

**Minutes of the New Ross Municipal District Monthly Meeting  
held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2024 in the Tholsel, Quay St., New Ross**

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**Presiding:** Councillor Anthony Connick

**In Attendance:** Councillor John Fleming  
Councillor Michael Sheehan  
Councillor Michael Whelan  
Councillor Pat Barden  
Cllr Bridin Murphy

**Officials Present:**

Alan Fitzhenry – District Manager  
Eamonn Hore - District Director  
David Murphy - Acting Executive Engineer  
Martina Donoghue – AO Housing (Teams)  
Melissa Goff- SSO Environment (Teams)  
Niamh Lennon- Executive Planner (Teams)  
Ger Walsh – SO  
Michelle Duffin – ASO  
Dymphna O Connor – SEO Community  
Ronan Griffin- ASO Community  
John Byrne – Executive QS, Housing Capital  
Donal Gordon – SSO Finance (Teams)

**Others Present:** David Looby New Ross Standard  
Deputy Verona Murphy (Teams)

**Apologies:** Seán Meyler – Senior Executive Engineer

Standing orders were suspended to allow a presentation on the implementation plan for the LECP Commencement of Rates Legislation.

This was proposed by Cllr Sheehan and seconded by Cllr Barden.

## **Presentation on the 2 year Implementation Plan for the LECP**

The Members requested additional time to read to contents of the plan before they would be in a position to approve the document. Cllr Whelan proposed a special meeting to discuss & vote on the Implementation Plan to take place on Wednesday evening, 17<sup>th</sup> January @ 7pm which was seconded by Cllr Sheehan. All queries to be e-mailed to Dymphna O'Connor for consideration and response before the meeting.

## **Presentation on Commencement of Rates Legislation**

A presentation was given by Donal Gordon, Finance Section who then responded to questions from the Members.

Cllr Fleming questioned the interest rate charge on vacant properties and if there was any mechanism to charge back rates. Donal advised charges are from the 1<sup>st</sup> date of occupation and from when the valuation is completed.

In relation to the 8% p.a. interest charge which is set to commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2026 Cllr Barden questioned what this would mean in real terms for the majority of rate payers. Donal responded to advise the majority of rate payers pay less than €5,000 p.a. with collection rates of 94% in 2023, therefore the interest charge of 8% on outstanding balances would affect very few. Cllr Barden remarked the 6% who it would impact would struggle to pay this additional charge.

Cllr Sheehan asked if there are any efforts being made by the Rates Dept. to ensure businesses which have advertised premises for rent are actually up for rent. Donal advised all premises would be inspected by the rate collectors and the vacancy relief given can be increased or decreased, which is the only flexibility available to the Council in this regard.

## **Sympathies**

Cllr Sheehan, Cllr Whelan & Cllr Barden extended sympathies to the families of Patrick (Pat) Lee, Church Lane, New Ross, Michael Barron, Gusserane & James Cullen, Kilbraney, Gusserane.

Alan Fitzhenry sympathised with Seán Meyler, Senior Executive Engineer, on the death of his father-in-law Kieran Fielding, Clonard Little, Wexford Town.

## **Congratulations**

Cllr Fleming & Cllr Barden congratulated Tullogher Rosbercon GAA hurling club on reaching the Junior hurling All-Ireland final and Thomastown GAA hurling club on reaching the Intermediate hurling All-Ireland final.

Cllr Fleming & Cllr Barden also congratulated Superintendent Jim Doyle on his retirement after 40 years of service to An Garda Síochána.

Congratulations were extended to Motorsport Ireland by Cllr Fleming, Cllr Sheehan, Cllr Barden and Cllr Connick who will be hosting a round of the World Rally Championship mid-2025. The South-East region was confirmed as a location to host the service park, which is the central hub for the rally teams, media and the medical centre.

Cllr Sheehan congratulated the organisers of the New Years Day arrow ceremony and also the shortlisting of the High Hill and Emigrant Park projects for the LAMA awards which will take place in the Dublin Royal Convention Centre on 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2024.

## **1.0 Confirmation of Minutes**

### **1.1 Monthly Meeting –**

The 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 Minutes were proposed as presented by Cllr Sheehan and seconded by Cllr Barden.

## **Matters Arising**

N/A

## **2.0 Consideration of Reports and Recommendations.**

### **2.1 District Managers Report**

The District Manager delivered his report and responded to queries raised by the Members.

### **Proposed Festival Budget 2024**

The proposed Festival Budget & Programme for 2024 was presented to the Members for consideration and approval. The GMA allocation for 2024 is €100,000. This was proposed by Cllr Connick and seconded by Cllr Murphy.

