

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE UÍBH FHAILÍ

MINUTES OF APRIL MONTHLY MEETING OF OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN BIRR THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE ON MONDAY, 21ST APRIL 2008 AT 2.00P.M.

PRESENT:

Cllr.'s. E. Dooley (Presiding), N. Bourke, M. Buckley, J. Butterfield, J. Carroll, P. Clendennen, M. Corcoran-Kennedy, B. Cowen, D. Dolan, T. Feighery, E. Fitzpatrick, Cllr. J. Foran, M. Fox, C. Hanniffy, G. Killally, F. McDonnell, T. McKeigue, T. McLoughlin, S. Moylan Ryan, P. Ormond, D. Owens.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Pat Gallagher, County Manager, Mr. Michael Roche, D.O.S., Mr. Declan Kirrane, D.O.S., Mr. Sean Murray D.O.S., Ms. Frank Heslin, D.O.S., Mr. G. Daly, S.P., Ms. R. McKenna, S.E.A., Ms. Ann Dillon, A/S.E.O., (Meetings Administrator), Ms. A. Walshe, E.P. & Ms. Natasha Troy, C.O.

APOLOGIES:

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. E. Dooley, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the Birr Theatre & Arts Centre.

Cllr. M. Corcoran-Kennedy, on behalf of the board of the Birr Theatre & Arts Centre, expressed thanks to the Council for accepting their invitation to hold the meeting in the Theatre. She stated that they were very grateful for the funding which Offaly Council had allocated to them and that this gave the Council a great opportunity to see where the money was going. She advised that it is a great facility which was free to be used by anyone or group around the county who wished to avail of its resources.

VOTES OF SYMPATHY:

The members extended Votes of sympathy to families of the following: -

Michael Mullarkey, O.C.C. on the death of his father Vincent.

Mrs Bernadette Cummins & Family, Gorteen, Killeigh, Tullamore on the death of her husband, John.

Mrs Loretta Jenkins & Family, Cushcallow, Banagher, on the death of her husband, Ken.

Ned & Mary Kennedy, Feighs, Banagher on the death of Bernie Ahearn.

Peter & Rose Dunne & Family, Rahan Road, Tullamore on the death of Billy.

**VOTES OF SYMPATHY
(cont'd):**

Lilly Kenny, Corduff, Roscrea on the death her husband, Oliver.

Jimmy Cronly, 39 Callery St., Tullamore on the death of his brother, Peter.

Seamus Crombie, Kilcappa, Cloneygowan, Tullamore on the death of his sister, Betty.

Kieran Cummins, Urney, Cloneygowan on the death of his mother, Julia.

**CONFIRMATION OF
MINUTES:**

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Buckley, seconded by Cllr. Percy Clendennen the minutes of Offaly County Council's monthly meeting held on 31st March 2008 were confirmed and signed.

The minutes of the Special Meetings' of Offaly County Council held on 14th & 18th January 2008 were proposed by Cllr. D. Dolan and seconded by Cllr. B. Cowen.

In proposing the minutes Cllr. Dolan requested that page 18 of the minutes of the 18th January 2008 be amended to include the decision to upgrade Clara Fire Station.

NOTING OF MINUTES:

There were no minutes for noting.

**“IMPLICATIONS OF
WORLD TRADE
ORGANISATION TALKS
ON THE IRISH
LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY” –
PRESENTATION BY
AIDAN LARKIN,
CHAIRMAN, OFFALY
I.F.A.:**

Cllr. Dooley informed the members that Item No 10 on the Agenda, “Implications Of World Trade Organisation Talks On The Irish Livestock Industry” – presentation by Aidan Larkin, Chairman, Offaly I.F.A. was being brought forward to be heard first. He advised that the presentation was for information purposes only and he welcomed Aidan Larkin and Willie Dolan of the I.F.A. to the meeting.

Mr. Larkin thanked the members for the opportunity to speak to them on this issue and informed them that the tariff changes being proposed at W.T.O. talks at a time when oil, fertilizer and other costs are increasing could mean an annual loss of income of €65 million per year to Offaly. He asked the Council to support the motion presented as follows:

“That the position of EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson in the WTO negotiations represents a grave and unacceptable threat to Irish farming, the food industry and employment in the Irish economy; we call on the Minister for Agriculture, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Taoiseach to assert Ireland's vital national interest at the highest level in Europe by rejecting Mandelson's concessions.”

The motion was unanimously agreed.

**PROPOSED DRAFT
VARIATION NO. 4 OF THE
TULLAMORE &
ENVIRONS
DEVELOPMENT PLAN:**

Mr. D. Kirrane, DOS, advised the members that they had been through all the details of the Draft Variation No. 4 of the Tullamore & Environs Development Plan at previous meetings held with Tullamore Town Council. The document is as previously circulated with no changes having been made. He was now requesting approval to proceed to Public Consultation.

Cllr. D. Dolan advised that he had a connection with landowners in the 'Tullamore North' area and also with the area at the hospital and offered to absent himself from any discussion regarding these lands. He had no direct interest in the lands himself and requested that this be recorded in the minutes. No discussion on these lands took place.

