**MINUTES OF MAY MEETING OF BIRR M.D. HELD ON MONDAY 12TH MAY 2025 AT BIRR CIVIC OFFICES, WILMER ROAD, BIRR AT 4.30 P.M.**

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| **MEMBERS PRESENT:** | **Cllrs P Ormond, E Clendennen, J Leahy, A Hennessy – Kennedy, H Egan, S Maher,** |
| **IN ATTENDANCE:** | **Ms A Dillon, DOS, Mr B Keenaghan SEE, Ms M Flynn AO Birr MD, Ms O Cummins SEO Regen Team OCC and Ms. D Molloy Meetings Administrator** |

1. **Adoption of Minutes of Meeting in Committee held on 14TH April 2025**

On the proposal of Cllr Leahy and seconded by Cllr Egan the Minutes of Meeting in Committee of Birr MD held on the 14th April, 2025 were adopted.

1. **Adoption of Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 14th April 2025**

On the proposal of Cllr Hennessy-Kennedy and seconded by Cllr Clendennen the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Birr MD held on the 14th April, 2025 were adopted.

1. **Matters arising from April Meeting.**

There were no matters arising from the April meeting.

1. **Regeneration Team Update**

Ms Olwen Cummins SEO Regen Team OCC presented an update to the Members in relation to current and recently completed schemes. The Members thanked her and her team for the extremely comprehensive presentation and the huge amount of work that has been carried out to bring these schemes to fruition and raised the following:

* The Members enquired as to the start date of the works in Market Sq., Birr and were advised that the works would commence this week and were expected to be complete within six weeks.
* The Members welcomed the work commencing on the Ferbane Fairgreen Project and also the near completion of the Kilcormac Fiesta Hall project.
* The Members welcomed the work carried out on derelict building’s in Shinrone and the work that was currently being carried out identifying derelict buildings and trying to encourage owners to bring them back in to use.
* The Members enquired about the difference between vacant and derelict properties and were advised that a vacant property looks in good condition but is being left empty where a derelict property detracts visually from the streetscape.

1. **Schedule of Municipal District Works 2025**

Mr Brian Keenaghan, SEE, Birr Municipal District presented the Schedule of Municipal District works programme for 2025 to the Members. The Members noted the contents and on the proposal of Cllr Leahy and seconded by Cllr Maher the Schedule of Municipal District Works for 2025 were adopted.

1. **Community Grants Scheme 2025**

The Members were advised that 35 applications had been received to date under the 2025 Scheme and after considering all the applications in line with the criteria of the scheme and crosschecking funding with other agencies it was proposed to allocate an overall fund of €38450 to these groups.

The Members advised that they had been approached by some groups who had failed to submit their application and it was agreed that these groups would be allowed a short window to contact the MD and arrangements would be made for submission of same.

On the proposal of Cllr Ormond and seconded by Cllr Leahy the draft proposal for Community Grants allocation for 2025 was agreed.

1. **Birr Courthouse Update**

Ms M Flynn-Kenny advised the Members that following their decision to allocate funding through GMA, that Forvis Mazars, Financial Consultants have been appointed to prepare a preliminary business case and strategic assessment report in relation to Birr Courthouse. The consultants will view the property and meet with interested parties later this month to explain the process and what information is required for inclusion in their report. Completion of this report will support a Category 1 application to the Department of Rural & Community Development under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund.

The Members thanked Ms. Flynn Kenny for the update and acknowledged that it was important for all relevant parties to be included in the process and hopefully a financially sustainable project could be identified for the building.

1. **Pride of Place Awards 2025**

Ms M Flynn-Kenny advised the Members that OCC Community Section and Offaly Public Participation Network have nominated Clonfanlough Hall Committee to IPB Pride of Place Competition 2025 in the 0-300m population category. The purpose of the competition is to acknowledge the work being done every day by these communities. The judging will take place in July when the judges will visit the groups which will involve a tour of the area and an oral presentation by the group.

The Members and the Executive wished the Clonfanlough group the best of luck in the Competition.

1. **World Heritage Site – Birr, Dunsink & Armagh Observatories**

Ms M Flynn-Kenny advised the Members that Minister James Browne has announced that Birr Castle Demesne and Dunsink Observatory have officially been added to Ireland’s tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. This is a key step towards full UNESCO recognition and this cross-border bid between Ireland and the UK aims to protect the scientific legacy of the three observatories at Birr, Dunsink and Armagh Observatory and if successful could become iconic World Heritage Sites. OCC is working closely with the Astronomical Obervatories of Ireland on this project.

The Meeting then concluded.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**CATHAOIRLEACH MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR**