

**Minutes of the New Ross Municipal District Monthly Meeting
held on the 11th February 2026 at 14:30hrs 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
Cllr Bridin Murphy

Officials: Alan Fitzhenry – District Manager
Áine Waters – Staff Officer
David Murphy – Executive Engineer (Roads)
Eamonn Hore – Director of Services
Abigail Nuzum – Executive Planner
Claude Clancy – Administrative Officer (Housing)
Lisa McCauley – Assistant Staff Officer (Housing)
Tom Banville – Administrative Officer (Planning)

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

Apologies:

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 14th January, 2026, were proposed by Cllr Marty Murphy and seconded by Cllr Michael Sheehan.

1.3 Matters Arising

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

Due to two scheduled presentations, An Cathaoirleach recommended the suspension of Standing Orders. Cllr Michael Sheehan proposed the suspension of Standing Orders, seconded by Cllr John Fleming. 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 Affordable Purchase Schemes presentation by Claude Clancy

Mr Clancy delivered his report before responding to queries raised by the members:

Cllr Dwyer questioned what the feedback on the scheme from the district is like and how much promotion of this scheme is in New Ross.

Cllr Sheehan requested an information evening on all housing schemes be held in New Ross, and asked if the scheme can assist buyers of private properties.

Cllr B Murphy questioned the geographical balance of the scheme throughout the county, queried if there is a maximum threshold for the support, and noted that the formulas would be difficult for some people to understand.

Cllr Barden asked about the 40 year time frame to payback the council for the charge on the title deeds, and if rural developments are also accepted.

Cllr Dwyer enquired if there is serviceable land in the district.

Cllr Sheehan asked if Social Housing applicants who are over the threshold are referred to this scheme.

Cllr Barden enquired about the status of existing schemes.

Mr Clancy responded to the members queries as follows:

- The Expression of Interest was not strong in New Ross, WCC engaged with the PPN to share information, will discuss with other Housing sections regarding information evening.
- Scheme is only available on Affordable Housing properties.
- Affordable Housing team sit in on preplanning meetings with developers and engage developers directly, and will continue to, nothing has come to fruition in New Ross district yet.
- No thresholds, based on purchasing power of buyer and if they need financial support, if buyer exceeds 95% of asking price with their own purchasing power then they won't qualify, flexibility of scheme takes into account stamp duty and legal fees to bring buyers under the 95%.
- Charge is added to title deed setting out the Council's interest in the property, owner has 40 years to pay back the Council, or if they sell, the Council will take a proportionate amount of the sale.
- Rural developments considered on case by case basis, focus is on urban settings.
- There is serviceable land in New Ross at various stages of development.
- Yes, Housing applicants who do not qualify for social housing are advised of the Affordable Housing scheme.
- All existing schemes are fully sold.

4.2 Taking in Charge Program 2026

Mr Banville delivered his report before responding to queries raised by the members:

Cllr Sheehan commented that the legacy estates should be priority rather than newer estates, however proposed approval of the Taking in Charge list.

Cllr Barden enquired about the delay in taking Farrin Carrig estate in charge, and enquired about a particular taking in charge application that is delaying a probate case.

Cllr Fleming enquired about Ban na Cheile which was previously on the TIC list but isn't on this updated list and enquired why the list has changed.

Cllr M. Murphy enquired about the taking in charge status of Cois Cuain, and asked for clarity on cases where house sales are held up due to estates not being in charge of the Council.

Cllr B. Murphy agreed with Cllr Sheehan's statement about legacy estates being prioritised, and noted it would be helpful for the members to receive an estate by estate timeline.

Cllr Dwyer enquired about the bond reserve, querying if all bonds received are in one fund as this could have affects on legacy estates.

Cllr Sheehan further enquired about the taking in charge of Parkfield estate.

Mr Banville responded to the members queries as follows:

- Legacy estates are challenging due to number of issues, no bonds in place etc., and it is easier to take on the newer estates. Looking at estates that can be taking in charge quickly and have funding for necessary works.
- Farrin Carrig is DPI, there is funding for connection to Uisce Eireann however WCC looking to take footpaths, roads and public lights in charge first. Once connected to UE, they will be responsible for those assets.
- Will talk privately re probate case.
- Ban na Cheile has been deprioritised & taken off TIC priority list, is DPI but no funding so no longer meets criteria to be taken in charge. It remains on the list but with no funding, will be priority. Cllr Fleming expressed his frustration as he had confirmed to the developer and residents that it was being looked at. Mr Banville agreed to review the case for Cllr Fleming.
- Cois Cuain is DPI, WCC looking to take the roads, footpaths and public lighting in charge first.
- Legally, the developer is still responsible until WCC take estate in charge, this should suffice for any property sales.
- It is difficult to set out a timeline due to contractor availability, developers snagging, dealing with Uisce Eireann, but committed that the 5 priority estates will be taking in charge by the end of the year.
- When bonds are received, they are ring-fenced for those estates, however WCC have put together a bond reserve from unclaimed bonds and are topping up this reserve with our annual budgets for legacy estates.
- Confirmed that Parkfield will be TIC by year end.

