



**Wicklow County Council
Chomhairle Chontae Chill Mhantáin**

ARKLOW MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

**MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON ZOOM PLATFORM ON WEDNESDAY
10TH MARCH 2021**

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

Officials Present: Mr. Colm Lavery, District Manager
Ms. Claire Lawless, District Administrator
Ms. Avril Hill, District Engineer
Mr. Rob Mulhall, Executive Engineer
Ms. Helena Fallon, SE Housing
Ms. Aideen Klauer, EE Housing
Mr. Marc Devereux, SE Environment
Mr. John Daly, EE TWES
Ms. Sinéad Boddy, ASO

Press : Ms. E Dodd WP

Public: Mr Kevin Mann, Jennifer Kavanagh, Ciaran Deay

Item 1: Votes of Sympathy.

The Members expressed votes of sympathy to all families who have recently lost loved ones.

A minutes silence was observed.

Members also extended best wishes to Fr O Cochláin and wished him a speedy recovery.

Cllr Annesley extended condolences to the Polish community in Arklow following the death of a young man in the town.

Item 2 : Confirmation of Minutes from Ordinary Meeting held on the 10th February 2021.

An amendment to the minutes of meeting held on the 10th February 2021 was noted and approved by the members (Amendments attached).

The Minutes of the Arklow Municipal District Ordinary Meeting held on the 10th February 2021 were proposed by Cllr Fitzgerald and seconded by Cllr Murphy.

Item 3 : Matters Arising.

No matters arising.

Item 4 : To receive an update on the LA Housing Energy Fabric Upgrade Programme of Works for the Arklow MD area

Ms Aideen Klauer EE shared a presentation on energy upgrades for housing stock in the district. The retrofit project is carried out in 2 phases – Phase 1 completions in the district number 31 and phase 2 at 13 houses, over a 3 year period.

Potential reasons for tenants being turned down for upgrades vary –

- Significant arrears
- Drugs issues
- Rats in attic
- Tenants don't want one
- Older tenants do not want the disturbance
- Tenant is purchasing property

There are 897 properties in the district and 578 have been upgraded over varying levels of works. There are approx. 300 to be surveyed and any properties built since 2008 will not need works.

There is a new scheme (10 year) for 2021 – an application for funding will be submitted today.

The members enquired about individual houses and why they may have been excluded and questioned why some purchased/newer properties would require upgrades. Aideen Klauer EE confirmed that some that missed out could be re-visited. Helena Fallon SE confirmed that WCC would focus on properties with render finish first – Cllr Fitzgerald commented that the exterior finish should not be a factor and that all tenants are entitled to get work done. Helena Fallon SE explained that WCC can only claim a certain amount per property and this is a key factor in getting as many properties upgraded with funding provided. Cllr Leonard commented that priority should be given to properties with lower BER rating and to the more vulnerable tenants – can damp proofing be considered for the red brick houses, possibly internal insulation. Helena Fallon SE replied that internal works would require the tenants to be moved out of the house and that external works are preferred. Cllr Leonard said that she would not like to see the cladding used on brick houses – need to look at different options.

Cllr Kennedy agreed with the members and thanked both for the presentation and welcomed the works to date. He also expressed disappointment at the number of houses still to be surveyed – 6 years ago the survey request was submitted.

Aideen Klauer EE confirmed that WCC will not be fitting oil or gas fired boilers and the preferred option is heat pumps – air to water. Helena Fallon SE confirmed that WCC would be concentrating on the BER ratings and will group houses for works.

Cllr Murphy noted that there was good and bad news – the condition of doors and windows in some properties would counteract any upgrade works. Disappointed also that open fires would be blocked up in a lot of cases.

The members discussed issues with heating upgrades and Helena Fallon SE confirmed that WCC can no longer use the old style boilers. Aideen Klauer EE said that there were a lot of queries about windows and doors and confirmed that there was no budget for these and only re-lets are being looked at for replacements.

Cllr Bourke thanked them both for their time and confirmed that the members would email them with any individual queries.

