

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE UÍBH FHAILÍ

**MINUTES OF JANUARY MONTHLY MEETING
OF OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, TULLAMORE
ON MONDAY, 17TH JANUARY 2011 AT 2.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Cllr. B. Cowen (Presiding), Cllrs. N. Bourke, M. Buckley, J. Butterfield, J. Carroll, P. Clendennen, D. Dolan, E. Dooley, S. Dooley E. Fitzpatrick, J. Foley, C. Hanniffy, N. Hogan, T. McKeigue, J. Leahy, T. McLoughlin, S. Moylan-Ryan, P. Ormond, D. Owens, G. Plunkett and L. Quinn.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. P. Gallagher, County Manager, Mr. D. Kirrane, D.O.S., Mr. F. Heslin, D.O.S., Mr. D. Conlon, H.O.F., Mr. S. Murray, D.O.S., Ms. M. Cleary, Meetings Administrator, Mr. D. Mahon, S.E.O., Mr. D. Hogan, S.E., T. Shanahan, S.E. and Ms. N. Troy, C.O.

**VOTES OF
SYMPATHY:**

Votes of sympathy were unanimously extended to the following:-

James Hogan & Family, Loughclose, Killeigh, Tullamore on the death of his mother, Mrs. M Hogan.

Margaret O'Neill, 38 New Road, Birr on the death of her husband, Paddy.

Majella La Cumber, Springfield, Birr on the death of her father, Michael.

Ger, Marie & Stephen Connolly Bracknagh, Rathangan on the death of Roisin and baby Catherine.

Jackie Masfield, Rathleen, Mountbolus, Tullamore on the death of her brother, Tommy.

Joan Deere, Bishopswood, Portarlinton on the death of her mother, Julia O'Brien.

Michael Dunne, Avondale Estate, Gracefield, Portarlinton on the death of his brother, Patrick.

John Sherlock, Kileen, Birr on the death of his wife, Ann.

May Sheridan, Arden Heights, Tullamore on the death of her sister, Kathleen.

Ian Lee, Collins Lane, Tullamore on the death of his father, Harry

The County Manager on his own behalf and on behalf of the staff of the Council joined with the members in these votes of sympathy.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES:

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Buckley, seconded by Cllr. L. Quinn, the minutes of Offaly County Council's December Monthly Meeting held on 20th December 2010 were agreed and adopted.

MINUTES FOR NOTING:

The following minutes were noted:

- Minutes of Housing, Social & Cultural Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 10th September 2010
- Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on 15th November, 2010

DRAFT SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2011:

The Draft Schedule of Meetings was noted and agreed by the members.

SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001: SITE NO. 1 KYLEBEG, BANAGHER, CO. OFFALY:

On the proposal of Cllr. S. Moylan-Ryan, seconded by Cllr. C. Hanniffy the members agreed the Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 for Site No. 1 at Kylebeg, Banagher, Co. Offaly.

OFFALY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2009-2015, COUNTY MANAGER'S 2 YEAR REPORT:

Ms. A. Walsh, Acting S.E.P., drew the members' attention to the County Manager's Two Year Progress Report on securing the objectives of the *Offaly County Development Plan 2009-2015*. She outlined, in detail, the various issues and conclusions included in the report.

Ms. A. Walsh informed the meeting that in accordance with The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010 the Council is required to prepare a Core Strategy for inclusion in the written statement of the County Development Plan by July 2011. The Act also requires the Council to ensure consistency between the statutory land use plans and The Midland Regional Planning Guidelines (MRPG) which were adopted on 20th July 2010. The excess amount of residential housing zoned land will have to be addressed to ensure consistency with the MRPG's through the following measures: phasing of land, amending the zoning objective and/or removing the zoning objective. This would require a variation to the Offaly County Development Plan 2009-2015. Ms. Walsh outlined to the members the various issues that may be included in the variation of the plan. Ms. Walsh advised that the population thresholds required to prepare Local Area Plans had changed. Accordingly, it was agreed that a settlement plan for Clara would be prepared as part of the Core Strategy Variation instead of preparing a Local Area Plan. The plan would include a land use zoning map and a written statement which would include objectives. Ms Walsh informed the members that the main difference between the local area plan for Clara and a settlement plan for Clara would be the process, as a variation can be undertaken and adopted in a shorter time than a Local Area Plan. Ms Walsh advised that the Traveller Accommodation Plan is separate to the Housing Strategy as it sets out a specific programme for addressing the accommodation needs of Travellers.

Mr. Kirrane outlined the role of the development plan, in helping to secure employment in the county, making reference to infrastructure provision, the County Development Board's Economic sub committee and the internship initiative being run by FÁS.

The members thanked Ms. Walsh for her informative presentation on the Manager's Report.