Director Eamonn Hore clarified the DPI process, noting that Developer Provided Infrastructure is the issue and that without DPI funding, WCC are not in a position to do the necessary works. It is estimated that there will be 80 DPIs over the next 10 years, however WCC will only get funding for a small number of these each year.

Cllr Dwyer advised that the main issue is the prioritisation of newer estates over legacy estates, and enquired about only taking the roads, footpaths and lights in charge to quicken the process. Mr Banville confirmed this is the current approach.

4.3 Derelict Sites Update

Mr Banville delivered his report before responding to queries raised by the members:

Cllr Sheehan commented on the length of time this process takes and noted that some property owners are delaying the enforcement process by putting properties up for sale, and asked if the priority list is publicly available.

Cllr Barden enquired about the URDF funding.

Cllr M. Murphy asked for an update on a derelict property on Hook Head.

Cllr B. Murphy asked how long is the owner given before WCC take enforcement action, and if unfinished properties can go on the Derelict Register.

Mr Banville responded to the members queries as follows:

- The focus is on bringing properties back into use, being for sale doesn't stop WCC from proceeding with enforcement.
- Approved programme list not publicly available, Derelict Site register is public.
- URDF funding is for WCC to buy properties and put them back to residential use.
- Hook property is on register and levy has been issued, the owner has engaged with WCC.
- A file is opened and letter is issued, owner then has four weeks to respond before it goes on the register.
- Unfinished properties can go on register if meets criteria.

Cllr Sheehan proposed suspending Standing Orders for a short break, seconded by Cllr Barden. Standing Orders were duly suspended. An Cathaoirleach, Cllr Dwyer, requested the order of business to be reflected in the minutes.

Sympathies

Cllr Dwyer expressed sympathies with the families of Susan Roche (née White) and Jason Roche, a local couple who passed away within a short time of one another, and also to the families of Jimmy Caulfield, of Nunnery Lane, and Paddy Rochford, of Pondfields.

Cllr Barden also expressed sympathies to the Roche family and Rochford family.

Cllr M. Murphy expressed sympathies to the families of Mary Carroll, of Coole, Breda Byrne, of Ballyhack, and Frances Whelan, of Elm Tree Cross.

Cllr Fleming expressed sympathies to the families of Nora Carty, of Clonroche, Marian Doran, of Courtnacuddy, Fr Richard Hayes, of Cloughbawn, and James Hendrock, of Knockroe.

Cllr B. Murphy also expressed sympathies with the family of Fr Richard Hayes.

Cllr Sheehan expressed sympathies with the families of Breda Byrne, of Ballyhack, Jimmy Caulfield, of Nunnery Lane, Paddy Rochford, of Pondfields, the Rawson family, the White family including former Councillor Willie Fitzharris, and the family of Fr Richard Hayes.

Congratulations

Cllr Dwyer congratulated New Ross Search & Rescue for another successful rescue whereby a boat had capsized while they were out training.

Cllr Fleming congratulated the Templeudigan Handball Club on the opening of their new handball alley, thanked the Members for attending the Dunbrody 25th Anniversary event, and congratulated Ann Murphy of Lacken who will be representing Rathgarogue Community Development at an upcoming awards ceremony.

Cllr Sheehan also congratulated the Search & Rescue, John Diamond, of the Marine Office, for his actions in stopping a barge that had broken away during the recent floods preventing significant damage down river, John Byrne and his staff on the upcoming opening of McDonalds in New Ross, and to all involved in the Dunbrody 25th Anniversary event.

Cllr Barden also congratulated the Dunbrody board & staff, and John Diamond for his actions.

2. Consideration of Reports and Recommendations

2.1. District Manager Report

The District Manager put forward the List of Festivals to the Members for approval for the GMA Allocation of funding towards these events.

