| L-2172 Snugborough - Barniskey | TBC with Contractor |
| L-5155 Tullylusk to Kilmacoo | TBC with Contractor |
| L-6154-6155 Tigroney | TBC with Contractor |
| L-6200 Killacloran | TBC with Contractor |
| L-6902 St. Mary's Road, Connolly St., Griffith St. | TBC with Contractor – During school holidays |
| R-755 Glasnarget | TBC with Contractor |

Restoration Maintenance – 18.6km

| <i>Proposed Works</i> | <i>Status</i> |
|--|---------------|
| R-747 Vale Road | Scheduled |
| L-1113 Coolbeg Bridge to Deputy's Pass | Complete |
| L-5156 Kilcandra to Barndarrig | Complete |
| L-6203 Tomnasklea - Killaveaney | Complete |

Climate Change Adaptation & Resilience

| <i>Proposed Works</i> | <i>Status</i> |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Retaining wall on R754 at Knockanree | Complete |

Former National Roads

| <i>Proposed Works</i> | <i>Status</i> |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| R772 Knockmore to Kish | Finalising design with NTA team |

Local Improvement Schemes

| <i>Proposed Works</i> | <i>Status</i> |
|-----------------------|--|
| Ballinacor, Greenane | Confirmation of schemes. To be scheduled with Contractor |
| Drumdangan, Glenealy | |

Discretionary Funds 2023

| <i>Proposed Works</i> | <i>Status</i> |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Footpath – Brewery Bends | Scheduled with GSS |

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|--|--|
| Arklow South Peir - Removal of sand | Completed |
| Upgrade of footpaths 130-204 Fernhill | TBC with GSS |
| Footpath in Greenane - Completion | Works ongoing on site |
| Repair verge behind 3-4 St. Mary's Crescent Barndarrig | Complete |
| Bus Shelter in Aughrim | Order Placed |
| Bus Shelter in Annacurra | Order Placed |
| Public lighting at The Birches, Ballinaclash | Liaising with lighting designer |
| Public Realm - Arklow | Putting scope of works together |
| Public Realm - Rathdrum | Seeking prices for bollards & planters |
| Educational signage at beaches | Order Placed |
| Repair of footpath at Curran's Corner | TBC with GSS |
| The Pines | Complete |
| Footpath at Ferrybank | Contractor in place, currently speaking to business owners |
| Footpath at RNLI | TBC with GSS |
| Tree management | Putting scope of works together |
| Footpaths at Templeraíne Heights | TBC with GSS |

Other Projects

Rathdrum Traffic Study: We have extended the scope of the study to include the junction at Lower Street and the R-752. Consultants have advised the additional survey is scheduled for September.

Note the Restoration Improvement works at L6902 St Mary's Road, Connolly St and Griffith St is independent to the NTA works planned for this area and is scheduled for this year.

Restoration Maintenance works at R747 Vale Road has been delayed due to bad weather, but will be completed as soon as possible.

Rathdrum Traffic Study A Hill DE wanted the survey to be completed sooner.

The 2 LIS works are ready to go, just to be confirmed with the Contractor.

Comments:

Cllr Bourke requested that drainage works be done on Beech Road and a footpath put in. A Hill to ask GSS

Cllr Murphy asked if the work to be done on the Ferrybank footpath would block pedestrians. A Hill confirmed it would not.

Cllr Fitzgerald asked about the work to be done at Fernhill. A Hill to ask GSS

Cllr Kennedy asked about the dangerous road at Johnstown. A Hill said a traffic survey was carried out, it identified the need for signs but at the moment there is no funding for a driver feedback sign but the new signs from the Speed Review would be going up.

Cllr Kennedy also asked about speeding around Brook Lodge. A Hill pointed out that An Garda Síochána are responsible for enforcing speed limits.

Cllr Kennedy then asked when the road markings on the disabled space in Rathdrum would be done and asked when the machine would be back. A Hill said the contract is signed and priority areas included the disabled space in Rathdrum, works will be completed by the end of October.

Cllr Leonard noted the continuous white line outside the 7-11 in Arklow had worn away and needs repainting.

Cllr Kennedy said €19,000 from discretionary funding for tree management in the district. One overhanging tree in the Woodview can this be looked into as it is blocking the light into a house there. He also asked if A Hill could contact the contractor to give the go ahead for lights in Ballinaclesh. Cllr Kennedy said that four dog bins had been purchased and asked if A Hill could organise getting them put up, she said she would get that organised.

Cllr Leonard asked about the grass cutting regime in Arklow and which areas fell under the remit of AMD to cut, some of the green areas in Fernhill and Church View need cutting. A Hill reported there are 50 acres of green space that need to be maintained in the town. These are being maintained according to best practice from the biodiversity team. Some areas may be cut every 3 weeks if they are 'meadow' areas, others more regularly or some not at all. AMD do not have the capacity to start cutting areas where residents associations used to cut but no longer do so.

