# Minutes of the New Ross Municipal District Monthly Meeting

**held on the 12th February 2025 at 14:30hrs in the**

**Council Chamber, The Tholsel, Quay Street, New Ross.**

**Presiding:** Cllr Bridin Murphy – An Cathaoirleach

**Councillors:** Cllr John Dwyer – Leas Cathaoirleach

 Cllr Pat Barden

Cllr John Fleming

Cllr Marty Murphy

Cllr Michael Sheehan

**Officials:** Alan Fitzhenry – District Manager

Eamonn Hore – District Director

Áine Waters – Staff Officer

Padraig Lyng - Senior Exec. Engineer, Water Services

Mark Devereux – Senior Exec. Engineer, Housing Construction

Martina Donohue - Administrative Officer, Housing

Sean Meyler - Senior Engineer, Special Projects

**Remote:** Eoghan Nolan – Executive Planner

 Melissa Goff – Senior Staff Officer

 Liam O’Donovan - Community Safety Coordinator

**Apologies:**  David Murphy – Executive Engineer, Roads

 Michelle Duffin – Assistant Staff Officer

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

1. **Confirmation of Minutes**
	1. ***Monthly Meeting***

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of 8th January 2025, were proposed by Cllr Sheehan and seconded by Cllr Barden.

*Congratulations*

Cllr M. Murphy afforded congratulations to An Cathairleach for her appointment to the European Committee of the Regions.

Cllr Sheehan seconded Cllr M. Murphy’s sentiments. Cllr Sheehan also afforded congratulations to Thomas Young on the opening of the E-Kiosk in the Irishtown, and Nicky Haberlin who has won volunteer of the year through the CUMAS project.

Cllr Fleming also congratulated Thomas Young on the opening of the E-Kiosk

Cllr Barden also congratulated the Cathaoirleach on her new position.

*Sympathies*

Cllr M. Murphy offered sympathies to the family of Philip Wallace of Ballycullane.

Cllr Fleming offered sympathies to the families of Anna Gaffney of Ballygalvert and Paddy Murphy of Chapel.

Cllr Sheehan expressed sympathies to the Workman’s Club on the passing of Jim Howlett, having served almost 50 years on the committee.

Cllr B. Murphy would like to be associated with all the above sympathies.

**2. Consideration of Reports and Recommendations**

***2.1 District Managers Report***

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

**Arts & Amenities and Residents Association Grants 2025**

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 14th February at 5.00pm.** The report with the allocations for both grants will be brought to the earliest possible meeting, for approval by the Members.

**EVENTS**

**New Ross St Patricks Day Parade 2025**

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 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 is “Heros” and very fittingly with this theme, the Grand Marshal will be Paralympic Hero Linda Kelly. Local businesses are also being encouraged to take part in the Shop Window Competition which has seen the prize numbers increase this year. 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 also to the various local community-based parades planned in the District.

**Age Friendly: Living Well / Ageing Smart Expo New Ross**

The Age Friendly Programme Manager has confirmed a Living Well / Ageing Smart Expo will be held in the Youth Centre, Nunnery Lane, New Ross on the 7th March from 10:30 to 14:30. They have 24 Exhibitors confirmed at the moment, including  An Garda Siochana, Fraud Smart, Irish Cancer Society, SEAI Grants, Energy Advisors (people can bring their electricity bill and see if any savings can be made), Digital Literacy (assistance can be given on the day with questions on IT, tablets or phones), Libraries, New Ross Credit Union, HSE Health Promotion and the Improvement Officer to name a few. This is a Free event and there will be refreshments available on the day. Posters are being printed and adverts will run in the newspapers. Please spread the word.

**PROJECTS**

**CCTV**

Now that the Garda Commissioners Office has signed off on the CCTV Scheme Pack (Phase 1) for New Ross, WCC has advertised the tender for the Civil & Electrical works and tender responses have been evaluated. Letters have issued to tenderers. The plan is to see a contractor appointed in February and work commence in March.

Phase 2 of the CCTV Scheme has been worked on over the past months and will be presented later in this meeting.

**Brennan’s Lane/Shambles**

Works at Brennan’s Lane are nearing substantial completion with the steel for the covered structure due to be installed in 2-3 weeks, followed by roofing. The Shambles works continue and completion is planned for April 2025. We plan to open Brennan’s Lane first once complete and details will be announced when ready.

