

**Minutes of the New Ross Municipal District Monthly Meeting
held on the 14th January 2026 at 15:30hrs in the
Council Chamber, The Tholsel, Quay Street, New Ross.**

Presiding: Cllr John Dwyer – An Cathaoirleach

Councillors: Cllr John Fleming – Leas Cathaoirleach
Cllr Pat Barden
Cllr Marty Murphy
Cllr Michael Sheehan

Officials: Alan Fitzhenry – District Manager
Áine Waters – Staff Officer
Michelle Duffin – Assistant Staff Officer
David Murphy – Executive Engineer (Roads)
Eamonn Hore – Director of Services

Remote: Melissa Goff – Senior Staff Officer (Environment)
Martina Donoghue – Administrative Officer (Housing)
Cllr Bridin Murphy

Guests: Michelle Walsh – EirGrid (Remote)
Eoin O’Sullivan - EirGrid
Ronan Lynch - EirGrid

Apologies: Abigail Nuzum – Executive Planner

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr John Dwyer, confirmed that the requisite quorum was in place, welcomed all those in attendance and commenced the meeting.

1. Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Monthly Meeting

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of 10th December, 2025, were proposed by Cllr Michael Sheehan and seconded by Cllr Pat Barden.

1.3 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meetings.

Sympathies

Cllr Barden expressed sympathies with the families of Anne Doyle of Rathnure, Jason Roche of New Ross, and John Foley of Duncannon.

Cllr Sheehan expressed condolences to the families of Jimmy Flynn, Aiden Kent, Jason Roche, Seamus Coley, Fr. Richard Miskella, Martin Doyle, Kathleen Allen, Betty Cass, Mary Connors, and Kathleen Lenihan.

Cllr Fleming expressed condolences to the Cooney family of Rathnure and the U.K.

Cllr Dwyer expressed condolences to the mayor of Danville, Newell Arnerich and his wife Janis, on the loss of their son, Anthony. This was echoed by all, including the District Manager and Director of Service.

Congratulations

Cllr Fleming congratulated the district team on securing funding for refurbishment of the old courthouse, the Rathnure Development Group on securing funding to develop the old school into a multi-purpose community building, and Dick Lyng on being inducted into the Handball Hall of Fame.

Cllr Sheehan also congratulated the district team on the success of the Santa event and the overall Christmas period, and also congratulated the New Ross Boat Club on their 150th anniversary.

Cllr Dwyer congratulated the New Ross Pipe Band on their Christmas Eve parade and noted that he didn't snub the event and would have attended if invited.

Due to a scheduled presentation by EirGrid, An Cathaoirleach recommended the suspension of Standing Orders. Cllr Pat Barden proposed the suspension of Standing Orders, seconded by Cllr Michael Sheehan. Standing Orders were duly suspended. An Cathaoirleach, Cllr Dwyer, requested the order of business to be reflected in the minutes.

4. Other Business

4.1 Presentation by EirGrid

The representatives from EirGrid gave their presentation before responding to queries raised by the members:

Cllr Dwyer queried if there will be an impact of fisheries, what type of infrastructure will be used on land, and if the off-shore infrastructure will be assembled at Rosslare. Cllr Sheehan enquired about the installation of the on-land infrastructure and road opening licences, and the estimated completion date.

Cllr M. Murphy enquired about the size of the turbines and how many are proposed, querying if fishing will be permitted between turbines.

Cllr M. Murphy further enquired about the landfall locations for cables.

Cllr Barden queried how many interconnectors are in Ireland, is this new addition for export or for Ireland's grid, why Wexford was chosen, and if the existing grid needs upgrades to cater for this addition.

Cllr M. Murphy enquired about using the estuary to bring cables straight to Great Island.

All members raised concerns about any potential impact this may have on fishermen and their livelihood.