Cllr B. Murphy outlined her approval for the festivals, noting there is a huge array of festivals in the district.

Cllr Dwyer seconded the approval of the festival funding, also commenting on the public perception that nothing happens in New Ross given the number of festivals in the District.

Cllr Sheehan highlighted that the Executive recently reviewed the festival funding countywide and noted that the District should be vigilant with the festival funding and committee spending.

The District Manager noted that, due to travelling delegations for St Patrick's Day, it will be necessary to change the date of our March meeting.

Cllr Dwyer proposed moving the March meeting to Wednesday 25th, seconded by Cllr B. Murphy, and agreed with all Members.

The District Manager delivered his report before responding to queries raised by the members:

Arts & Amenities and Residents Association Grants 2026

The 2025 Arts & Amenity and Residents Association Grants have been advertised in the newspapers and on the Council's website, since announcing them at the January Meeting.

Applications can be made online or a form can be requested from the Tholsel reception. **Reminder that the closing date is this coming Friday 13th February at 4.00pm.**

The report with the allocations for both grants will be brought to the earliest possible meeting, for approval by the Members.

Proposed Festival Budget 2026

Please find attached, the proposed Festival 2026 programme & budget. This is a €100k allocation through the GMA and is a matter for the Elected Members of NRMD to decide for the forthcoming year. The proposal is the same as 2025.

This is a significant investment by the Members in local Festivals in the Community, which also act as significant attractions to the area and promote New Ross on the National and International stage.

A full countywide review of festivals was undertaken and the NRMD list was submitted by this office to the Head of Finance & CE. It has been confirmed to me that they have no issue with our current events list as outlined today.

EVENTS

Civic Awards Evening 2026

The Civic Awards Evening, where we recognise the outstanding achievement of individuals and groups within the District over the last number of years, will be held in the Brandon House Hotel on Thursday 30th April (provisional date).

This year, we are requesting three nominations per Councillor, of an individual or group of individuals. An individual will be seated at a table of 8 while a group can be accommodated with 2 tables of 8 (max.). **All nominations by Councillors to be in by 13th March 2026.**

It promises to be a special evening for the recipients and their families and is fitting that their achievements should be honoured by the New Ross Municipal District.

New Ross St Patricks Day Parade 2026

The New Ross Town St Patrick's Day parade preparations are well advanced with thanks to the hard-working committee and volunteers. The parade will start at 2pm in the Irishtown and take its traditional route through the Town before ending beyond the viewing platform on the Quay.

The theme of this year's parade has been decided and will be officially announced soon by the committee, along with the Grand Marshal, so keep an eye out for the press release and social posts. Local businesses are also being encouraged to take part in the Shop Window Competition.

We would ask all participants and members of the public to follow guidance and instruction from stewards and An Garda Siochana on the day, and as always...fingers crossed for fine weather!

Best wishes to the various local community-based parades planned in the District also.

PROJECTS

Outdoor Biodiversity Classroom

Following wet pour and bench install, 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.

Stokestown Viewing Area

The art installation repair works have been completed since last week at the viewing area of the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Bridge in Stokestown with thanks to the Arts Office. A new information sign and some native planting are to be installed next, finishing off this beautiful reflective area.

Motorhome Park

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

Quay Street Regeneration

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 before our next meeting in March. A number of detailed surveys have been undertaken and the Heritage Officer engaged with also.

Sports Capital Pearse Park

The plan is to see works start in Q1 2026. All submitted to the Dept for final sign off to begin works/expenditure.

New Ross Skate Park

Awaiting funding. Part 8 for masterplan for the Rosbercon Trailhead carpark and facilities has been submitted.

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

€500,000 has been secured for the project under the 2025 Town & Village Renewal Scheme, 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.

CCTV

Phase 2 of the New Ross CCTV Scheme has been approved by the Local Community Safety Partnership members at the end of January (see correspondence). We will now prepare the next steps and look to secure funding.

OTHER ITEMS

Date of March Meeting

Proposal to move March meeting date to Wednesday 25th March, based on Members availability.

Cllr M. Murphy welcomed the repairs to the art installation at Stokestown and raised a concern regarding preventing future incidents of vandalism.

Cllr Fleming welcomed the progression of the Rosbercon Trail Head project noting the importance of the completion of the greenway.

Cllr Barden noted that the newly opened Shambles, which was beautifully restored, should be a space to depict the recent history of the town, economically and socially, especially of the Shambles meat markets throughout the years, for visitors to look at when enjoying a coffee there.

