

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF ENNISCORTHY HELD THROUGH MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY 15TH FEBRUARY, 2021 AT 3.00 P.M.

Attendance: Councillors:

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

Officials:

Mr. Ger Mackey, District Manager
Ms. Carolyne Godkin, Director of Services
Mr. Tadhg O'Corcora, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Neil Dempsey, Executive Engineer
Ms. Mary Cline, Assistant Staff Officer
Ms. Martina Donoghue, Administrative Officer
Ms. Niamh Lennon, Executive Planner
Mr. Larry McHale, Project Engineer

1. Confirmation of Minutes:

1.1 Minutes of the January Meeting of the Members of the Municipal District of Enniscorthy – 18th January, 2021

It was agreed by the Members on the request of Mr. Ger Mackey that the following be taken from the Minutes of the January Meeting, i.e.

"Thank the Members, the frontline staff of Wexford County Council and the staff of the Enniscorthy District Office for their work and assistance during this very difficult year.

The Cathaoirleach thanked a number of people including, the media, the staff of the Enniscorthy Municipal District, local businesses, volunteers, fellow Members, all officials in attendance at each monthly meeting for their help and co-operation throughout 2020 and wished everyone a joyful and happy Christmas and a healthy 2021"

On the proposal of Councillor O'Rourke, seconded by Councillor Codd Nolan, the Minutes of the January Meeting of the Members of the Municipal District of Enniscorthy held on 18th January, 2021 were adopted by the Council and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

1.2 Matters Arising

Councillor Murphy asked for an update on the Murphy Floods Hotel site. The District Manager informed Members that this site had deteriorated significantly since Christmas, that a Litter Fine had been issued in respect of the site and all options open to the Council were being looked at, including Compulsory Purchase Order, having the site revalued, and planning issues around signage.

Cllr O'Rourke asked if signs with regard to CCTV could be erected, while Cllr Byrne referred to this site as one of the main keystones of the town and welcomed action being taken to clean it up.

Cllr Owens referred to a Meeting held between Minister of State for the OPW, Patrick O'Donovan and local politicians where reference was made to certain Councillors engaging in "fake news" and behaving like "Hyenas on speed" in relation to concerns over delays to the commencement of the Flood Defence Scheme for Enniscorthy. He has spoken to the Ministers office and is seeking an apology to this Council in relation to the matter.

2. Consideration of Reports and Recommendations:

2.1 Planning

Ms. Niamh Lennon attended the meeting to discuss planning matters and updated the Members on the Planning Report which was circulated prior to the meeting.

In reply to Cllr Byrne, Ms Lennon stated the waiting time for pre-planning meetings was currently 3 – 4 weeks.

2.2 Housing

Ms. Martina Donoghue, Administrative Officer attended the meeting to update the Members on Housing and highlighted the main points of the Housing Report circulated prior to the meeting, including a list of vacant houses in the Enniscorthy area, for the members own information. A number of queries were raised by the Members, in particular:-

- Cllr Owens looked for clarification as to when the listing of vacant houses would be given out.
- Illegal Dumping at Marconi Park – Cllr Browne acknowledged the clean up work carried out and asked if there was a plan in place to prevent future back up of rubbish, etc.
- Cllr Byrne referred to a refusal rate of 33% of properties being allocated and asked for the reason why this was so high
- Cllr Murphy expressed disappointment that there were no plans to build more houses in the villages, where there is a demand for housing. She stated that this

demand needed to be shown to Irish Water. Ms Godkin referred to possible future projects in Bunclody and Ferns, but internal assessments were ongoing with issues of land acquisition, identifying suitable locations, etc being investigated.

- Cllr O' Rourke asked how many had availed of the programme for rough sleepers during the current cold snap.

Ms Godkin informed the Members that a rough sleeper count had been carried out in December with all rough sleepers being encouraged to come forward for accommodation. 10 rough sleepers had been catered for in the past week and the situation was constantly under review. She stated that the housing department continued to work with Oznam House and Focus Ireland in this matter.

Cllr Owens thanked the Housing Staff for the prompt manner in which they were dealing with the cases presenting.

Ms. Donoghue informed Members that software was being looked at which would map choice based lettings. She stated that new houses with higher energy ratings, etc. were the preferred choice of housing in the main.

2.2 Community, Environment, Libraries and Fire Service

Community

Councillor Byrne asked if the Playground in Ferns could be cleaned. District Manager replied that it had been contracted for cleaning and may be done by now.