Item 5 : To receive a presentation on the Arklow Flood Relief Scheme.

Marc Devereux SE shared the presentation with the members – The presentation is available on wicklow.ie and forms part of the public information session that cannot be held physically and has been adapted for an online information session.

It is hoped that the WWTP and the FRS will run over the same period and it has been agreed that whoever is first on site will carry out combined works – agreement in place.

The public realm design incorporates a 1km promenade. Currently, the following proposals have been considered –

- The removal of the pinch point is no longer going ahead – will be behind the new wall.
- Dredging large area – 1 m depth maximum.
- New and enhanced public areas
- Marsh embankment – increasing area of the Marsh. On the lands behind, create native woodland not so much an embankment clear space needed for access, grass area low maintenance, possibly wildflowers.
- Debris trap – design and location
- The existing mooring quay will be moved out.

This public information period will finish toward the end of the month and the application will be submitted to ABP – They may possibly hold an oral hearing – ideally by the year end and works could begin next year.

Cllr Bourke asked if the team are still accepting submissions. Marc Devereux SE confirmed that this is the scheme and all consultation submissions have been considered and the team have done as much as they can to accommodate these – the main objective will always be protecting the town from flooding. Any queries can be addressed through the information session – option included to email the team.

Cllr Kennedy thanked Marc Devereux and asked him to clarify 3 points –

Debris traps – beside carpark and how many times a year would they need to be cleared.
What tonnage of soil will be required for the project?
How many glass panels will there be?

Cllr Leonard commended Marc Devereux on the project to date and re-iterated that the objective from the public's perspective is to achieve the best project results. All need to come together to ensure that a good portion of the South Quay wall has glass panels – slides don't truly reflect what is blocked from view. We are all on the same side and the budget for glass would not hugely impact the project overall – Enniscorthy and Waterford are examples. It is not intended to hold up the application but there are concerns about the sightlines if the green space is moved. The proposal for the wall covering is excellent and the dredging gives us the perfect opportunity to use it for environmental remediation projects – huge restorative value – potential use for behind revetments. Glass panelling is most important for the scheme – need for visual access to the water – there is a need to be able to see people in the water from the quayside, access to the water should be by way of stone steps and not ladders for safety reasons.

Cllr Annesley confirmed that most queries he had were covered by the members – He said that there was very little detail on the debris traps and is concerned that the historic willow trees would be felled and the tiles celebrating the twinning with Chateaudun would be removed and would not want this – He said that glass panels were preferable.

Cllr Bourke confirmed that he was invited to speak with Minister O Donovan and will speak to him about progressing the project on behalf of the members – Marc Devereux SE confirmed that there was no issue with support from the Minister and asked that Cllr Bourke pass on thanks from the project team. He is also hoping to have the Minister's support for the next project – Arklow North Beach Revetment.

Marc Devereux replied on the following queries –

Gravel Traps –

The access will be through the carpark – the tiles will be protected. From the EIAR the pond area in the middle of the river is most suitable and most accessible point – possible access required once a year - In Bray access to the traps has not been required in 5 years, this will be weather dependant but the access will be planned for once a year. We will do our best to preserve as many trees as possible.

Embankment –

It is intended to use 15/20% of the dredged materials in the embankment, most of the dredge will be inert and would be suitable for recovery sites i.e. quarry in-fill, North Beach project– designers are trying to use as much of the material that is already there and will only import material to cap it off – material will be sourced locally where possible. Throughout the works plant species will be protected where possible and compounds will be situated away from houses and residents to ensure as little disruption as possible. Any area disturbed will be replanted with native plants once works are completed.

Glass panels –

Currently in 4 locations – there will also be a pontoon in the river for boats. The slip area on South Quay will be highlighted and the info board enhanced. Works on the bridge will aim to enhance and conserve its heritage value.

With regard to safety along the quay wall, the design will ensure that the safety of persons in the water is considered – Lifebuoys will be installed.

Cllr Bourke asked that the issue of landownership along the river bank be clarified and prevent any issues arising around this.