**Duncannon Fort Works**

Works at Duncannon Fort continue and are on target to be completed by April 2025. New railings at the entrance have been installed since the last meeting, seeing a very positive response from the local community. The project team has now finalised decisions on floorings, paint colours, doors, benches and light fittings. Planters and small scale landscaping will be decided on next week.

**Motorhome Park**

The Flood Risk Assessment being completed now allows for final preparations to submit the approved Motorhome Park for Part VIII. Expected for March meeting.

**Quay Street Regeneration**

A brief has been prepared & advertised for initial tender of a design consultant, with contractor tender then to follow. The plan is to begin construction before the end of this year. The deadline for the advertised Design & Construction related Consultancy Services tender is this Friday 14th February.

**Sports Capital Pearse Park**

The District Team has begun work on the paperwork for the Dept. and had initial discussions around the project steps required. Updated quotes are to be sought on works in the coming weeks.

**Stokestown Viewing Area**

As included in the Area Engineers Report and with thanks to David Murphy, surfacing works at the viewing area of the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Bridge in Stokestown have recently been completed. Public lighting will be installed in the coming weeks. The art installation is in need of repair/cleaning and Arts Officer Liz Burns is engaging the artist on this.

**OTHER ITEMS**

**Date of March Meeting**

Proposal to move March meeting date to Wednesday 26th March, based on Members availability.

Cllr Sheehan proposed to move the March meeting date to Wednesday 26th March, seconded by Cllr Dwyer.

**Report on NRTC Archives**

As the official repository for the archives and records of local government in County Wexford, Wexford County Archive is custodian to the original minute books for each of the county’s local authority bodies. Representing the earliest extant municipal archives in the county (and one of the earliest collections in the country), the earliest two minute books of New Ross Corporation (1658-1732) provide a unique insight into the functioning of local government for the period and a glimpse into the characters and personalities who populated the town. The two volumes were digitised in 2016. Written in old Secretary hand, the Archive engaged two professional transcribers to transcribe the handwritten volumes along with translating numerous passages in Latin. Each transcribed page was digitally stitched to its digital counterpart and the two volumes are now fully searchable and freely available online for worldwide research on [www.wexfordcountyarchive.com](http://www.wexfordcountyarchive.com). A third volume (1732-1841) has also been digitised and is available on the Archive’s website. Wexford County Archive manages a phased digitisation programme each year as budgetary constraints permit. The last 5 years have seen most of the minute books for the poor law unions of Enniscorthy, New Ross and Gorey digitised and made available on the website. This year’s phased programme centres on the digitisation of the next 10 volumes of minutes from the New Ross Town Commissioners’ collection covering the period 1843-1887. This project should be finalised by late October 2025 and the digital volumes subsequently made available on the Archive’s website. The complete collection of original minute books for New Ross (1658 up to 2014) document 356 years of municipal governance in the town and are available to consult in Wexford County Archive’s reading room at 6A Ardcavan Business Park, Ardcavan, Co. Wexford. In addition to a diverse range of researchers, the elected members and local authority staff members are also welcome to access same.

Through the Chair, Cllr Dwyer noted that it is fantastic to have 356 years of records archived, and that a public display of these records would be beneficial for members of the public to view.

Cllr Sheehan queried the timeline for works on the Library now that works at Barrack Lane are coming to an end.

Cllr Sheehan raised a query regarding the Michael O’Hanrahan statue to be placed at Brennan’s Lane, as a resolution was passed in 2016 by the Members that this statue would be a milestone project for the centenary.

Cllr Sheehan also queried the Council’s plans for the old Courthouse and the Bumble Bee.

Cllr Sheehan requested an update on plans for the garden centre and the Docks, due to their positions on entrance/exit routes in and out of town.

Cllr Sheehan requested information about the Community CCTV Scheme which was announced this week.

Cllr Fleming noted that the paintwork on O’Hanrahan bridge needs to be redone.

Cllr Barden queried if a roofed area is to be provided at Brennan’s Lane or the Shambles for a recreational area.

The District Manager responded to the above queries raised by the Members and clarified the following matters.

* The Shambles area will have a roofed area inside.
* The refurbishment of O’Hanrahan bridge is to be undertaken and will be repainted during the course of these works.
* Director Liz Hore previously advised that her staff are looking into the Courthouse and future plans for same.
* The statue of Michael O’Hanrahan will be subject to funding.
* A new expression of interest in taking over the old garden centre has been received and will be explored further.
* The Docks is privately owned but the District Manager will reach out to the owner again. The District Manager explained that individuals private business and interests are not suitable for discussion at a public meeting.

A discussion regarding the enhancement of the quay front area took place.

