



**Wicklow County Council
Chomhairle Chontae Chill Mhantáin**

ARKLOW MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING HELD IN THE McELHERON CHAMBER ON THE 8th JUNE 2022

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

Officials Present: Ms. Leonora Earls, District Manager
Ms. Claire Lawless, District Administrator
Ms. Avril Hill, District Engineer
Merlin Ovington, AO Environment
Ms. Sinéad Boddy, ASO

Press : None

Public: None

Item 1 : Votes of Sympathy.

The members expressed votes of sympathy to all families who have recently lost loved ones; the members also asked that all are mindful of families with sick relatives and expressed concern for families of those killed in recent road traffic accidents. Votes of sympathy were expressed for the families of –

Mary Byrne, Robert Bradshaw, Hugh Kelly, Kathleen Kinch, Oliver Forde, May Anne Rynne.

A minutes silence was observed.

Item 2 : Confirmation of Minutes from Ordinary Meeting held on the 11th May 2022.

The minutes of the Arklow Municipal District Ordinary Meeting held on the 11th May 2022 were proposed by Cllr Fitzgerald and seconded by Cllr Bourke.

Item 3 : Matters Arising.

C Lawless DA briefed the members on the report on derelict sites – none in Arklow listed at the moment. Members were advised that the form to nominate a property is available on the WCC website. Any that have been nominated previously were inspected and deemed not to be derelict in accordance with legislation.

The members expressed shock at the fact that there are no properties deemed derelict in the district. Particular areas in the town were highlighted and discussion continued in relation to previous attempts to have certain properties deemed derelict. Cllr Fitzgerald suggested following the example of another LA and demolishing buildings. Cllr Leonard said that it should not be on one member to submit forms and a collective form could be submitted – members should meet and identify the properties to be nominated. Cllr Murphy supported this and stated that this is a national problem and there seems to be an issue with the policy in relation to this. Discussion on previous applications continued and Cllr Kennedy asked if a representative from the planning section would consider meeting with the members, on site if necessary. L Earls

DM agreed to bring the members concerns to the Planning DOS and will extend an invite for a representative to meet with the members. Cllr Kennedy asked that this item is included in next month's agenda.

Item 4 : Consideration of Reports and Recommendations.

To adopt the Arklow MD Schedule of Municipal District Works

The schedule was adopted – proposed by Cllr Bourke and seconded by Cllr Fitzgerald.

To Consider and agree Festival Funding for 2022

The proposed allocation was circulated prior to the meeting.

Cllr Kennedy stated that there was a good geographical spread of the funding this year. Cllr Leonard requested information on the criteria used to make the allocations, she suggested a points system could be used to maximise the impact of the funding for the town. Cllr Annesley agreed with this and was disappointed with the amount allocated to the Seabreeze Festival – further discussion took place on the allocation and what details had been submitted to support the applications. C Lawless DA stated that the aim was to allocate throughout the district. Cllr Kennedy asked the members to vote to agree the proposed allocation – All members voted for the proposed allocation.

Item 5 : Other business set forth in the Notice convening the meeting.

To receive a report from the Housing Section

The housing report was circulated to the members. Cllr Murphy said it is heart breaking to see that there are over a 1000 applicants looking for housing in the district – Do we have any power, no offence to the housing staff but we cannot get through to the section so where do we go? Is it a staff resource issue – we cannot do our job. C Lawless DA confirmed that the Housing SEO is available and can be contacted at any time. Cllr Fitzgerald expressed concern at the number of NTQs being issued to tenants from landlords and it is a terrible situation – north of the county is faring better. Cllr Leonard also expressed concern and highlighted that people are resorting to squatting even though it would not be in their nature. Do WCC have a budget to purchase more properties? Cllr Annesley confirmed that the WWTP has had an impact and more houses will come on stream for Arklow. The standard of social houses being built is second to none. Cllr Bourke agreed that the NTQ situation is very serious – watching what government is proposing and ensuring that the playing field is levelled nationally is important. Cllr Kennedy stated that he is in Co Buildings every second day representing people – a housing report is due to issue and Co Wicklow will do well nationally. He thanked the housing staff and stated that they cannot do more than they are already doing. He agreed with Cllr Leonard and more funding should be sought as well as ensuring that there is adequate land to fulfil housing needs – LAP due to be reviewed and asked that the DM check this. L Earls stated that LA's are instructed not to look to the acquisition market as it goes against those in a position to buy – WCC's targets are being met.

To receive an update on the Columbarium Wall.

