

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE MUNICIPAL
DISTRICT OF ENNISCORTHY HELD IN THE PRESENTATION
CENTRE, ENNISCORTHY ON MONDAY 17th JANUARY, 2022 AT
3.00 P.M.**

Attendance: Councillors:

Cathal Byrne (Cathaoirleach)
Kathleen Codd-Nolan
Barbara Anne Murphy
John O'Rourke
Aidan Browne
Jackser Owens

Officials:

Ms. Carolyne Godkin, Director of Services
Ms. Bernie Quigley, A/District Administrator
Mr. Tadhg O'Corcora, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Neil Dempsey, Executive Engineer,
Mr. Larry McHale, Project Engineer
Ms. Roseanne Redmond, Senior Staff Officer, Housing
Ms. Marie Butler, A/ASO

At the outset the Chairman stated that the Meeting would be of 1 hour and 55 minutes duration.

Congratulations:

- Cllr. Jackser Owens congratulated Oulart/The Ballagh Camogie Team on their success in the All-Ireland Camogie Club Championships.
- Cllr. Owens sent his commiserations to Oilgate/Glenbrien on their loss in the Leinster Intermediate Club Championships.
- Cllr. Aidan Browne congratulated Fintan Kelly, Actor who is heading to London (the Playground Theatre) to perform a role in the Bernard Field Play "Shroud".

Votes of Sympathy:

- Cllr. Cathal Byrne offered a vote of sympathy to the Manning family on the death of Tara.
- Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan offered a vote of sympathy to the Yates family on the death of Mary, to the Doyle family on the death of John, to the Hatton family on the death of Emily, the Murphy family, on the death of Paudge and the Quigley family, on the death of James.
- Cllr. Jackser Owens offered a vote of sympathy to the O'Connor and Freeman families on the death of Lysa, to the Egan family on the death of Liam, the Farnan family on the death of Ellen, and the Jordan family on the death of Daniel (Bo).

1. Confirmation of Minutes:

1.1 Minutes of the December Monthly Meeting of the Members of the Municipal District of Enniscorthy – 21st December, 2021

On the proposal of Councillor Barbara Anne Murphy, seconded by Councillor Kathleen Codd-Nolan, the Minutes of the December Monthly Meeting of the Members of the Municipal District of Enniscorthy held on 20th December, 2021 were adopted by the Council and signed by the Cathaoirleach with the following amendments.

1.2 Matters Arising

Cllr. Murphy asked that it be noted that St. Patrick's National School was not owned by the HSE or the Diocese's and undertook to follow up further on ownership.

Cllr. Codd-Nolan stated that in relation to deers/stags on roadways, the roads in question were, Ballycarney Road to Ferns, the N80 into Castledockrell, and the Ferns Road (R745) to Ballindaggin. Cllr. Codd-Nolan asked that consideration be given to the erection of signage in these areas.

Cllr. O'Rourke asked that consideration be given to the provision of housing for the elderly at St. Patrick's National School being.

Cllr. O'Rourke also if there was any update on the naming of the steps outside Evolv Health Food Shop on Castle Hill– "Wilkie Way".

Cllr. O'Rourke asked that his necessity to leave the meeting at 4.20 p.m. be noted in the minutes.

Bernie Quigley, A/District Administrator stated that she did not have any further information to hand on the naming of the steps on Castle Hill but undertook to follow up on the matter.

2. Consideration of Reports and Recommendations:

2.2 Housing

The Chairman asked that the Housing Report be taken at this juncture of the meeting to facilitate a presentation via video link from Michael Drea, SEO, Housing.

Michael Drea thanked the Members and made a presentation on "Housing for All, Housing Delivery Plans" – Wexford County Council 2022 – 2026.

Mr. Drea outlined the main objectives of the plan, in particular the four pathways highlighted in the document.