Cllr. Dolan proposed two amendments as follows:

- a) Approximately 50 acres of land between the Grand Canal and the Tullamore River, which is zoned as residential, mixed use and open space in the Variation, be set aside for the development of a public central amenity park.
- b) Table 5 pg 25 – suggested phasing of development – no houses be built before schools are built in Tullamore West.

He also expressed his opposition to urban design suggestion in the variation that the N80 & N52 might be downgraded.

In responding Mr. D. Kirrane, DOS, stated that there were two reasons behind the zoning of an additional 900 acres approximately of residential land, firstly that the Managers Report July 2006 implied that there was shortfall in residentially zoned land in Tullamore and secondly to strengthen the role of Tullamore as part of the Midland Gateway as specified in the National Spatial Strategy.

He advised numerous meetings had been held with the Tullamore Town Councillors and the matter had been discussed in depth. He considered the policies within the plan robust enough to support the zoning of the additional land. He advised that Chapter 3 is dedicated entirely to Tullamore town centre, with a view to redeveloping the town from the centre outwards. He confirmed that a traffic study will be carried out in the near future.

Mr. G. Daly, S.P. in answering queries raised advised the following:

- Regarding downgrading of the N52 & N80 he recommended careful consideration based on the outcome of the forthcoming traffic study.
- Table 5: land has been zoned for educational purposes, as need arises for educational facilities there is enough land zoned.

**PROPOSED DRAFT
VARIATION NO. 4 OF THE
TULLAMORE &
ENVIRONS
DEVELOPMENT PLAN
(cont'd):**

- There will be a provision for a link to the Bypass from the Southern Environs – not needed yet but leaving option open.
- Moving of Treatment Plant – has been considered, not feasible at the moment but needs to be dealt with.
- Proposal for a Landmark building – not being prescriptive, need to have something to announce entry to town from the Northern route.
- Mixed use zoning for Puttaghaun – small area, didn't specify the need for neighbourhood centre.

With regard to Cllr. Dolan's proposal (a) on a central amenity park, he stated that as part of the design of the plan it was required to investigate all the options. He recommended leaving as proposed in the draft for two reasons. Firstly, he stated that putting all of the open space into one area is not appropriate and secondly he considered that it would be a missed opportunity being that the land in question is in such close proximity to the Grand Canal it has great potential and should be developed and inhabited. Quality of the space is as important as the quantity and this space would not be appropriate for play for example as it is not overlooked by residential areas.

Cllr. T. McKeigue proposed adopting the plan as previously circulated and without any amendments. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. D. Owens.

The Cathairleach, Cllr. Dooley, requested a seconder for Cllr. Dolan's proposal to amend the plan as above. There being no seconder the proposal fell.

On the proposal of Cllr. McKeigue, seconded by Cllr. Owens it was agreed to proceed to further Public Consultation for a period of four weeks.

Cllr. B. Cowen welcomed the plan and the vision for growth of the town. He asked that the flood study be brought forward as soon as possible. Cllrs J. Butterfield and M. Buckley also welcomed the plan.

**CONSERVATION GRANTS
SCHEME 2008:**

On the proposal of Cllr. Peter Ormond, seconded by Cllr. Molly Buckley the members approved of the Conservation Grant Scheme 2008 as circulated with the Agenda.

**LOCAL IMPROVEMENT
SCHEME - 2008 PRIORITY
LIST:**

Mr. F. Heslin, DOS, directed the members' attention to the Local Improvement Scheme Priority List for 2008 which had been previously circulated. He informed them that the allocation for the scheme was €209,000 and advised that the first 7 applications on the list would be completed this year.

**LOCAL IMPROVEMENT
SCHEME - 2008 PRIORITY
LIST (cont'd):**

In responding to queries raised Mr. Heslin confirmed that if a grant which has been allocated to a specific application is not availed of, it will be reallocated to the next application on the list. He advised that if we undertake to do works on an application which is part of the Clár Scheme, we receive an extra 50% funding.

The Cathaoirleach, in commenting suggested carrying out a review of the Local Improvement Scheme and how the points are accumulated. He asked the Transportation & Infrastructure S.P.C. to investigate and requested that the executive put together a submission to the D.O.E.H.L.G. for extra resources for L.I.S.

The members noted the Local Improvement Scheme Priority List for 2008 as circulated.

**TAKE-OVER OF
GARRYHINCH G.W.S.:**

On the proposal of Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. N. Bourke the members approved of the take-over of Garryhinch Group Water Scheme.

**TAKE-OVER OF
BISHOPSWOOD G.W.S.:**

On the proposal of Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. N. Bourke the members approved of the take-over of Bishopswood Group Water Scheme.

ANNUAL REPORT 2007:

Mr. S. Murray, DOS, circulated a draft Annual Report 2007 to the members in accordance with Section 221 (1) (b) of the Local Government Act 2001 for their consideration.

