# Minutes of the New Ross Municipal District Monthly Meeting

**held on the 7th May 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

Áine Waters – Staff Officer

Michelle Duffin – Assistant Staff Officer

David Murphy – Executive Engineer (Roads)

Eamonn Hore – District Director

Tom Banville - Senior Executive Officer (Planning)

Mick McCormack – Town Regeneration Officer

Eoghan Nolan – Executive Planner

**Remote:** Melissa Goff – Senior Staff Officer (Environment)

Martina Donoghue – Administrative Officer (Housing)

**Apologies:**  None.

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 9th April, 2025, were proposed by Cllr Pat Barden and seconded by Cllr John Dwyer.

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

An Cathaoirleach welcomed Simon Bourke, from Mediahuis Ireland, to the meeting as the new reporter for Council meetings.

*Sympathies*

An Cathaoirleach offered sympathies to the family of Frankie Monahan of Clonroche.

Cllr Barden offered condolences to the families of Molly Furlong of Adamstown, Jackie Stacey of Rosbercon, and Ronnie O’Grady of Foulksmills.

Cllr Fleming also offered condolences to the family of Frankie Monahan, and to the families of Mary Wickham of Ballybanogue, and John Aspell of Fr Cullen Terrace.

Cllr Dwyer wished to be associated with all of the above remarks and offered his sympathies on the passing of former New Ross resident Professor Tom Dunne, author of ‘New Ross: An Anthology Celebrating 800 years’.

Due to the scheduled presentations from the Planning SEO and the Town Regeneration Officer, An Cathaoirleach recommended the suspension of Standing Orders.

Cllr Barden proposed the suspension of Standing Orders, seconded by Cllr Fleming. Standing Orders were duly suspended.

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr Bridin Murphy, requested the order of business to be reflected

in the minutes.

**4.1 Planning- Enforcement & Building Control**

The Senior Executive Officer of Planning delivered his report before responding to queries raised by the members;

Cllr Dwyer asked what the typical resolution is to an enforcement case, particularly cases resolved on the steps of the courthouse?

Cllr Fleming enquired about the timeline & costs of enforcement cases.

Cllr Fleming queried why cases take so long from the initial complaint to legal action, particularly in the case of unauthorised developments which are nearly completed by the time enforcement take legal action. And also what can be done to force development on vacant sites to stop land hoarding.

Cllr Barden also raised a concern regarding unauthorised developments, particularly businesses and accommodation providers operating without planning permission.

The SEO advised that the only resolution to an enforcement case is to comply with the instruction on the warning letter. In cases on the steps of court, negotiations may take place to accept partial compliance, as these are criminal proceedings the Council will accept partial compliance in good faith.

Cllr Dwyer noted that, in the cases of unauthorised businesses, the potential damage to neighbouring businesses who are in compliance and that such unauthorised businesses can apply for planning permission just before going to court which delays the process further.

The SEO understood the public frustration and advised that it is important that the public see these cases being brought to court.

The SEO advised that the costs vary from case to case and the timeline for resolution can range from 1 year to 5 years.

The SEO clarified the enforcement process for the members and highlighted that they cannot take action on potential unauthorised developments, they can only take action once unauthorised developments take place.

An Cathaoirleach enquired about cases of people who have been determined to have a housing need and are living in unauthorised developments, such as mobile homes or log cabins.

The SEO advised that the Enforcement Team allow a reasonable amount of time for those people to source alternative accommodation or regularise the development with planning permission.

**4.2 Update from the Town Regeneration Officer – Town Centre First**

The Town Regeneration Officer delivered his report before responding to queries raised by the members;

An Cathaoirleach thanked the TRO for his report as it was very informative, especially for the newer members.

Cllr Barden noted that the most important aim for New Ross is to get people back living in the town, especially about shops, and enquired if there has been an uptake on grants for such properties.

Cllr Fleming commented that the grants offered are a great support for purchasing properties.

Cllr Sheehan noted, as Chair of the Town Team, the many projects underway in the District and that engagement is ongoing with business owners, younger people and older people regarding the development of the town.

Cllr Dwyer enquired about a scheme to acquire derelict properties, similar to the Void Scheme.

An Cathaoirleach queried the timeframe for the Croí Cónaithe grants and whether an extension would be granted if works not completed.

The TRO advised that it is a challenge to get people to move back into the town centre and that there is a need for funding at a national level to assist in this regard.

The TRO noted the success of the Void Scheme and advised the members of the current grant schemes available to assist with bringing properties back into use.