Cllr Dwyer added to Cllr Barden's comments by highlighting the long history of the town, noting that the Norman Visitor Centre will cover a large portion of the town's history.

Cllr Sheehan welcomed the progression of the Rosbercon Trail Head project highlighting the Sports Capital Grant, Large Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund will be announced in March which the Council should apply for, raised concerns about the Part XI application for the John Street Grain Store project being split into two separate applications and asked that when applying for funding these projects are linked to ensure the development of the public realm area is not left behind development of the grain store, and requested an update on the installation of a statue of Michael O'Hanrahan and asked that the district explores all avenues to complete this.

Cllr M. Murphy requested an update on the opening of Duncannon Fort.

Cllr Fleming requested an update on the installation of a memorial bench in the town park.

The District Manager responded to the members queries as follows:

- There have been no incidents at Stokestown since works have taken place and the hope is to see it become a well-used public amenity.
- Will pass along comments regarding the importance of progression with the Rosbercon Trail Head to Special Projects.
- Outdoor furniture for the Shambles is on order and will be in place for the warm weather for people to use this space, it is planned that the space would be used for exhibitions however the walls are protected structures and any use of them would need to be mindful of this. Will discuss further.
- The district office are engaged with the Arts Officer regarding the installation of a Michael O'Hanrahan statue.
- Have requested a date for the Duncannon Opening from the Ministers Office for late March of April, we await confirmation of a date.
- We have sourced a bench, it has been too wet to pour a concrete base, we are still sourcing the memorial plaques for the bench.

The District Manager advised the Members that the Christmas Charity Tree collection raised €2,000 to be donated to the Oak Ward Palliative Care Unit. This consists of money collected on the day of the Christmas Lights Switch On, online donations, and the purchase of the baubles.

2.2. Roads Report

The Roads Engineer delivered his report before responding to questions raised by the members:

Cllr Dwyer raised concerns regarding the condition of the roads following the recent storms, with people having their cars seriously damaged, and enquired if Government funding is forthcoming to properly repair the roads rather than patching.

Cllr Fleming raised the issue of a farm flooded from surface water from the national road, making some of his land inaccessible, and also raised the issue of illegal parking in Clonroche village and the traffic safety issues it causes, and requested bollards to prevent illegal parking on footpaths.

Cllr B. Murphy raised the point that the roads budget has not been released for 2026, highlighting that the engineers are being asked to attend to storm damage without a budget, reported public lights out in Clonroche since before Christmas, and seconded Cllr Flemings points regarding illegal parking in Clonroche.

Cllr Sheehan thanked the roads crew for their hard work since the recent storms, welcomed the taking in charge of Parkfield estate, and asked for a review of the surface water drainage at Camblin due to significant damage caused.

Cllr Barden echoed Cllr Sheehan's thanks to the Engineer and the roads crew and asked what interim measures could be done for the roads closed.

Cllr M. Murphy requested an update on the public lighting at Kilhile, and thanked Derek Dunne, Roads GSS, for his fantastic work during the storms.

Cllr Barden further enquired about public lights out in Newbawn.

Cllr Dwyer queried an issue with frequent outages of public lights in the Irishtown and the quay, and noted that the Millhouse area is also in complete darkness.

The District Engineer expressed his sincere thanks to the Roads Engineer and his crew for their hard work during and since the storm.

The Roads Engineer thanked the members for their comments and will pass along their thanks to his crew, and responded to the members queries as follows:

- Currently 4 roads closed in the district, submitted a list of 90km of damaged roads for funding, met with inspector to survey the damage, as well as photographs, we await a decision on funding.
- Land and roads are saturated still, until the weather starts to improve, can only fill potholes.
- Of the closed roads, 2 will be made passable by the end of the week, crews are working on the other 2 until the weather improves and funding comes, and highlighted that it will take months to fully resolve these issues.
- Irishtown lights have been out 3 times recently, it could be caused by a number of issues, will speak with the contractor to look into it.
- A contractor will be appointed for the public lighting in the Millhouse area in the coming weeks.
- A temporary measure will be put in place in Ballinaboola to relieve the flooding and return the land back to the farmer until a permanent measure can be carried out.
- Met with Gardaí regarding illegal parking in Clonroche, will also meet with the Roads Safety Officer regarding bollards.

- The flooding at Oaklands was unprecedented, the land was saturated and pipes were full of debris, but drainage has returned to normal since the pipes were cleared.
- The poles in Newbawn are ESB poles, will need to check with Public Lighting Section if they are lights.
- Will need to check with Public Lighting Section for an update on Kilhile and update the members.