TULLAMORE DRAINAGE SCHEME:

Mr. D. Hogan, S. E., gave a report to the members on the proposed Tullamore River Certified Drainage Scheme. He advised that the Office of Public Works is proposing to carry out flood relief works in Tullamore to reduce the risk of flooding to properties on the Daingean Road (Whitehall Estate, Cluain Darach and adjoining areas). Mr. Hogan advised that the proposed works involve the construction of a wall or embankment beside the Tullamore River and Barony River to prevent these waterways from flooding the protected properties, and the removal of a disused weir downstream to allow free flow in the Tullamore River. The proposed works, he advised, are designed to prevent flooding from a flood with probability of occurring once in 100 years and are part of a strategic approach that includes continuing and enhancing existing planning policies to restrict development in areas at risk of flooding, and an enhanced programme of maintenance of the Tullamore and Barony Rivers.

Mr. Hogan advised that in accordance with the legislation the Council may make a submission in relation to the scheme. He noted that the scheme was on public display since the 13th December 2010 and the final date for submissions is the 31st January 2011.

Mr. Hogan informed the meeting that the scheme provides enhanced protection to the existing properties in Whitehall, Cluain Darach and adjoining areas. He recommend the scheme to the members and advised that it is open to any member to make a personal submission by the closing date. It was agreed that the members' unanimous support for the scheme would be communicated to the OPW.

SEVERE WEATHER UPDATE:

Mr. T. Shanahan, S.E., outlined to the members the extent and impact of the severely cold weather, during December and January, on water services. He informed the members that the duration and severity of the freezing conditions was unprecedented (temperatures below 0oC for nine consecutive days). Water production, he advised, increased from 28,500m³/day to over 30,000m³/day and peaked at 38,000m³/day on 27th December 2010. He advised that 1,200 individual services and 55 water main repairs were repaired to date.

Mr. Shanahan informed the meeting that the Management Team had agreed a contingency plan to address the issues.

Mr. Shanahan informed the meeting that the total costs would exceed €400,000, i.e., €300,000 direct costs for repairs and response to date, €50,000 for further repairs to bring demand back to November 2010 levels and €70,000 for increased water cost production. A further estimated cost of €60-70,000 would be required to address frozen plant and sludge handling processes on the Council's Waste Water Treatment Plants.

Mr. Shanahan thanked the staff and contractors for their work over the Christmas period and noted that in excess of 7,700 hours had been worked to date. Mr. Shanahan thanked the local media for disseminating information to the public and thanked the public and elected members for their assistance in sourcing leaks.

In responding to questions Mr. Shanahan advised that a comprehensive examination of the types of meters that caused issues would be undertaken. He advised that the progressive freeze did cause pipes below the standard depth, i.e., 2ft., to freeze in some situations.

The Cathaoirleach and members thanked Mr. Shanahan for his update and complemented the staff for their dedication and exemplary response. In the course of members' contributions, it was remarked that the fact that water services were delivered by the local authority, which would deploy resources from other sections to help deal with the crisis, was an important factor in this response.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

(a) The following motion was proposed by Cllr. T. McKeigue, seconded by Cllr. C. Hanniffy and agreed by the members:

"That Offaly County Council calls on the Minister to direct the toll road operators to reduce their charges, which are now excessive by today's living standard".

(b) Cllr. T. McKeigue proposed the following motion, which was seconded by Cllr. M. Buckley, and agreed:

"That Offaly County Council calls on the Minister and the I.D.A. to review their policy on the way that grant assistance is allocated for foreign companies setting up and expanding in Ireland. Offaly and other rural counties in the past had a 10% greater grant assist than the Dublin region and over the years this advantage has been eroded and as a result it gives the Dublin region a distinct advantage".

COMHDHÁLACHA:

Cllr. M. Buckley paid tribute to Cllr. C. Hanniffy for her role, as Chairperson of the Association of County and City Councils, in bringing the Association of County and City Councils Spring Conference to The Court Hotel, Tullamore.

**COMHDHÁLACHA
(cont'd):**

The following conferences were agreed by the members:

22nd Colmcille Winter School
Colmcill Heritage Centre, Letterkenny 25th/27th February
No member expressed an interest in attending.

The Local Government Planning Service
Silver Tassie Hotel & Spa, Letterkenny 25th/27th February
It was agreed that Cllr. Nichola Hogan would attend.

Association of County & City Councils Conference
Tullamore Court Hotel 24th/25th March 2011
It was agreed that Cllrs. P. Clendennen, T. McKeigue, C. Hanniffy, M. Buckley, J. Butterfield, E. Fitzpatrick would attend.

Professional Development for Councillors
Castlecourt Hotel, Westport 18th/20th February 2011
No member expressed an interest in attending.

Retrospective approval for the attendance of Cllrs. G. Plunkett, B. Cowen and D. Owens at Professional Development of Councillors – Time Management Success 21st/23rd January 2011 in The Maritime Hotel, Bantry, Cork

Retrospective approval for the attendance of Cllr. N. Hogan at AMAI Spring Seminar on 11th/12th February 2011 in Westwood Lodge Hotel, Bantry, Cork.

COMHFREAGRAS: The correspondences were noted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS: There were no other matters arising.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

MINUTES CONFIRMED:

CATHAOIRLEACH

RUNAÍ

21st FEBRUARY 2011