Current and projected housing needs within County Wexford were identified and it was noted that Wexford County Council had a minimum social housing target of 1150 to be delivered by 2026. Mr. Drea informed the Members that an assessment of the Council's land-bank had been carried out revealing that Wexford County Council had very little land at their disposal. It was noted that a number of options were currently being explored by officials.

He continued by stating that when preparing the plan, it was noted that 702 people were in need of housing in the Enniscorthy District with the bulk in need of 1 and 2 bedroom units. He further stated that there were a very large number of properties in the District under-utilised.

Mr. Drea stated that the Council were pursuing lines in bridging the Affordability Gap and delivering Affordable houses with the following under consideration:

- (a) Local Authority-Led Affordable Purchase Scheme.
- (b) Affordable Purchase Shared-Equity First Home Scheme.
- (c) Part V Agreements increased from 10% to 20%.
- (d) The launch of a newly expanded Local Authority Home Loan.
- (e) Wexford County Council Affordable Purchase Scheme.

A number of queries were raised by the Members, in particular:-

- 357 Houses to be built over 5 years – people will be waiting a long time to be rehoused.
- The biggest housing need at present is for 1 and 2 bedroom units.
- Request for consideration for Emergency Accommodation to be provided in the Enniscorthy area.
- Request for the Area Housing Officer to attend the monthly meetings of this committee.
- It was noted that the weaker parts of the District, including Castledockrell were not included in the plan for Social housing. Request for considering to purchasing land in these areas to facilitate housing.
- Query as to whether the 76% of first preferences for Enniscorthy was an accurate picture overall or was it that people were putting Enniscorthy as their first choice for housing as there were no houses being built in other parishes.
- Target of 22 houses for Ferns – currently 20 houses being constructed, would the Council be acquiring an additional 2 properties to meet this target.
- Query regarding plans for an Affordable Housing Scheme.
- Query regarding the achievability of meeting the housing target for 2022-2026.
- Lack of services in a number of areas throughout the district.
- Concerns around the suitability of apartments as they are age demographic.
- Concerns regarding the oversaturation of 3 beds underoccupied (371).

- Commencement of a pilot project regarding house construction for affordable housing before the end of 2022.
- Request for Mr. Drea to come back to a future meeting of the committee to update on progress.

Ms. Godkin, Director of Services responded to all queries raised. Ms. Godkin stated that the plan only included what the Council were confident they could deliver. She said that this was a strong first draft with the Council currently looking at “buy and renew” and before the end of February proposing to examine at “Turnkey”. It was noted that the Area Housing Officer does not attend the district meetings, however, any queries can be brought to them through Roseanne Redmond.

The Director continued by stating that Covid had caused huge delays in the construction sector and there was now a shortage of construction workers. In relation to Irish Water, she stated that this was an ongoing challenge for Local Authorities, however, the new programmes expectation is that the Local Authority will now have some input.

The Director stated that apartments were cost efficient as they did not take up as much land and that the Council would be looking at the provision of apartments over shop units.

Ms. Roseanne Redmond attended the meeting to update the Members on Housing and highlighted the main points of the Housing Report circulated prior to the meeting.

A number of concerns were highlighted by the Members:

Cllr. Owens proposed that the Council consider installing a bench/seat outside former Cllr. Tom Moorehouse’s house at Moran Park, this proposal was seconded by Cllr. O’Rourke.

- Concerns regarding the non-acceptance of a family onto the housing list due to their income being over the €33,000 cut off point.
- Completion date for the houses on the Ross Road and breakdown of house types.
- Clarification if housing medical forms signed off by an applicant’s doctor was sufficient as some applicants have been asked for a second medical practitioner to sign.

Cllr. O’Rourke left the meeting – 4.20pm.

- 2 houses in Marconi Park – have applicants been identified to take up residence when houses are complete.
- Completion date for houses in Ferns.
- Query whether the Council can work with people regarding underoccupied houses.
- The number of houses in Enniscorthy acquired under lease.

- Vacant properties in Borrmount and Crefogue since 2018/2020 – update requested.

In response to the queries raised Ms. Redmond informed Members that she would speak to the Housing Officer in relation to the two vacant houses in Marconi Park. She stated that she did not have a breakdown of the units at Carley's Bridge to hand, however they were due to be completed in the 1st quarter of 2022. A breakdown on number of units involved to be emailed to the Members following the meeting.

With regard to the income limit for Social Housing it was noted that this was determined by the Department, however, the Director stated that if the family were unhappy with the outcome there was an appeal procedure in place.

Ms. Redmond informed the Members that it was proposed to readvertise for emergency accommodation in early 2022, when it was hoped some Enniscorthy properties would become available. It was noted that the final account for the house on Ross Road was being prepared and a submission would be made to the Department, with Members being updated.

Ms. Redmond also stated that the house in Crefogue was ready to go to tender before the end of January. In relation to leased properties within the district, Ms. Redmond undertook to speak to her colleagues to prepare a report on same.

2.1 Planning

Planning report as circulated was noted by the Members

2.2 Community Report

The Members asked of the possibility of a survey with regard to public lighting within the town being carried out.

Cllr. Codd-Nolan said she noted that with regard to the Rural Regeneration Scheme, Wexford had secured no funding in this phase and enquired if an application had been made. She stated that the Council needed to apply for all grants for our towns and villages.

Cllr. Owens enquired if the Cemetery gates in Bunclody, could be kept open. He further asked of the possibility of a second tap to be installed and raised concerns regarding the lack of toilet facilities.

Cllr. Browne enquired if the Council could apply for RD Funding, Category 2 for Ferns.

Cllr. Murphy noted that villages with small populations of less than 200 were receiving funding, and of the importance of the Council in applying for all available grants.

Ms. Godkin responded by stating that there were significant grant applications ongoing at present and confirmed that no application was made for Enniscorthy Town under the Rural Regeneration Scheme. It was noted that the current priority is to get some of the applications in progress completed. The Director further stated that Ferns would be a significant project with a significant amount of work. It was further noted that the historic towns initiative had progressed well in 2021 and this is something we could look to build on for 2022.

2.2 Environment

Cllr. Murphy asked if there was a public service obligation on waste companies to travel down lanes to collect refuse. Cllr. Murphy raised concerns that in an area in which she is familiar with, that the service provider had refused to go down the lane due to overgrown trees. Concerns regarding issues arising from a number of different providers in small estates were also raised.

Ms. Godkin stated that scheduling within waste companies was out of the control of the Council, however, to assist with this issue property owners should arrange to cut back trees on private lanes.

2.2 Libraries/Fire Service – Home Energy Saving Kit

Noted.

2.3 Municipal District Report:

Report as circulated and noted by the Members. The following matters were raised:-

- Cleaning of Promenade.
- Peace Park – Wheelchair access/walkways not accessible following heavy rain.
- Public Lights from the Riverside Park to the Bridge out of order.

Ms. Quigley, A/District Administrator responded to all queries raised.

3. Roads Report.

Mr. Neil Dempsey, Executive Engineer updated the Members on the main points of the Roads Report circulated prior to the meeting. A number of queries/observations were highlighted:-

- Esmonde Road – no pathways/lights not working.
- Bellefield Springs – Wall knocked down last year, when will same be rebuilt.
- Necessary works to all bridges in the district – inspections imminent.
- Active Travel – Maximise how much we get - €300,000 insufficient.

Mr. Dempsey addressed all queries raised.

The Members thanked Mr. Dempsey for work on Pegs Lane.

The Chairman asked that we defer items 5, 6 7 and 8 to the February meeting.

4. Enniscorthy Flood Defence Scheme Report/Update.

Mr. Larry McHale updated the Members on the main points of the Flood Defence Scheme report circulated prior to the meeting and gave an update on the meeting with the Flood Defence Minister, Patrick O'Donovan, on January 13th.

Mr. McHale assured Members that the scheme was ready to progress once approval was granted and the Members thanked Mr. McHale for the update.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

CATHAOIRLEACH

DATE