An Cathaoirleach called for a vote to extend Standing Orders. Proposed by Cllr B. Murphy, and seconded by Cllr Barden, Standing Orders were extended.

The Engineer advised the members that the public can report any roads issues through the district office.

Cllr M. Murphy enquired if funding was forthcoming following previous storm events. The Engineer advised that he submitted a request for €10million for New Ross roads.

Director Eamonn Hore pointed out that not every district suffered the same level of damage as New Ross so not all districts will be applying for that level of funding. Mr Hore further thanked the Roads Engineer and his crew for their hard work during and since the storm.

2.3. Housing Report

The Administrative Officer delivered her report before responding to queries raised by the members:

Cllr Sheehan enquired if there has been any feedback from Respond AHB regarding their plans for their accommodation at the Mercy Convent, and proposed that we write to them outlining the members disappointment that it's a 20 unit building is lying vacant during a housing crisis.

Cllr Dwyer enquired about a specific case in which a highly sought-after adapted social house is actually vacant but rent is being paid.

The AO responded to the members as follows:

- The Capital team have sought to engage with Respond, and the Department have asked for updates, but there has been no response.
- Not aware of particular case Cllr Dwyer raised but can advise that the Council's solicitor raised concerns about the ability to prove that someone is not living in a property.

2.3a. Housing Report - New Ross only

Noted.

2.3b. Housing Construction

Noted.

2.4. Planning Report

The Area Planner delivered her report before responding to queries raised by the members:

Cllr M. Murphy enquired how observations are dealt with or assessed by planners.

Cllr Sheehan asked when the variations to the town plan are to go live for public consultation and what type of submissions the public can make.

Cllr Fleming queried why the name and address of the people making planning objections being made public.

The planner responded to the members as follows:

- Every observation is read and listed in the planners report, material planning issues are addressed by the planner.
- Any party who submits a planning observation, their name and address is public information, except phone numbers or email addresses.
- The new variations plan is currently live for submissions, the Chief Executive report is due by 7th April, with a further 6 weeks for the decision, due by 18th May.
- All submission are taken into account.

Cllr Barden enquired if a landowner can be forced to have their land zoned. The Planner advised she would need to check this with the Forward Planning team, and advised the members that if land is zoned as residential, it will be liable to RZLT except if used for farming.

2.4a. Planning – Grants

Noted.

2.4b. Planning - Refusals

Noted.

2.5. Environment Report

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

Cllr Dwyer raised concerns about Japanese Knotweed, noting a particular infestation, and enquired if the Council can force the landowner to deal with it.

Cllr Fleming added to Cllr Dwyers comments noting that it also damages properties.

The SSO advised the members that the NPWS deal with Japanese Knotweed, and that she will have to check if the Council has any remit in dealing with it, and can put together some information for anyone who wants it.

Cllr Dwyer proposed writing to the NPWS regarding this infestation due to the severity.

Director Eamonn Hore noted it is a noxious weed, and within NPWS remit, the landowner is responsible for dealing with it, and there is a detailed leaflet available on it.

2.6. *Special Projects Report*

Noted.

2.7. *Libraries, Archives & Arts Report*

Noted.

2.8. *Community Development Report*

Noted.

2.9. *Fire Services Report*

Noted.

2.10. *Members Portal Report*

Noted.

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

3.1 Vote to change date of March monthly meeting to Wednesday, 25th March 2026 at 2.30pm

4. Other Business

4.1 Affordable Purchase Schemes presentation by Claude Clancy

4.2 Taking in Charge Program 2026

4.3 Derelict Sites Update

5. Notice of Motion/s

6. Correspondence

6.1 Acknowledgement Letter To President Invite

6.2 Government Response to ESB Connections Query

6.3 Rosbercon Trailhead & Recreational Amenity Facility- Part 8

6.4 WLCSP approval for New Ross CCTV Phase 2

7. AOB

Cllr Sheehan proposed that the Municipal District invite the officials from New Ross Port to a meeting to discuss the commercial feasibility of the port and their future plans.

Cllr Sheehan also highlighted that a local man is currently in detention in the USA and asked that the Councillors travelling to the USA for St. Patrick's Day, use their voice to represent this man and the family, noting that he went to the Good Counsel and is more local to New Ross than Kilkenny.

THAT CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

Signed on the

Cllr John Dwyer
An Cathaoirleach
New Ross Municipal District