***2.1a Special Projects Report***

The Senior Engineer delivered his report before responding to queries raised the Members.

Cllr Fleming requested clarification on the planning process for the public realm space at John Street.

Cllr Sheehan noted the substantial works ongoing in the district and questioned the timeframe for the An Bord Pleanála applications.

Cllr Sheehan also enquired about timer lights on the greenway, along the quay and at the Norman building due to safety concerns.

Cllr Barden requested information on carparks and access to the greenway, Director Eamonn Hore clarified that the main access will be at the trail head carpark in Rosbercon.

Sean Meyler, Senior Engineer, then departed the meeting.

An Cathaoirleach acknowledged and welcomed Liam O’Donovan, the new Community Safety Coordinator. The District Manager advised that this role effectively replaces the Joint Policing Committee and requested Liam to circulate his information to the Members.

***2.2 Roads Report***

Due to the absence of the Executive Engineer, the District Manager advised the Members that queries relating to the circulated report could be passed to him to follow up with the Executive Engineer.

Cllr Murphy enquired about the start date for the DPIs. Director Hore advised that these are still at public tender stage, and we have secured funding for 5 which will be delivered this year.

Cllr Fleming raised a query regarding the speed limit at the Waterford roundabout in Rosbercon as the road signs have not been changed. Director Hore clarified that this road has been reclassified as a regional road and the speed limit is 80kmp/h.

Cllr Dwyer queried how many km of roads require regular attention due to potholes, and the capability of the budget to attend to such issues. Director Hore advised that a third of the roads in the District are in poor condition and it would require almost €200 million to bring all of the roads in the County up to standard, and that funding has not yet been reinstated to pre-recession levels.

Cllr Dwyer proposed that the Members write to the Minister requesting a return to previous funding levels that the Director referred to as the public opinion is that the Council is at fault for this.

Cllr B. Murphy clarified that New Ross has over 900km of roads, and that the majority of these are rural roads which require regular patching.

Director Hore clarified that patching roads is necessary as the budget does not allow for resurfacing and strengthening of every road in need of attention. Director Hore advised the Members that he has submitted a report to the Minister outlining the issues faced in Wexford and how the current budget is not sufficient and has asked that the Government match Wexford County Council’s roads budget to allow for more road upgrade works, and this current Government has acknowledged the need for further funding in Wexford.

Cllr Dwyer also raised the issue of the poor quality of lighting in the town, with poor LED lights and also lights out, leading to anti-social behaviour.

The District Manager confirmed that the Engineer is in contact with the contractor regarding these issues.

Cllr Barden raised a concern regarding a developer-lead estate in Ballinaboola that has an issue with sewerage.

Director Hore advised he would follow this up for a response.

Cllr Sheehan requested an update on the taking in charge of Parkfield estate.

Cllr Dwyer, adding to Cllr Sheehan’s query, raised the point that with the introduction of property tax, every house in the County should receive the same level of service, regardless of location.

Director Hore, while in agreement with Cllr Dwyer, commented that the Council prioritises going after the worst offending developers.

***2.3 Housing Report***

The Administrative Officer referred to the previously circulated report before taking queries raised by the Members.

Cllr Dwyer raised the issue of the Council’s handling of anti-social behaviour issues and referred to the previously mentioned case of a family being tormented by their neighbour. Cllr Dwyer also raised a question about the response of the Council in the case of a woman and children suffering domestic violence whereby she was told she is adequately housed.

Cllr Barden raised a concern of a housing applicant that submitted a housing application looking for assisted living in July 2024 which hasn’t been acknowledged.

Cllr Sheehan added to Cllr Dwyer’s comments regarding housing needs and suggested that the scheme of priorities should be reviewed, as the current policy is too stringent, and queried the plans for the Convent taken over by Respond.

Cllr Sheehan also queried the area’s where the Council is acquiring land for social housing as housing applicants in rural areas are being offered houses in North Wexford due to lack of availability of housing.

The AO advised that the Council investigates every case of anti-social behaviour, and in the case referred to by Cllr Dwyer, this is an ongoing case with complaints made by both sides.

With regards the case of a woman experiencing domestic abuse, the AO advised that the first point of contact should be the Women’s Refuge and then make a housing application.

Cllr Dwyer clarified that this woman was turned away from the Refuge as it was full and was told by the Council that she is adequately housed.

In response to Cllr Barden, the AO advised that every housing application is acknowledged and if an acknowledgment has not yet been received, the application may not have been received in the Council. The AO advised that requests for assisted living are referred to external service providers, and that there is a limited number of such services. The AO will look into the matter raised by Cllr Barden.