Cllr Bourke thanked both engineers and Cllr Leonard stated that the glass panelling is being sought for the whole town and not just a couple of residents – support from all is needed.

Item 6 : District Engineers Report.

Avril Hill DE gave a report on the following –

Roads Programme –

DTTAS have allocated funding at county level – confirmed on the 5th March – the total for this year is €2.8m, including discretionary grant, WCC funding, Regional and Local Roads grants and drainage grants.

Safety Improvement Works –

6 schemes have been proposed – proposed funding amount €90,000 – most are at tender stage.

Former National Roads –

Wexford Rd Arklow rehabilitation project – proposed funding amount €300,000 – at preliminary design stage.

Footpath Schemes –

The Rathdrum scheme is 90% complete. The R747 Vale Rd works are at tender stage for kerbing and work to be completed by the NNR crew.

NTA Schemes –

Confirmation was received that the NTA schemes may continue during the covid19 lockdown – projects are being led by the NTA team in WCC with input from AMD – 6 projects under STMG and AT project types are being proposed – funding total €395,000.

Other Road Projects –

Due to current restrictions the status of the following projects remains the same – Shroughmore LIS, Saville's Cross Pedestrian Crossing, Ballinacash/Rathdrum Junction.

Tender documents are being prepared for the TVR scheme in Redcross.

Essential works, housing repairs, street sweeping, pot hole repairs, and drainage works are currently being undertaken

Planting of trees in the green area of Fernhill has begun as part of the Biodiversity Plan for the town. Safety barriers at St. Mary's Crescent Barndarrig have been replaced.

Cllr Bourke commented that the report covered an extensive amount of works. Cllr Leonard commented that there were a few roads in need of repair in the town – Griffith St, Connolly St – can funds be found to get these under the Road Improvement works. The tree planting in Fernhill is welcomed but the feedback was that there were concerns over communication on the project – the residents need to be involved more and the outlook on biodiversity for the town needs to change.

Cllr Fitzgerald welcomed the funding for barriers in Avoca and noted that the funding for the Vale Rd was a good investment and that the road would be safer for users. He also asked for clarification on the proposed works at Ballycoogue. Cllr Kennedy also welcomed the proposed works and the spread of funding across the district – noted that road conditions are particularly bad following the volume of rainfall in the last number of weeks and the bad frost adding to the damage.

Cllr Annesley asked if the Wexford Road works would include footpaths. Rob Mulhall EE confirmed that proposal includes the widening of the road from Knockmore to the Kish – it is intended to facilitate walkers as much as possible.

Cllr Murphy suggested going back to local TD's – national problem – emergency funding is needed and pressure needs to be coming from a higher level.

The members asked the engineers to look at continuing the footpath to the recycling centre.

Cllr Kennedy commented that the wall at Ballishal looks really well and thanked both engineers for the timely manner in which the works were carried out – makes such a difference and the workmanship is excellent. He also asked for an update on the proposed works at Rednagh Bridge – is there any plan in place yet?

Rob Mulhall EE confirmed that this proposal was identified in 2020 – an application will be made for funding once funding schemes are open. He also confirmed that funding has been secured for signage at Ballycoogue and that funding was previously sought for Griffith St. and Connolly St. and the application was unsuccessful – AMD will submit the application again.

Cllr Bourke enquired about bridge repair funding – Rob Mulhall EE confirmed that repairs would be carried out where required and would be co-ordinated by WCC. Cllr Bourke expressed concern at the volume of debris built up at Avoca Bridge – Rob Mulhall EE said he would check this.

Cllr Leonard requested a copy of the terms of reference in relation to the planned transport study – Colm Lavery DM confirmed that this had been circulated with the tender documents.

Item 7 : To receive an update on Public Lighting in Arklow MD.

Colm Lavery DM circulated the report on public Lighting.

The report shows 2.64% of public lights in Arklow MD are not working.

The report highlights the need for essential upgrades on public lights in older developments and this will negatively impact on both the timescale in which repairs can be completed and the cost of repairs (installation of column cut-outs/micro pillars.) It is envisaged that a survey

will be carried out on pre 2000 developments with ESB in attendance. A pilot scheme is proposed in Arklow and following this a plan can be put in place for the installation of the required infrastructure.