Councillor O'Rourke enquired about the possibility of having Enniscorthy Castle and Enniscorthy Cathedral lit in green for St. Patrick's Day Festival.

Cllr. Owens asked for consideration to be given to the continuation of the path in Bellefield to extend around the entire park.

Mr. Mackey responded to all queries raised.

Environment

A number of issues were raised under Environment, including:-

- Cllr Browne thanked the Environmental Community Warden and the crews for their work in the area of illegal dumping. As the problem is ongoing, he asked if the local recycling centre at Kilcannon could be more widely advertised and an intensive education programme for schools needed to be put in place, with a more proactive approach.

Mr Mackey stated that it was planned to select two Estates to analysis wheelie bin usage and to provide feedback on same. Cllr O' Rourke drew attention to tenants in rented accommodation, whose Landlords were not providing bins. Ms. Godkin informed Members that an audit had been carried out door to door in Bunclody and she undertook to bring an update to the Members on this matter, as it was very disappointing when some community groups work hard to keep their areas clean.

Libraries & Fire Service

The Libraries and Fire Service Reports were noted.

2.3 Enterprise

It was noted that the District Manager would follow up with the Economic Department regarding the provision of a monthly Enterprise Report.

2.4 Municipal District Report

The main points of the Municipal District Report were highlighted by the District Manager, as follows:-

- **Technology Park.**
- **Sports Capital Programme** – proposal to submit an application for funding for an Astro Turf Pitch at the Ross Road, Enniscorthy. Part VIII planning process and application for funding with applications closing 1st March, 2021 underway.
- **Sports Hub** – Design work has commenced of the pavilion building for the Sports Hub. It is expected that construction works will commence in September, 2021.
- **Historic Towns Initiative** – The Enniscorthy Municipal District have submitted an application for heritage conservation works on Slaney Street under the Heritage Council's Historic Towns Initiative. It is expected that a decision on this application will be announced in March 2021.
- **Irish Water Meeting** – The Meeting with Irish Water will take place on Friday, 19th March at 10.00 a.m. This meeting will be held remotely.
- **Enniscorthy Trails Feedback** – Feedback from the Members would be welcomed to the Draft Trails Feasibility Study which was circulated to the Members at the last meeting of the Council.
- **Remote Working Hub** – Work is continuing on the development of a Remote Working Hub and E-Learning centre for Enniscorthy and Members will be updated on its progress.

The Members noted the above and put forward a number of questions to Mr. Mackey to which he responded, stating that projects were funding dependent, and were being made as professionally as possible.

Cllr Byrne raised the following issues -

Pedestrian crossing at the bottom of Slaney Street.

Enniscorthy Trails very welcome.

Replacement of footbridge at the promenade, with a view to accessibility for the elderly and for prams and buggies.

Scope for siting of 1798 Visitors Centre on Vinegar Hill.

Mr Mackey stated that any reimagining of Vinegar Hill is worth exploring. He also stated that Enniscorthy does need an Active Travel Plan for the town. This plan needed to be submitted to the funding authority and priority actions could be agreed at the March Meeting and projects prepared. Mr Mackey also stated that “Town of Trails” was a concept that could be built on for Enniscorthy.

3. Roads Report.

Mr. Neil Dempsey, Executive Engineer attended the meeting and updated the Members on the main points of his report circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that critical works repairing potholes is ongoing. Mr. Dempsey informed the Members that he had just received notification of the grants allocation under the 2021 Roads Programme which were slightly above last year’s, which included plans for resurfacing works on Millpark Road. He also clarified that there were plans for a pedestrian crossing tied into the proposed pedestrian bridge at bottom of Slaney Street.

The Members put forward a number of queries, in particular:-

- Pedestrian Crossing between the old Graveyard at St. Marys and the new Graveyard.
- No lighting on roadway from Gimont Avenue to Castle Gardens Nursing Home.
- Pathway at Tomduff.
- Traffic Plan (with Schools back) in relation to Riverside Park Hotel being used as a Vaccination Centre for County Wexford.
- Flooding at Killabeg in Ferns – need for surface water to be reduced.
- Bad condition of road at Mackmine – it will need resurfacing.
- Surface water retaining on Rath Lane, Garnstackle, Bree.
- Surface on roadway from Ballyhogue Village down to Belleview Church.
- Local Improvement Scheme for private lanes – huge amount of applications in for up to 9 years for funding.
- Current ongoing works on Rafter Street/Church Street.
- New soak pit needed at Clone, Killabeg to relieve blocked lines.
- Crossroads sign in Marshalstown.
- Cutting back of hedgerows before the 1st March.
- Cutting back of ditches on Salville Road – very narrow road.
- Potholes on road from Ballycarney to Strahurt.