Cllr Leonard said there is a plan needed, she acknowledged AMD do not have the resources to cut everywhere but there needs to be a meeting with Biodiversity Officer and the residents associations.

Cllr Kennedy asked about grass cutting in Churchview. AMD cut the soccer pitch area, but also maintain a pathway around the edge but the rest is left as meadow which is cut 2 times a year.

Cllr Murphy stated that older residents in Fernhill are not happy with the long grass and would like it cut.

Cllr Fitzgerald also agreed it looks very unkempt and needs cutting.

A Hill DE stated that they were working on a map to highlight all areas that AMD cut. This is currently up to 50 acres of grass. She is liaising with the Biodiversity Officer.

Cllr Leonard agreed some areas could be left to grow, but that most green areas need cutting.

A Hill DE stated that AMD did not have the resources to cut all of the 50 acres of identified and that some of the maintenance work is contracted out, such as the graveyard.

L Earls DM pointed out that for biodiversity the grass is not cut before 15th April and then with 'no mow May' it will not be cut for several weeks. She felt it would be helpful to communicate with the estates what benefit the biodiversity plan has and the benefits of limited grass cutting.

Cllr Leonard pointed out that small children needed green space to play close to home, but the long grass made some of the small green areas not suitable for playing.

A Hill DE will talk to the Biodiversity Officer regarding green areas and cutting.

Festival Funding 2023

L Earls DM outlined the process used for allocating the proposed funding, but also pointed out that it was up to the Members to have the final say on the allocation of funds. In previous years more funding has been available post-Covid but this has been reduced and there were 4 more applicants this year than last year.

Comments:

Cllr Fitzgerald proposed that Inbhear Mor Performance Ensemble funding be increased to €1,200.
Cllr Leonard seconded.

Cllr Kennedy proposed the Rathdrum Christmas Lights funding was increased to €1,400 in line with Arklow Christmas Festival.
Cllr Fitzgerald seconded.

Cllr Murphy proposed the RNLI funding was increased to €1,000.
Cllr Leonard seconded.

Cllr Leonard questioned the process for using fireworks at events and if there were any guidelines with regards to environmental impact. L Earls stated that WCC were not the licensing authority for fireworks and that there is no specific policy on the use of them. Cllr Leonard suggested that maybe it could be discussed with the Biodiversity Officer to ensure minimum impact of fireworks when they are part of a festival.

The 2023 Festival Funding was agreed with amendments.

| Name | Grant Amount |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Arklow RNLI Lifeboat | €1,000.00 |
| Inbhear Mor Performance Ensemble | €1,200.00 |
| Annacurra Parish Council | €400.00 |
| Arklow Music and Arts CLG | €800.00 |
| Arklow Seabreeze Festival | €1,400.00 |
| Aughrim GAA | €400.00 |
| Arklow Music Festival | €1,400.00 |
| 402 Art Collective | €700.00 |
| Aughrim St Patricks Day Festival | €500.00 |
| Arklow Christmas Festival Committee | €1,400.00 |
| Arklow St Patricks Day Parade | €1,400.00 |
| Rathdrum Christmas Lights | €1,400.00 |
| Total Festival Grants AMD 2023 | €12,000.00 |

Item 6: Other business set forth in the Notice convening the meeting.

Item 7: Notice of Motion

(a) **To consider the Notice of Motion in the name of Cllr S. Bourke Received on 19/06/23**

“That the AMD investigate a rainwater harvesting system to be installed at Castlemacadam cemetery”

As there is no possibility of putting a tap in the cemetery, Cllr Bourke suggested that rainwater could be harvested instead. A Hill DE agreed to talk to the Environment section regarding this.

Item 7: Correspondence

None received

Item 8: Any Other Business

CLlr Kennedy asked for an update on the community sports ground in Arklow.

L Earls DM said she would talk to CCSD.

CLlr Kennedy asked about the possibility of putting in a footpath between Kilbride and the Asgard Nursing Home. A Hill DE said she would measure it and look at using discretionary funding.

CLlr Kennedy said that the additional €124,000 funding given by the Dept of Transport to cover the increased costs was welcome but it just wasn't enough. L Earls DM acknowledged this but also noted that it ensured we could complete the planned works for the year.

CLlr Leonard asked about progress on the design of the Duck Pond area and lighting at the running track. A Hill DE said the tender for the lighting has now closed and is being assessed; the lighting should be complete by the end of the year.

CLlr Murphy asked if there were any results from the recreational survey that was undertaken some time ago. L Earls DM said we had no results yet but she would chase it up.

CLlr Fitzgerald asked how long the path would be on the NTA scheme in south Arklow, L Earls to follow up with the NTA.

Minutes confirmed at the Arklow Municipal District Council Meeting held on Wednesday the 12th July 2023.

Signed: _____

Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District.

Signed: _____

Ms. Alvina Brehony, District Administrator, Arklow Municipal District