The TRO confirmed that the timeframe given to applicants to complete works under the Croí Cónaithe Scheme is 13 months, with a 6 month extension offered where required.

The Town Regeneration Officer and Planning Senior Executive Officer then 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;

**Annual Meeting**

We suggest a date for the NRMD Annual Meeting of Wednesday 25th June at 2.30pm. This is a matter for the Members to decide and we are happy to facilitate any date as directed.

**EVENTS**

**AIMS**

The AIMS Choral Festival will take place in New Ross from Friday 16th May to Sunday 18th May. Now in it’s 40th year, the festival is firmly established and attracts choirs, musical societies and soloists from all over Ireland. A great weekend is planned and this year a PA and keyboard will be setup on the newly opened Brennan’s Lane for fun & impromptu performances by groups as they wait to compete in the theatre. Supported by the District under the Festivals Budget, we wish the organisers every success with this years event.

**Flowers for the Magdalenes**

A reminder that the annual Flowers for the Magdalenes ceremony will take place on Sunday 11th May at 2pm at the Magdalene grave site in St Stephens Cemetery. The NRMD is proud to support this remembrance commemoration, and all Members are invited to attend. We wish them the best with this important ceremony.

**PROJECTS**

**CCTV**

Al Read Electrical contractors started works in mid-April in New Ross and are due to complete in mid-May. They are delivering the civil and electrical works on the CCTV project at various locations. Disruption has been very minimal. Educom are lined up to follow on and fit the CCTV infrastructure on week beginning 19th May, followed then by the ESB supplying power where new connections are required. The plan is to see all works complete by the end of June.

**Brennan’s Lane/Shambles**

Works at Brennan’s Lane are complete and the area has been officially opened since our last meeting. We were delighted to welcome the Minister for Rural and Community Development & Social Protection Dara Calleary TD to a sun-drenched New Ross, as well as Minister for Housing James Browne. Thank you most sincerely to everyone who worked on this project and on the opening event. The feedback from the public on this important public realm space has been excellent. The Shambles works continue with the steel due to be installed in mid-May. Once the steel is installed the roofing and paving works will follow and completion is planned for mid-June 2025.

**Duncannon Fort Works**

Works continue at Duncannon Fort and are planned to be substantially completed by mid-June. There are multiple contractors on site currently, working side by side.

**Motorhome Park**

A Preplanning meeting was held on Friday 11th April. Attended by the Area Engineer, District Manager and led by DoS Eamon Hore, the team received a positive response to the plans presented. We expect to see the Part 8 process begin and advertised in the coming weeks.

**Quay Street Regeneration**

The District team are currently engaging directly with a number of consultants for the Design & Construction related Consultancy Services tender for Quay Street. Three companies have quoted to date and the plan is to have a consultant appointed by end of May/early June to start the detailed design process.

**Sports Capital Pearse Park**

The District Team continues to gather revised quotes and make preparations for these works, scheduled to be completed by the end of 2025.

**New Ross Skate Park**

This project is “shovel ready” and awaiting a funding opportunity from the Government.

**New Ross Courthouse Project**

An Expression of Interest form under the 2025 Town & Village Renewal Scheme, has been submitted for consideration, for the renovation of the old Courthouse on the corner of Cross Street and Priory Street in New Ross. This building was acquired by WCC three years ago under the TVRS Building Acquisition Measure. The proposed project involves the refurbishment of this historic building, currently unused since 2005, into a multifunctional community space and office hub. The plan involves renovating the building to include a versatile community hall for events, workshops, exhibitions, gatherings and civic receptions, complimented by modern office units. The project will boost community engagement, stimulate local economic activity, and preserve a key heritage asset. The District Team are heading up this application and hope to see it short listed for national consideration in the coming months.

**OTHER ITEMS**

**Community Monuments Fund**

The New Ross District has received grants totalling €150,356 under the Community Monuments Fund 2025. This significant funding will help conserve, maintain and protect two local monuments. St. Nicholas church, Clonmines was awarded €130,000 to carry out essential conservation repairs. These works will ensure the long-term survival of this important medieval building. Carnagh church and graveyard also received €20,356.50 for a Conservation Management Plan. This multi-disciplinary plan will enhance our understanding of the site and put forward policies for its conservation and future preservation. The Community Monuments Fund is overseen by Wexford County Council’s Heritage Officer, Colm Moriarty.

**Old Town Crest Sign Installed**

Following on from the restoration and planting of the old New Ross Town Crest Sign at the Rosbercon side of the bridge last year, we have now repaired and restored the second sign that originally sat on the town side of the bridge. This has been fitted at the Oaklands Roundabout and planting around the sign is to follow in the coming weeks. Its great to see this piece of New Ross history back in public view and we think it makes for a warm welcome to town from the Wexford side. Thank you to our own district workers, Gatecraft and S. Doyle Painting for their lovely work.

**Potential Special Meeting**

I met with Special Projects this morning regarding the much-anticipated Norman Visitor Centre plans for the old bank and furniture buildings on the Quay. Special Projects were hoping to bring the final design to this meeting, but they are awaiting one final report. Special Projects expect to seek a Special Meeting of NRMD sometime at the end of May and Members are being put on notice of this. We will confirm a date and time in due course. We are really looking forward to seeing the design and Part 8 commencing.

Cllr Fleming offered his congratulations on the opening of Brennan’s Lane to everyone involved in the project and welcomed the progression of the Motor Home Park, and the funding for Carnagh graveyard. Cllr Fleming also noted the comments from the Normandy delegates that New Ross was ahead of other areas in terms of recognition of our Norman roots.

Cllr Sheehan also congratulated the District Manager and all involved with the Brennan’s Lane project and opening, and asked that we contact the owner of the Eir building in Barrack Lane following the works in Brennan’s Lane. Cllr Sheehan wished best of luck to the organisers of the AIMS Festival and requested that we appeal to the local businesses to remain open for the duration of the festival. Cllr Sheehan further requested that the District Manager contact the Gardaí and ask for a meeting to discuss the recent news story that New Ross has the highest level of anti-social behaviour in the county. Cllr Sheehan requested an update on the District Manager making contact with quay-front property owners regarding works to freshen up the buildings, and asked if the District Manager could contact the OPW regarding the old Garda Station building with a view to developing same.

Cllr Barden requested more detail regarding the works in the Shambles regarding the roof structure and references to the history of the meat-market. Cllr Barden also enquired about the current status of Cumas taking on the St Joseph’s school building.

The District Manager thanked the members for their kind comments on Brennan’s Lane. The DM advised that the delegates from Normandy that recently visited were impressed with New Ross’s Norman sites.

In response to Cllr Sheehan, the DM confirmed he would write to Eir to request they paint their building following works on Brennan’s Lane.

The DM noted that the Gardaí attend the meetings quarterly and therefore the members would get an updated report from the Gardaí at the next meeting.

The DM noted Cllr Sheehan’s comments regarding the old Garda Station building.

The DM clarified the plans for The Shambles, and Director Eamonn Hore advised he would bring design drawings to the next meeting for the members to view.

The DM advised that the acquisition of St Joseph’s school building is with the Property Section and he would bring an update to the next meeting.

An Cathaoirleach noted that the proposed date of June 25th for the AGM does not suit and the members would need to select a different date. A discussion ensued, and 19th June was proposed by the District Manager, all members voted in favour of setting the AGM for Thursday 19th June, 2025.

***2.1a Special Projects Report***

None.

***2.2 Roads Report***

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

Cllr Sheehan enquired about progress on the PEP for taking in charge Parkview estate.

Cllr Dwyer raised the issue of lack of public lighting on the greenway and on the road to the carehome.

Cllr Barden requested an update on the trees at Eustace corner and raised a concern regarding signage on the N25.

Cllr Fleming enquired about the bridge works at Raheen and Kilbride, will the road be closed or will diversions be in place.

The Executive Engineer advised that the PEP for taking Parkview in charge is signed, he will bring an update on same to the next meeting, and further advised that contractors are lined up to commence works once the PEP is approved and can be on site within 2-3 weeks.

The EE advised he would follow up on the lighting for the greenway with Special Projects and that the lights on the carehome road, a survey has been carried out and he will request an update from the Public Lighting Section.

The EE confirmed that there will be stop/go in place for the bridge works.

The EE advised that he would enquire about an update on the trees at Eustace Corner, and the DOS would look into the signage on the N25.

***2.3 Housing Report***

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

Cllr Sheehan enquired about planned painting programmes for entrances to LA estates, noting the poor upkeep of LA estates when compared to private estates.

Cllr Barden enquired about the plans for 2 houses and 2 apartments to be delivered in Adamstown and an update on the funding request for same.

Cllr Dwyer enquired about taking back unoccupied LA properties, and noted a case in Rosbercon where an unoccupied Council house is attracting rats and causing issues to neighbouring properties.

The AO will check with Housing Maintenance regarding a planned maintenance programme for painting LA estates, and noted that the HLO would have some funds available for painting of LA estates if the tenants are willing to carry out the work.

The AO will check with the Capital Team for an update on the funding for the delivery of the Adamstown housing units.

The AO advised that there is an abandonment process that Housing must follow in cases where tenants leave their properties vacant, and further noted that there is difficulty proving abandonment where rent is still being paid, however the Housing Section would look into any case reported.

The Administrative Officer then departed the meeting.

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

***2.3b Housing Capital***

None.

On the proposal of Cllr Fleming, seconded by Cllr Dwyer, standing orders were suspended for a short break.

 ***2.4 Planning Report***

The Executive Planner delivered his report before clarifying certain matters for the Members.

Cllr Fleming noted from the Planning SPC Meeting that Kildare Co Co went to the highcourt for a decision on their County Development Plan and the Court determined that the existing CDP continues to be the guiding document until a new CDP is in place.

Cllr Sheehan welcomed the decision by the Council to open the planning framework to allow the Municipal Districts to review the direction of their towns and districts regarding future development and zoning of land for development.

Cllr Murphy welcomed the decision to allow for one-off rural developments to install their own waste-water treatment systems and enquired if specific villages in the district would be targeted for such developments.

The Planner confirmed he is aware of the Kildare Co Co decision, however he is not involved in the formulation of Wexford’s CDP and to refer any queries or suggestions to the Senior Executive Planner over the Forward Planning Team.

The DOS noted regarding the decision on one-off waste-water treatment systems, that applicants must still pass a percolation test.

***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***

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

Cllr Murphy enquired if the Council have any control over private refuse collectors, due to a recent instance in which refuse hadn't been collected.

Cllr Dwyer asked if it is compulsory for private refuse collectors to provide compost bins to customers upon request.

The SSO advised the Council does not have control over private refuse collection companies but can liaise with them and can follow up on complaints.

The SSO also advised that these companies are required to provide brown bins, but there is no size requirement.

The Senior Staff Officer then departed the meeting.

***2.10 Fire Services Report***

The District Manager advised that the Chief Fire Officer had been asked to attend this meeting but was at a conference in Galway and will attend the next meeting of NRMD. The CFO will attend Council meetings only when there is a specific issue or enquiry regarding the Fire Service.

Cllr Dwyer asked that the Fire Service report include details of inspections

carried out by the Fire Service, raising concerns regarding the fire safety of

some of the apartment buildings in town, particularly those that have been

converted from commercial premises to apartments, and the lack of fire escape

routes in some buildings.

***2.11 Members Portal***

Noted.

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

 **Municipal District Members**

***3.1 S.183- Land at Butlersland, New Ross***

***3.2 S.183- No. 1 Windmill Lane, New Ross***

On the proposal of Cllr Sheehan, seconded by Cllr Dwyer, both Section 183 notices were endorsed, unanimously agreed by the members, and allowed to proceed to the plenary session as presented.

**4. Other Business**

**4.1 Planning- Enforcement & Building Control**

**4.2 Update from the Town Regeneration Officer – Town Centre First**

**5. Notice of Motion/s**

 None.

**6. Correspondence**

None.

**7. AOB**

The Director of Service offered the following update regarding repairs to

O’Hanrahan bridge, site investigations would take place in June after the

Leaving Certificate exams, to minimise traffic disruptions. Diversions will be in

place and signposted. Repairs works are scheduled to commence in 2026 and

will tie into the greenway and active travel schemes. The DOS advised the

members that the Town Traffic Management Plan would be circulated to the

members.

Cllr Sheehan welcomed the update on the bridge works and noted that the

bridge works and quay street pedestrianisation works will be major successes for

the town. Cllr Sheehan suggested that the plans for Quay Street be blown up

and made readily available to the public to ease public buy-in on the plans.

Cllr Sheehan raised an issue regarding the allocation of the Arts & Amenity

Grants noting that recipients are unaware of which member allocated them

funding.

A discussion among the members ensued.

Cllr Dwyer enquired about a group allocated funding having to provide tax

clearance details. The District Manager and ASO advised that this would be

queried with Finance by the District team and a response issued directly to Cllr

Dwyer.

**THAT CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING**

Signed on the 11th June 2025.

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**Cllr Bridin Murphy**

**An Cathaoirleach**

**New Ross Municipal District**