M Ovington updated the members on the Columbarium Wall project for Arklow – since the first proposal at the meeting in Redcross, €5,000 a year has been set aside to fund this project. The Bray project has been completed with 392 niches and 6 purchased to date. Advised AMD to keep building the fund and see how the Bray wall progresses. The cost per niche in Bray is €650 for 2 urns whereas an existing plot can take 3 urns.

Cllr Fitzgerald acknowledged that the number of people opting for cremation is increasing. Families opt then to inter the ashes in existing plots, a different mind-set. He recalled that the Manager at the time this was first discussed, stating that there would be no issue with funding. The bigger problem at the moment in Arklow is the lack of space and there is no doubt that a Columbarium Wall would improve this situation. M Ovington replied that it has been estimated that there will be 3 years left in St Gabriel's Cemetery. The option of acquiring space from the other section of the graveyard was discussed – there have been 12 plots purchased in the last 21 years with approx. 400 available. WCC owns this portion also. WCC are looking at alternative lands for a new graveyard but a lot are not suitable. The wall will be required even if other options are considered.

Cllr Leonard suggested that natural burial grounds are considered – Arklow could pilot this initially. This lends itself to biodiversity. I can forward the link to all – it is an alternative. M Ovington replied that this may be an option if it's for ashes only and suggested an area of woodland owned by WCC.

Cllr Annesley said it would be worth conversing with the current Rector about the space available in St. Gabriel's and stated that a Columbarium Wall was promised. M Ovington replied that a new graveyard could be the solution and Cllr Annesley

agreed that it is needed. M Ovington stressed that the funding is nearly there for the wall. Cllr Murphy stated that we should not be waiting on results from another graveyard and telling families where and how to bury their loved ones is not right – not prepared to see old traditions go yet, but agreed that we need to open our minds to all options. Cllr Leonard suggested getting started on the design phase if the funding is in place. Cllr Bourke agreed and suggested a plot of land in the town for a new graveyard. M Ovington stated that the assistance of the district staff is required to aid the design phase. If the acquisition of land is considered, funding will need to be set aside from the revenue budget starting now. Cllr Kennedy agreed and that this is prudent management.

Item 6 : Notice of Motions.

(a) Notice of Motion in the name of Cllr Peir Leonard. Received on (22/04/22)

‘That Arklow Municipal District removes the sand build up on Arklow South Pier before the summer season’.

Cllr Leonard asked if there was funding available to do this – it is a space for public amenity and would it be possible to put a seat there. C Lawless DA confirmed that the MD traditionally does this and it can be checked.

(b) Notice of Motion in the name of Cllr Peir Leonard. Received on (22/04/22)

‘That Arklow Municipal District request Wicklow County Council to put Arklow Cove Beach and Arklow Nuns Beach on the designated bathing area register and introduce a lifeguard to both beaches’.

Cllr Leonard asked that a submission is made from all members – the beaches are getting busier and need to be designated to have a lifeguard assigned during the bathing season. It was agreed to submit a request from members and AMD.

District Engineers Report

Roads Programme

Provisional roads programme is below. Surface dressing programme is due to start in the district on 9th June.

Regional Roads

<i>Road No.</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Proposed Works</i>	<i>Status</i>
R-754-0	Red cross	Resurfacing & line marking	Tendered

Local Roads

<i>Road No.</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Proposed Works</i>	<i>Status</i>
L-2191-30	Ballyduff Road	Resurfacing & line marking	Tendered
L-6167-0	Oghill Upper	Resurfacing	Tendered
L-6203-33	Killaveny	Resurfacing	Tendered
L-2140-0	Greenan Beg - Aughrim	Resurfacing	Tendered
L-2144-0	Meetings to Ballinaclash	Resurfacing	Tendered
L-5665, L-5165, L-5164	Ballykeane	Surface Dressing	WCC
L-5660	Bonagrew to Ballyvaltron	Surface Dressing	WCC
L-2128	Ballyboy-Aughavannagh	Surface Dressing	WCC
L-2137	Aughrim - Ballyteige	Surface Dressing	WCC
R-754	Redcross - Barndarrig	Surface Dressing	Contractor on behalf of IW

Safety Improvements Works

<i>Road No.</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Proposed Works</i>	<i>Status</i>
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R 747	Woodenbridge and Aughrim	Safety Barrier	Complete
L 6126-0	Kirakee Village, Glenmalure	Safety Barrier	Complete
R 753	Ballinaclesh and Rathdrum	Safety Barrier	Complete
R 754	Barndarrig	Replacement speed ramp	To be tendered

Former National Roads

<i>Road No.</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Proposed Works</i>	<i>Status</i>
R 772	Knockmore to Kish	Resurfacing & Line Marking	Tendered

Line Marking: AMD are working on a line marking tender for the district.