Mr. Dempsey noted and responded to all queries. In relation to hedgecutting, he stated that it was a case of getting the balance right between road safety and the preservation of wildlife. He undertook to follow up with landowners in relation to hedgecutting at Salville Road.

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.

The Members again expressed their disappointment that the scheme has not yet been signed off by the Minister. Councillor Owens asked why the Scheme had taken so long to go from Wexford County Council to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Mr. McHale replied that the Scheme confirmation documents required for Ministerial consent were submitted to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in March 2020. There had been changes to legislation of an environmental and ecological nature, which necessitated detailed site surveys and environmental surveys being undertaken. Two extensive public consultations had been carried out in liaison with local bodies, but at this stage the main construction work can commence when the Scheme has been confirmed by the Minister.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr Murphy asked Cllr Owens if he would contact Mr. McHale to go through the matter of approval for the Flood Defence Scheme with him.

5. Water Services Report.

Mr. Tadhg O'Corcora, Senior Executive Engineer updated the Members on the Water Services Report circulated prior to the meeting. The Members put forward a number of questions to Mr. O'Corcora to which he responded.

Cllr Murphy asked if the Members could have an update on water services prior to their meeting with Irish Water on 19th February. Mr. O'Corcora undertook to forward this report, which was being prepared by Wexford County Council, Capital Section.

He also informed Members that Consultants Nicholas O'Dwyer had been appointed to carry out Phase 1A Capital Design on a new permanent water supply intake for Clonhaston and this work would involve the construction of a new intake plant at Clonhaston. The provision of this development work would provide an increase of 20% capacity to the town water supply, planning permission has been granted but construction is currently on hold due to lack of finance.

6. Boro River Walking Trail – to improve access to the Borodale Walk and Ringwood Walk in Kilcarbry.

Mr. Mackey, District Manager informed the Members that a grant of €17,618 had been approved for improvement works to the Boro River Walking Trail and he thanked both Alan Quirke and Dervla Tierney for their input into the grant application.

Cllr. Cathal Byrne welcomed this funding. He said that he had noticed stakes quite far out onto the road at Boradale and asked if this could be investigated. Mr. Ger Mackey stated that this and was owned by Coillte, but that he would bring this matter to their attention.

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

None.

8. Correspondence.

None.

Sympathies

The Members extended sincere sympathies to the following:-

- John Carley and his wife on the death of his mother-in-law Kathleen Gill.
- All who have lost loved ones due to the Covid-19 Virus.
- The Dunne Family on the death of Larry Dunne, Marshalstown.

Congratulations

The Members wished to congratulate all involved with getting the vaccination centre for Enniscorthy and also the Riverside Park Hotel for facilitating same.

District Manager, Ger Mackey applauded the journalists for their work in covering the Municipal District Meetings and for the calibre of their work.

9. Any Other Business.

Land at Andy Doyle Close - Councillor O'Rourke proposed that this piece of land be given to the AJAX Club. Mr. Mackey stated that the housing department would have to look at this matter and he undertook to bring a report back to the March Meeting. Cllr. Owens referred to a meeting held in around 2008-20069 between the Town Council and representatives of AJAX and asked if these Minutes could be accessed to clarify the position on this piece of ground.

Allotments - Cllr. Cathal Byrne asked if the possibility of allotments being provided could be explored to see what interest there was for them. Cllr Browne referred to a feasibility group which was making progress on this matter. The District Manager informed Members that the Community Department were involved in this development and he would explore and come back to the Members with an update.

Enniscorthy Flood Relief Scheme - In reply to Cllr. Owens, Cllr Codd-Nolan informed the Meeting that Cllr. Byrne and she had met with Minister Patrick O Donovan and two of his officials. They had a very robust meeting and put forward their view on the delays with the commencement of the Scheme. Cllr. Byrne added that he could have taken it that it was him he was referring to when he made the remarks on local radio. Cllr Murphy asked Cllr. Owens to clarify the matter with the Ministers office, stating that it was an unfair comment.

Cllr. Murphy asked for an audit on the facilities that are available to the various Clubs and Organisations within the county.

Cllr Murphy reminded Members of the upcoming Meeting with Irish Water scheduled for Friday, 19th February 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

CATHAOIRLEACH

DATE