The EirGrid representatives responded to the members as follows:

- There is no major reduction in fisheries, only 500m around the substation, the infrastructure on land will be underground cables to substations, and no update on if the off-shore infrastructure will be assembled in Rosslare yet.
- Laying of cables on land will require road opening licences and permissions from private landowners, everything will be reinstated once completed, with a projected completion date in 2030.
- There will be 45 turbines in a 331sq/km off-shore plot, approx. 1 turbine every 5-6km, and it would be a decision for the developers regarding permitting fishing between turbines.
- There is a restriction on laying cables next to each other so final route is yet to be determined.
- Currently three interconnectors with this to be the fourth, and is to benefit Ireland, can export power when not needed and import when needed, Wexford was chosen because of Great Island, and noted there are over 300 projects ongoing to the existing grid to cater for renewable energy to meet targets.
- Bringing cables up the estuary to Great Island is not viable due to anchoring at the mouth of the river.
- EirGrid are meeting regularly with local communities and fishermen to engage and provide updates.

This concluded the scheduled presentation. The EirGrid representatives departed the meeting.

2. Consideration of Reports and Recommendations

2.1 District Managers Report

The District Manager delivered his monthly report and highlighted the following information;

Arrow Ceremony at Hook Lighthouse

The Cathaoirleach and Elected Members of New Ross Municipal took part in the centuries old, traditional arrow ceremony at Hook Head on New Years Day. Assisted by members of the Dunbrody Archers, An Cathaoirleach Cllr John Dwyer, cast an arrow into the sea, claiming the Estuary for the people of New Ross. A large crowd attended on the day and our thanks to all at Hook Lighthouse on a well-run event.

Arts & Amenities and Residents Association Grants 2026

The 2026 Arts & Amenity and Residents Association Grants are soon to be advertised in the newspapers and on the Council's website.

Applications will open 21st January and can be made online, or a form can be requested by phoning reception at 051 421284. The closing date is **Friday 13th February at 5.00pm**.

The Residents Association grants are for individual private housing estates only. Local Authority housing estates receive their funding directly from the Housing Officer.

The Residents Association funding is €11,000 in total and that is divided by the number of groups who apply, with the maximum amount payable to any group, being €600. The Budget allocation here on the GMA is €15,000 however the NRMD members have traditionally allocated €4,000 from this fund to New Ross Tidy Towns. The Arts and Amenity grants are for voluntary groups or individuals for works such as community development initiatives, promoting local heritage, promoting an interest in sport or the arts, etc.

Once the Arts and Amenity closing date has passed, each Elected Member will be sent the list of applications and will have €10,000 each to distribute as they see fit. The report with the allocations for both grants will be brought to the earliest possible meeting, for approval by the Members.

PROJECTS

Outdoor Biodiversity Classroom

We were delighted to secure €17,000 funding from the Biodiversity Officer recently to revamp the outdoor classroom in Pearse Park. This area is located beside the Sensory Garden. The wet pour surface is being installed this week and the benches have also been installed. Native planting and a wildflower area is the next focus, with signage in this space being updated to match the school curriculum. The space will be open to all and bookable by schools for use. We expect to see works completed by Q2 of 2026.

Motorhome Park

Work on compiling a detailed Environmental Impact Statement will begin this year and An Coimisiún Pleanála will be required to make a decision once submitted.

Quay Street Regeneration

Following approval by the Members at the last meeting, Malone O'Regan Consulting Engineers continue to finalise their work on the detailed design for Quay Street and to prepare the tender pack for advertising to contractors by end of January/early February.

Sports Capital Pearse Park

The plan is to see works start in Q1 2026.

New Ross Skate Park

Awaiting funding.

St Stephen's Cemetery Digitalisation Project

The project for the mapping and digitalisation of the cemetery records continues. The system has gone live for the project team to work on. It will take a significant period of time for the entire cemetery records to be up-loaded to the new system.

New Ross Courthouse Project

The District Team, working with Special Projects, are delighted to see our application under the 2025 Town & Village Renewal Scheme has been successful, for the renovation of the old Courthouse building in New Ross.

€500,000 has been secured for the project, which will see this historic building return to use in the community. Once official documentation is issued by the Dept., a project team will be formed to begin work on this important project. Our thanks to all members, officials and the Dept. for their support for this project.

Cllr Sheehan congratulated the district team for all their hard work, raised a concern regarding a significant shop closing in the town and proposed to invite the Chamber to a meeting to discuss town centre renewal plans.

Cllr Sheehan further enquired about upgrading the town Christmas lights to include John Street, North Quay and Rosbercon.