Miscellaneous Roads

<i>Road No.</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Proposed Works</i>	<i>Status</i>
L-2149-0	Avondale Road	Overlay and passing places	Overlay to commence

Footpaths

<i>Road No.</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Proposed Works</i>	<i>Status</i>
R747	Vale Road	Remove and replace extruded kerb and lay concrete	Replacement kerb due w/e 10 th June

Currently reviewing the footpath projects on the Discretionary list, some have been tendered; others will be constructed by our own staff.

Speed Limit Review

The Pre-draft Consultation phase of the speed limit review has commenced.

Any submission can be discussed with DE or sent to speedlimits@wicklowcoco.ie

Housing Construction Update

Avondale Phase 2

The site consists of 20 houses. The Contractor is currently on site. Substructure and ground floor slabs are in place, Timber frames are insitu, and roofs are constructed. External blockwork walls are progressing well and external rendering has commenced. Anticipated completion date is September 2022.

Sheehan Court (Old Fire Station)

The project consists of a terrace of 7 no., 2bed houses, and is now fully approved by the DHLGH. Structurally building closed up, doors windows brickwork and first fixing all in place. Irish Water connections are due to take place between 19th- 22ndApril. The road will remain open during this time. The conditions of the road opening licence include liaising with bus services to ensure there are no disruptions to services.

Community Monuments Funding

Arklow received funding for two projects in the 2022 Community Monuments Funding. €84,000 for Arklow Castle and €7,072 for Abbey Lane.

Other Projects

Handrails at St. Gabriel's cemetery are complete.

St Mary's Park – An Application was made by the team managing the Parade Ground project to extend the scheme to include the front of St. Mary's Park. No confirmation of approval to extend the scheme/funding as yet.

Bike Shelters – Bike shelters have been installed throughout the district.

Comments:

The members thanked the DE for the huge amount of works being done. Cllr Leonard asked about the plans for St Marys Park and if the design was the original, A Hill DE replied that it is the same one. Cllr Bourke stated that he had received a complaint about the location of the bus stop in front of the church building – Cllr Fitzgerald said he had spoken to the local priest and he had no issue with the location. Cllr Bourke questioned the work rate of the contractors on the Parade Ground works and asked for an expected end date. L Earls DM confirmed that longer working hours are not in the contract – the team is working within the limits provided. A Hill DE confirmed that the expected end date has not changed and is Oct/Nov 2022.

Signs were requested for Abbeys St. to advise motorists that St. Mary’s Road is open to traffic.

Cllr Fitzgerald said the location for the temporary bus stop was not agreeable, L Earls DM replied that Bus Eireann seemed happy with this location. Cllr Leonard asked when the traffic layout would return to normal, L Earls DM confirmed that this has been discussed with the traders and options also discussed, the decision will depend on the contractors Traffic Management Safety Officer’s considerations.

Cllr Leonard raised an issue with large commercial vehicles turning for Lower Main St and to danger to pedestrians on the street – Can more signs go up?

Item 7 : Correspondence

A letter was received from Arklow CBS thanking AMD for the contribution to their exchange programme with the twinning town Wurzburg – They hope to hold an event in September and would like AMD members to be involved. C Lawless agreed to discuss this with the school.

Item 8 : Any Other Business

Cllr Kennedy pleased that €3.5m in funding has been announced for St Colman’s Hospital Rathdrum and requested that SSE is invited to the next meeting.

Cllr Bourke asked if any plans were discussed for Arklow to apply for the funding scheme recently announced for converting old buildings for community/enterprise use and requested that a bench is located along the Beech Rd., at the junction with the Fert. Road. He also asked that AMD replace the flood barriers on the Riverwalk at the back of Christies.

Cllr Leonard asked for clarification on whether or not there will be access from the Primary Care Centre through to Main St. Cllr Fitzgerald said he would check that out tomorrow. Cllr Leonard suggested that an event manager could be hired to organise an event on Main St to promote the street and bring people to the town centre.

The Pines residents have reached a good compromise with the revised design – A Hill DE will meet with the builder to review the revised option.

Meeting concluded.

Minutes confirmed at the Arklow Municipal District Council Meeting held on Wednesday the 13th July 2022.

Signed: _____

Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District.

Signed: _____

Ms. Claire Lawless, District Administrator, Arklow Municipal District