**PROPOSED CIVIC
RECEPTION FOR AN
TÁNAISTE BRIAN
COWEN, T.D.:**

Mr. S. Murray, DOS, advised the members that it is proposed to hold a Civic Reception to honour the Taoiseach designate, Mr. Brian Cowen, T.D. on 10th May 2008. He advised that there would be approximately 200 guests invited to a formal gathering in the Council Chamber, followed by an informal gathering in the foyer of the Áras.

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Dolan, seconded by Cllr. D. Owens, it was agreed to proceed with the proposed Civic Reception.

NOTICES OF MOTION:

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Buckley, seconded by Cllr. M. Corcoran-Kennedy the council approved of the following motion:

“That Offaly Co Council ensures that Community Facilities are provided in both Local Authority and Private Housing Estates. This would help eliminate anti-social behavior”.

**NOTICES OF MOTION
(cont'd):**

In responding, Mr. S. Murray advised that the current Development Plan includes policies/objectives in relation to sport and recreation, childcare provision, cemeteries, community centres and playgrounds, library service, access for people with disabilities, arts and culture. In particular, he stated, Section 3.17 of the current County Development Plan contains an objective to reserve sites for community facilities in existing and newly developing areas. The plan also sets out development management standards in order that the facilities are designed to a suitable standard.

He advised that it is clear council policy (in the draft County Development Plan) to ensure community facilities are provided in residential areas. (Policy 11.04).

He informed the members that as set out in section 11.6 of the draft Plan, the Council recognises to maximise opportunities for children play facilities both within the natural and built environment and confirmed that the Council have adopted a Play Policy for the County in June 06 in accordance with national policy – ‘Ready Steady Play: A National Play Policy’.

It also sets out in section 11.7 of the draft Plan, the Council will also have regard to the Department of Health and Children’s policy document ‘Teenspace National Recreation Policy for Young People’.

He stated that section 4.2 of the ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Consultation draft guidelines for planning authorities’ address the provision of community facilities, namely schools, childcare, health/elderly care facilities and district/neighbouring centres uses. He advised that the Council must have regard to the guidelines when assessing developments or proposing Local Authority developments.

He advised that the planning authorities devotes significant resources at pre-application consultation stage in providing guidance for the design, layout and community facility needs of residential developments. The draft plan also states that the successful implementation of the Council’s community policies is by way of a collaborative approach by Offaly County Council, other statutory bodies, private developers and the community sector and this list can be extended by adding development contributions, planning conditions, masterplans and land use zoning, which are all platforms for provision of community facilities.

Cllr. M. Buckley proposed the following motion:

“Since Part 5 will be the primary tool for addressing the housing need in the coming years; a policy document needs to be prepared to include acceptable building standards”.

**NOTICES OF MOTION
(cont'd):**

Mr. S. Murray, DOS, in responding advised that the following documents/methods aid in providing high standards of design for houses proposed under Part V:

- The Building Regulations 2007 and associated Technical Guidance Documents set standards for the construction of houses.
- The recently published DoEHLG document '*Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartment - Guidelines for Planning Authorities*'
- The recently published DoEHLG document '*Quality housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes and Sustaining Communities*'
- There are development management standards in Vol. 1 of the County Development Plan.
- The principle in the design guide for houses in the countryside currently been prepared may also be of use for small village schemes.
- Section 4.1.6 Housing Strategy is to ensure that quality housing and sustainable communities underpin housing provision.

It is considered, therefore, that there are adequate standards and guidelines available to ensure acceptable building standards are adhered to.

Mr. P. Gallagher, County Manager ensured the members that O.C.C. are enforcing their policies.

COMHDHÁLACHA:

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Owens, seconded by Cllr. T. Feighery the Council approved of the members attendance at conferences as follows:

Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly 9th Annual Regional Assembly Conference
Friday 16th May 2008 – Marriot Druids Glen Hotel,
Newtownmountkennedy, Wicklow
Noone expressed an interest in this conference

TJK Conferences – Planning Seminar for Councillors
Saturday 26th April 2008 – Patrick Punch Hotel, Limerick
No-one expressed an interest in this conference

Literacy & the Local Authority: How to develop literacy-friendly policies and practices across the organisation.
No-one expressed an interest in this conference

“National Hub Town Conference” hosted by The Mayor of Cork County – Cllr. Tom Sheehan
29th May 2008 – Hibernaian Hotel, Mallow, Co. Cork
It was agreed to send Cllr. Connie Hanniffy and Cllr. Michael Fox

COMHDHÁLACHA
(cont'd):

Inspiration for the Next Generation
Friday 16th – Sunday 18th May 2008 – Cruachan Ai Heritage
Centre, Tusk, Co. Roscommon
It was agreed to send Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Cllr. Dooley advised the members that last date for
submissions of the County Development Plan is 29th April.

The Cathaoirleach and the County Manager expressed thanks
to the organisers, The Board of Management and the staff of
the Birr Theatre & Arts Centre for the invitation to the
Council to hold their monthly meeting there.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

MINUTES CONFIRMED: -

CATHAOIRLEACH

MEETINGS ADMINISTATOR

19TH MAY 2008