### **Arts & Amenities and Residents Association Grants 2024**

The District Manager informed the Members the Arts & Amenities Grant and the Residents Association Grant are to be advertised shortly, with a closing date of 5pm on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2024. The Residents Association funding is €11,000 and the Arts & Amenity funding is €8,000 per Member.

## **EVENTS**

### **Nollaig New Ross 2023**

The District Manager spoke about the success of the Nollaig New Ross Christmas programme, and following discussions with some local businesses reported that trade was good over the Christmas period with high levels of footfall. It is hoped this will continue throughout the sales period in January.

### **Arrow Ceremony at Hook Lighthouse**

The District Manager discussed the arrow Ceremony event at Hook Lighthouse on New Year's Day, which was a very successful event with a large crowd in attendance despite the inclement weather conditions.

## **PROJECTS**

### **CCTV**

The Members were advised there was no change in the status on the Phase 1 CCTV Scheme Pack, which is still with the Gardai.

### **Brennan's Lane/Shambles**

The Members were informed the Consultant Avanti have been instructed to move forward to tender stage which is scheduled to take place during January & February. It is planned to have a successful tenderer by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2024.

### **Duncannon Fort Works**

The Members were advised that a pre-planning application has been submitted by the project team and is with the Planning Section. Works are planned to begin in the Spring.

### **Advance Factory**

The Members were informed that the Director for Services Liz Hore unfortunately was not in a position to attend the District meeting but has given the following update; *'I am meeting with a potential investor this week and I have a new potential investor referral identified, with capacity to develop a commercial property of scale who is meeting with me later this month. When I complete the investor appraisal discussions, I will come to the New Ross meeting to report, as economic are actively working on this project'*.

## **Motorhome Park**

The District Manager informed the Members the drawing for the Motorhome Park has been moved forward to begin preparation for Part VIII.

## **Pedestrianisation**

The Members were informed that funding will be sought under Town Centre First/ Rural Regeneration & Development Fund. The RRDF details have been announced by the Government and the team are looking at the requirements for applications. The deadline is Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> February.

## **Sensory Garden**

The District Manager advised the Members that works by Carragh Paving & Landscapes have re-started following the Christmas break and the plan is for the garden to be ready for opening in the late Spring after planting.

## **Shortlisting for LAMA Awards**

The District Manager was delighted to announce the shortlisting of the High Hill and Emigrant Park projects for the LAMA awards which will take place in the Dublin Royal Convention Centre on 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2024.

Queries were then taken from Members.

Cllr Murphy commended the work which goes into the festival budget each year. She also expressed her frustration at the lack of progress with the CCTV project commenting illegal dumpers are protected under data protection regulations. Cllr Murphy asked if there could be an up-date on RRDF supports under the Town Centre First plan.

Cllr Fleming expressed his hope the meeting with the potential investor for the Advanced Factory would come to fruition. He also referenced the illegal dumping noting he has collected 100's of rubbish bags from the roads over the years.

Cllr Barden echoed the sentiments of his fellow Councillors with regards to the above noting the need for mobile cameras on the roads to combat the issue of illegal dumping on the roads.

Cllr Sheehan expressed his belief there should be a policy of naming & shaming with regards to illegal dumpers.

He also asked if it was still the intention of the District office to submit 3 projects under Wexford's RRDF Programme.

Cllr Sheehan requested correspondence to issue to the owner of the Albatros site for an up-date on plans for the area. He also asked if the Arts Department can be contacted in relation to a statute for Michael Hanrahan.

Cllr Whelan queried if there has been any advancement in the replacement of the New Ross Projects Administrator.

Cllr Connick congratulated Lorraine Waters and all those involved in the Arrow Ceremony. He also asked if the Advanced Factory can be a monthly item on the District meeting agenda.

The District Manager responded to queries to advise he would be engaging with the Environment Section with regards to the issue of dumping. He is hopeful a replacement will be found for the New Ross Projects Administrator in the near future and that correspondence will issue to the owner of the Albatros site as requested.

Furthermore he will contact the Arts Department with regards to the Michael Hanrahan statute and will discuss the RRDF Programme with the Town Regeneration Officer Mick McCormack.

### **2.1a Special Projects Report**

The report was presented to the Members.

### **2.2. Roads Report**

The Roads Engineer delivered his report and responded to queries from the Members.

The Roads Engineer was thanked by the Members for works carried out at Mount Carmel & Riverview Estates.

Cllr Barden raised the subject of the bollard installation in Adamstown village under the Safe Routes to School Scheme noting the local people and shop owners are not happy with the bollards and want them taken out. This sentiment was echoed by Cllr Fleming.

Cllr Sheehan questioned if Pondsfield & Parkfield Estates and also Kennedy College are included under the 2024 Roads Programme.

The Engineer responded to advise the bollards in Adamstown were put in for safety reasons and as a temporary measure until a concrete footpath can be installed. The area had been identified as problematic following a Road Safety Audit. He also advised a consultation had taken place with the local shop owner before installation but would be happy to meet with the shop owner again to address their concerns.

The Members were informed 2024 Roads Funding has not yet been announced but roads which are in a bad state of disrepair will be looked at.

### **2.3. Housing Report.**

The Housing report was delivered by the Administrative Officer, Housing but due to technical difficulties with Teams a decision was made to have all queries e-mailed to Martina Donoghue for a response.

## **Housing Capital**

The Housing Capital Report was delivered and the Executive QS then responded to queries from the Members.

Cllr Sheehan questioned how much money has been spent on the Bullawn site to date and if correspondence should issue to the Department to consider abandoning the project at this point due to the expenses incurred on preparatory works.

The QS responded to advise the Department are still in favour of continuing with this 3-unit development and there should be no issue with getting additional funding as required.

Cllr Sheehan also asked what efforts were being made by Housing Capital to find sites around the town and to consider all areas in the interests of balance.

Cllr Connick requested that Members are informed when potential sites are being considered by the Housing Capital team.

Cllr Whelan asked if the site identified at the Special Housing meeting could be included as part of the Housing Capital Report.

The QS advised the Housing Section are always looking for land but there is difficulty in finding serviceable land that can be used. An advertisement will be placed in local papers in February for any interested parties.

Cllr Sheehan also requested a letter issue to the Chief Executive of Respond Housing Agency to express the Council's disappointment at the lack of progress with the Good Shepherd Convent. He suggested the Council buy back the building and noted there are 20 units there which could be used for housing purposes. Cllr Connick expressed his view that the building is not fit for purpose and should be knocked down as no one would want to live there.

Cllr Fleming asked if the drawings for the 3-unit Adamstown development were available for viewing on-line. The QS confirmed they are as there is a current Part 8 planning application awaiting decision.

## **2.4 Planning Report**

The Executive Planner delivered the Planning Reports and responded to queries raised by the Members.

Cllr Fleming requested information in relation to the waiting time for pre-planning applications. The Executive Planner responded to advise a pre-planning clinic which was held before Christmas which cleared a lot of the back log and another clinic will be held in a few months. There is currently a delay of approximately 2 months for applicants.

## **2.5 Planning Grants**

The content of the report was noted by the Members.

## **2.6 Planning Refusals**

The content of the report was noted by the Members.

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

The content of the report was proposed by Cllr Sheehan and seconded by Cllr Murphy.

## **2.8 Community Development Report**

The content of the report was proposed by Cllr Barden and seconded by Cllr Sheehan.

## **2.9 Environment Report**

The content of the report was delivered and the Senior Staff Officer then responded to queries from the Members.

Cllr Murphy enquired about the qualifying criteria with regards to the Septic Tank Grant. The SSO responded to say she was putting correspondence together which would explain all the requirements in a clear & concise way.

Cllr Whelan enquired if water readings were available for the last 2 years for the blue flag application in Duncannon and if there had been any improvement. The Members were informed the results were positive and further information would be sought from the Scientist involved in the project.

Cllr Sheehan asked about the number of horses impounded for 2023 and if there were any plans to have a dog pound for each District. The SSO responded to say the figures regarding horses are available to view in the Environment report but these would be checked again and will revert with regards to the dog pound query.

Cllr Fleming queried if a local Engineer could be used by the applicant as required when applying for the Septic Tank Grant. The Members were informed a list of suitably qualified Engineers are available from the Environment Section.

## **2.10 Fire Services Report**

The content of the report was proposed by Cllr Barden and seconded by Cllr Sheehan.



## **2.11 Members Query System**

The content of the report was proposed by Cllr Barden and seconded by Cllr Sheehan.

## **3.0 Business prescribed by Statute, Standing Orders or Resolutions of the Municipal District Members**

N/A

## **4.0 Other Business**

4.1 Presentation on the 2 year Implementation Plan for the LECP, and approval of the LECP

Discussed earlier in the meeting.

4.2 Commencement of Rates Legislation

Presented earlier in the meeting.

## **5.0 Notice of Motion/s –**

N/A

## **6.0 Correspondence**

N/A

## **7.0 AOB**

7.1 Cllr Sheehan proposed correspondence issue to the Chief Executive of the HSE with regards to the proposed Primary Care Centre for New Ross. This letter would seek confirmation of when New Ross will be provided with a PCC and to ask why previous correspondence issued has not been acknowledged.

7.2 Cllr Connick congratulated Executive Engineer Leonard Poole on the work carried out with SVDP to deliver 200 bags of timber to hardship cases, which is done an annual basis.

**THAT CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
**Cathairleach**

Date \_\_\_\_\_