Cllr B. Murphy congratulated the district team on the Christmas Lights Switch-On, supported Cllr Sheehan's point about the town's Christmas lights, and enquired about a timeline for the motorhome park, noting concerns about another summer season passing without it.

Cllr Fleming enquired about an update on the old Sweeney garden centre, and provided the members with an update from the Regional Health Forum on the Primary Care Centre for New Ross.

Cllr M. Murphy enquired about an update on the works to Fethard slipway.

Cllr Dwyer queried an opening date for Duncannon Fort and raised an issue with wheelie bins left on the street.

Cllr Barden queried the delays on the motorhome park planning application, and also noted the increase in Croí Conaithe grants for accommodation above shops.

A discussion ensued among the members regarding the Croí Conaithe grants.

The District Manager responded to queries raised by the members as follows:

- Will certainly invite the Chamber to a meeting soon.
- Will look into additional lights and frames, just finished paying off last upgrades so may need to wait to let funds build up.
- The motorhome park may be delayed up to 18months due to further assessments requested.
- Cannot discuss the garden centre as it is privately owned.
- Duncannon Fort opening is planned for early spring but await confirmation of a date from Minister's office.
- Investigation into bins left on street is ongoing with Environment.

Director Eamonn Hore advised that he would follow up with the Department regarding the approval for works at Fethard slipway.

The District Manager reminded the members that the Civic Awards will be held in April this year and advised that they each have 3 nominations for the awards.

2.1a Special Projects Report

None.

2.2 Roads Report

The Executive Engineer delivered his report before responding to queries from the members;

Cllr Fleming highlighted a missing speed sign at Leeches bend and a tree down near Adamstown, and asked about compensation from Coillte from their trucks breaking up a local road.

Cllr Sheehan enquired when works would commence in Pondsfields and when the speed feedback signs would be installed.

Cllr Dwyer enquired about installing neurodivergent parking in town, the condition of the Irishtown road due to high volume of traffic, highlighted a dangerous stone wall which is collapsing in Kelly's wood, and the lack of public lighting in Millponds.

Cllr Barden enquired about Active Travel works in Newbawn and Adamstown, particularly footpaths and lighting columns, and enquired about resurfacing works on Doonooney Lane.

Cllr B. Murphy asked for resurfacing of Ballinclay lane, and raised the issue of illegal parking in Clonroche which causes safety and traffic issues and enquired about an update on a proposed safety audit.

The Executive Engineer responded to the members as follows:

- The tree down near Adamstown is wrapped in Eir lines, they must remove lines before Council can remove tree.
- Coillte are entitled to use public roads but will raise issue with them.
- Pondsfields is on 2026 works programme, will have an update at February or March meeting.
- Speed feedback signs will continue to be put up around the district.
- Irishtown resurfacing is considered for 2026 works programme.
- Will look into neurodivergent parking.
- Will visit Kelly's wood to look at collapsing stone wall and what is needed.
- Met with ESB re public lighting, design complete, and tender issued, will get an update on same from Public Lighting Section.
- Newbawn is on the list for Active Travel.
- Doonooney Lane potholes were filled.
- Ballinclay lane being considered for 2026, await budget.
- Spoke to Gardai regarding illegal parking in Clonroche, outside the shop is on a national road, will refer to Roads Safety Officer.

2.3 Housing Report

The Administrative Officer delivered her report and responded to queries raised by the members.

Cllr Dwyer enquired if we are in line with national guidelines recently published regarding rent arrears and arrears prevention, noting a tenant being refused repairs to their house due to rent arrears.

Cllr Barden raised a query about refusal of an adaptation grant.
Cllr Sheehan enquired about the handover of Hewittsland, and asked for an update on the vacant Respond apartments in the Irishtown.
Cllr Fleming enquired about a start date for the development in Adamstown.
Cllr Sheehan asked if the single rural housing scheme is still active.
Cllr Dwyer enquired if the Gardaí are liaising with WCC if they are called to LA properties.
Cllr Sheehan asked how long social housing applicants are on the waiting list before being placed.
Cllr Barden raised a query concerning an applicant for a 2 bed house on the waiting list for 10 years and if she would be considered for a 3 bed due to her time on the waiting list.
Cllr M. Murphy asked if applicants are aware of the importance of bidding on properties when they come up.