Colm Lavery DM confirmed that these changes need to be implemented to comply with H & S measures and updated regulations. A complete retrofit to LED lighting is also coming down the line.

Cllr Fitzgerald noted that this will be expensive and asked if there was a proposed start date? Colm Lavery DM confirmed that WCC would work it through with ESB Networks with minimal impact on the PL service and the costs had not yet been determined.

The members discussed the new procedure for reporting faults and the implications for the cost of repairs going forward – Colm Lavery DM confirmed that all of this has been considered and provision made where possible – long term the retrofit will pay us back. WCC will know more when the requirements on the ground have been determined. Cllr Bourke asked that the members are kept updated as things progress.

Item 8 : To receive an update on Arklow Waste Water Sewerage Treatment Plant.

Colm Lavery confirmed that he had been in contact with the lead on the project and was informed that the contract had not yet been awarded and no contract costs have been finalised. IW has committed to attending a meeting in the future and no further update was available. Cllr Bourke noted that this was positive and there was no back pedalling.

Cllr Fitzgerald reported that he had heard that IW would handing back ownership of smaller WWTP's to WCC – Colm Lavery DM confirmed that WCC is still working on some smaller schemes that have yet to be transferred to IW – all that can be transferred have been.

The members expressed frustration at the slow start to the project and the uncertainty over securing funding – Cllr Fitzgerald said he had consulted with the Minister and he was confident that the funding will be secured and an announcement made.

Colm Lavery confirmed that LG is very committed to this project – would face EU fines if not completed and would potentially cost more not to do it. Also confident that timelines will be met and achieved.

Cllr Kennedy concurred with Cllr Fitzgerald and acknowledged the urgency in getting the funding announced.

Item 9 : To receive an update on St. Gabriel's Cemetery.

Avril Hill DE confirmed that WCC ultimately need to purchase land and this process will start. The existing drains around the burial ground will be jetted prior to any remedial works being carried out.

Cllr Fitzgerald thanked the DE and reported that this had been raised at plenary level. He also reported that a headstone had been removed...possibly an accident...the surround and headstone were relatively new and there is no onus on WCC to do anything – WCC need to act here.

Cllr Leonard enquired if trees were to be removed – Cllr Kennedy clarified that the engineers would be looking at the drainage issue, removing trees was not the first option. Cllr Leonard

welcomed that and re-iterated that the trees should be kept and that WCC should consider the option of using the land where the drainage work is being carried out as a place for ashes – not necessarily a columbarium wall.

Cllr Kennedy clarified that it had been previously agreed that he and Cllr Bourke would meet with the CE and they are making progress and the executive is committed to resolving any issues.

Item 10 : Correspondence.

No correspondence received.

Item 11 : A.O.B.

Members asked that AMD write out to the young girl from Avoca who had written in about littering. Claire Lawless DA agreed to do this.

The members discussed the economic loss to some community centres around the district and suggested a mechanism to write to Government to re-introduce mortgage breaks for any that are struggling to meet payments – Can AMD write to the Head of Finance to look for a letter to be drafted to Minister McGrath. Members supported this and Cllr Kennedy thanked Mr Mann (PPN) for attending and waiting for this item.

It was agreed to review the estate grant allocations at the next meeting.

Minutes confirmed at the Arklow Municipal District Council Meeting held on Wednesday the 21st April 2021.

Signed: _____

Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District.

Signed: _____

Ms. Claire Lawless, District Administrator, Arklow Municipal District

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ITEM 6 – Minutes 10th February 2021
COUNCILLOR LEONARD AMENDMENT NO. 1 –

PROPOSED:

SECONDED:

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

“Arklow needs another graveyard, some of the land at Churchview could be considered for planting more trees.”

REPLACE WITH:

“Arklow needs another graveyard, land at Tinahask could be considered. Some of the land at Churchview could be considered for planting more trees.”