In response to Cllr Sheehan’s request for the Housing Allocation Scheme to be reviewed, the AO advised that this can be added to the SPC Meeting agenda.

Cllr Sheehan proposed writing to the Chair of the SPC to request the scheme be reviewed to allow for compassion.

A discussion regarding the current housing market and housing availability ensued.

Cllr Dwyer enquired about Ard an Bhile estate and how many units are on CBL.

The AO confirmed that 12 units have been delivered, 9 of which are on CBL currently with the remaining units due to be available in Q2.

The AO responded to Cllr Sheehan’s query regarding Respond advising that this is on the agenda for a meeting between the Director and the AHBs.

A discussion regarding the condition of the Respond convent ensued.

Cllr Dwyer further raised the case of a woman experiencing domestic abuse being turned away by the Council as she is adequately housed.

The AO and Cllr B. Murphy voiced concerns about raising such issues in a public forum and that such matters should be dealt with privately.

Cllr Murphy queried how often a housing applicant can change their areas of choice.

The AO advised that the legislation allows for one change every 12 months.

***2.3a Housing Report – New Ross Only***

Noted.

***2.3b Housing Capital***

The Senior Executive Engineer delivered his report before taking queries raised by the Members.

Cllr Sheehan queried the expenditure on the Bullawn site, and the timeframe for planning permission on the Rosbercon site.

Cllr Sheehan further queried of the 171 units to be delivered, how many will be social housing units or affordable housing.

The SEE advised that he would revert with a breakdown of social housing and affordable housing figures. The see further advised that Housing Capital are looking at land acquisition throughout the county and outline some conditions for same. The SEE advised that the planning application for Rosbercon will be lodged once Stage 2 assessment completed.

Cllr Barden queried the delay in the funding application for a site in Adamstown.

The SEE advised that unforeseen issues in demolition have caused the delay, and gave further information regarding the application and procurement processes.

Cllr Barden also enquired about the site in Castlemoyle, whether this is going to an Approved Housing Body or private developer.

The SEE advised that 8-10 units will be provided under CAS, and the remainder have not been determined, will be decided once Part 8 is received.

Cllr Fleming questioned if Housing Capital are looking for serviced sites in New Ross District.

The SEE confirmed that land owners should get in contact for assessment.

 ***2.4 Planning Report***

The Executive Planner delivered his report before responding to queries raised by the Members.

Cllr Fleming enquired about timelines for preplanning meetings.

Cllr Sheehan queried the Council’s policy regarding converting ground floor shops to residential units.

The Executive Planner advised that there is a slight backlog on preplanning meetings due to the Christmas break, and that there are exemptions with regard change of use which can be shared via email.

Cllr Dwyer requested that the exemptions for change of use be circulated to all Members.

Eoghan Nolan, Executive Planner, then departed the meeting.

***2.5 Planning Decisions – Grants***

Noted.

***2.6 Planning Decisions – Refusals***

Noted.

 ***2.7 Libraries Archives & Arts Report***

 Noted.

***2.8 Community Development Report***

Noted.

***2.9 Environment Report***

Noted.

***2.10 Fire Services Report***

 Noted.

***2.11 Members Portal***

Noted.

**3. Business prescribed by Statute, Standing Orders or Resolutions of the**

 **Municipal District Members**

None.

**4. Other Business**

4.1 CCTV Phase 2 Approval

The District Manager delivered a brief report to the Members on Phase 2 of the New Ross CCTV Scheme. A discussion regarding the scheme took place.

The scheme was proposed by Cllr Sheehan and seconded by Cllr Barden.

4.2 County Wexford Norman Forum

Cllr Barden proposed Cllr Fleming, seconded by Cllr M. Murphy.

**5. Notice of Motion/s**

 None.

**6. Correspondence**

None.

**7. AOB**

Cllr Sheehan wished the best of luck to the Members who are travelling for St. Patrick’s Day.

 Cllr Fleming wished the best of luck to all ORIS applications that are in for funding.

 The Cathaoirleach advised that Cllr Dwyer, Leas Cathaoirleach, is unavailable for the speech at the New Ross parade. It was decided that Cllr Sheehan would deputise for the Cathaoirleach and deliver the St. Patrick’s Day speech.

**THAT CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING**

Signed on the 26th March 2025

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**Cllr Bridin Murphy**

**An Cathaoirleach**

**New Ross Municipal District**