The AO responded to the members as follows:

- WCC has its own Credit Control section, Housing meet them fortnightly, and they do everything possible to get tenants into affordable payment plans. Will have to review document in question and revert.
- Grant queries should be referred to Edel Nolan in Grants section.
- Hewittsland development to be handed over in Q2.
- Will need to check with Housing Construction section for start date in Adamstown.
- The single rural housing scheme is still active but it is not viewed as economically viable and will only be considered as last resort.
- Not aware of Gardaí proactively contacting WCC, although our Liaison Officers certainly liaise with the Gardaí where appropriate.
- Waiting time on housing list depends on a number of factors, but with the most recent allocations we got up to about 2023.
- As there is no need for a 3 bed house, she wouldn't be considered for one.
- Existing housing applicants were provided training on the CBL system, all new applicants are issued with a letter and instructions on how to use the system. The HLO can assist if required.

2.3a Housing Report – New Ross Only

Noted.

2.3b Housing Capital

Noted.

2.4 Planning Report

None.

2.5 Planning Decisions – Grants

None.

2.6 Planning Decisions – Refusals

None.

2.7 Libraries Archives & Arts Report

Noted.

2.8 Community Development Report

Noted.

An Cathaoirleach called for a vote to extend Standing Orders. Proposed by Cllr Sheehan, and seconded by Cllr Fleming, Standing Orders were extended.

2.9 Environment Report

The Senior Staff Officer delivered her report before responding to queries raised by the members.

Cllr B. Murphy raised a concern regarding the number of dogs hit by vehicles on the roads and enquired if the Gardaí still have powers to demand production of a dog licence or if this lies solely with the Dog Warden.

The SSO responded to the members as follows

- WCC has 2 full time Wardens, will have to look into it as not aware of any changes in Gardaí powers relating to licence checks.

2.10 Fire Services Report

Noted.

2.11 Members Portal

Noted.

Cllr Dwyer noted that the portal was not used at all in December. Cllr Fleming advised he uses it for reporting illegal dumping.

3. Business prescribed by Statute, Standing Orders or Resolutions of the Municipal District Members

3.1 S.183- 25 John Street, New Ross

Cllr Dwyer noted that the Council are selling the property for less than it was purchased.

Director Eamonn Hore advised the members that the overall income & outlay for purchasing & selling properties balances, and the main objective is to get the property off the derelict sites list.

On the proposal of Cllr Sheehan, seconded by Cllr M. Murphy, the Section 183 notice was endorsed, unanimously agreed, and allowed to proceed to the plenary session as presented.

3.2 Declaration of public road

On the proposal of Cllr Sheehan, seconded by Cllr Barden, the Declaration of Public Road was endorsed and unanimously approved.

4. Other Business

4.1 Presentation by EirGrid

5. Notice of Motion/s

None.

6. Correspondence

6.1 Response from Minister Browne's office re ESB connection correspondence

The District Manager advised the members that a response was received and a further update is anticipated.

6.2 Approval letter for appointment of Mr Philip Carton as Master of the Hospital of the Holy Trinity

6.3 Retirement congratulations letter to Breda Fitzgibbon as Master of the Hospital of the Holy Trinity

6.4 Invitation to President Connolly to visit New Ross

Cllr Dwyer highlighted that New Ross has had visits from our previous female presidents and would love to see President Connolly come here also.

Cllr Sheehan added to this by noting the number of upcoming events within the district which the President could also attend during her visit.

7. AOB

Cllr Sheehan raised a concern regarding solar farm planning applications highlighting that there are no national guidelines on solar farms, and that the only means the Cllrs have to object to such applications is if they are in contravention to the County Development Plan, and proposed writing to the Chief Executive as a

Municipal District outlining plans to amend the County Development Plan to include parameters for solar farms, and they will not approve any further applications in the meantime.

The District Manager advised the members that our application for the LAMA Awards was shortlisted, with the awards to take place in March.

Cllr B. Murphy thanked the members for changing the time of this meeting at her request.

THAT CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

Signed on the

**Cllr John Dwyer
An Cathaoirleach
New Ross Municipal District**