

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE UÍBH FHAILÍ

MINUTES OF OCTOBER MONTHLY MEETING OF OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, TULLAMORE ON MONDAY, 20TH OCTOBER 2008 AT 2.00P.M.

PRESENT: Cllrs. B. Cowen, Cathaoirleach (Presiding), N. Bourke, M. Buckley, J. Butterfield, J. Carroll, P. Clendennen, M. Corcoran-Kennedy, D. Dolan, E. Dooley, T. Feighery, E. Fitzpatrick, J. Foran, C. Hanniffy, G. Killally, F. McDonnell, T. McKeigue, T. McLoughlin, S. Moylan Ryan, P. Ormond, D. Owens.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. P. Gallagher, County Manager, Mr. D. Kirrane, D.O.S., Mr. D. Hogan, A/D.O.S., Mr. H. O'Donoghue, A/D.O.S., Mr. C. McCarty, A/D.O.S., Mr. T. Mawe, A/H.O.F., Mr. G. Daly, S.P., Mr. A. O'Gorman, S.E.O.; Ms. A. Dillon, A/S.E.O., (Meetings Administrator), Mr. S. Burt, E.P., Ms. J. Finney, A.O., & Ms. N. Troy, C.O.

APOLOGIES: Cllr. M. Fox, Mr. M. Roche, D.O.S., Mr. F. Heslin, D.O.S., Mr. D. Conlon, D.O.S., Mr. S. Murray, D.O.S.

COMHIRLE NA NÓG PROGRAMME OF VISITING SCHOOLS:

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. B. Cowen welcomed the students of St. Manchan's National School, Tubber and their teacher, Ms. Audrey Hughes Deputy Principal & Alysia Fallon Class Teacher to the meeting as part of the Comhairle na nÓg programme..

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The Cathaoirleach introduced Mr. Thomas Mawe, Financial Management Accountant to the meeting and welcomed him to Offaly County Council.

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The members, management and staff of Offaly County Council extended their condolences to the immediate family, extended family and wide circle of friends of former staff member, Mr. Gerry Dillon.

On the proposal of the Cathaoirleach it was agreed to have a five minute adjournment as a mark of respect for Gerry.

**VOTE OF
CONGRATULATION:**

The members extended their congratulation to Mr. Ray Carroll, Senior Executive Officer, on his retirement. They paid tribute to his great work in Offaly County Council and wished him and his family a long and happy retirement.

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The members also expressed congratulations to Cllr. C. Hanniffy on her association with the E.U Committee of the Regions Conference at the Athlone Institute of Technology.

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Cllr. Hanniffy, with regard to the UNESCO World Heritage Site Bid for Clonmacnoise, thanked the County Manager on the diplomatic manner in which he acted on since the presentation was given to the members in September.

Cllr. Hanniffy also expressed her disappointment with Bord na Mona's decision to close the Clonmacnoise and West Offaly Railway "the bog rail". She considered it a great loss and proposed that O.C.C. make contact with B.N.M. to request that it be maintained. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. M. Corcoran-Kennedy and agreed

Mr. D. Kirrane, D.O.S., in responding stated that he was unaware of the decision to close and confirmed that he would make contact with Bord na Mona. He proposed that a deputation would comprise the four Ferbane area members, which was agreed.

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The members congratulated the Offaly Film Commission on their efforts. On the proposal of Cllr. M. Corcoran-Kennedy it was agreed to show a promotional video at the November Council Meeting.

**VOTES OF
SYMPATHY:**

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

Mr. Joseph Lambe, Killoughey, Blueball, Tullamore on the death of his sister, Nora Murphy.

Ms. Brid Weldon, Cushina, Portarlinton on the death of her mother, Mrs. Kathleen Moynihan.

Mr. Seamus Brearton, Annamoe, Portarlinton on the death of his mother, Bridie.

Mr. Joe Abbott & Family, Killane, Edenderry on the death of his father, Paddy.

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

Mr. Ned Tyrrell, Drumcooley, Edenderry, on the death of his wife, May.

Mrs. Mary Feighery & Family, Coolinanny, Blueball, Tullamore on the death of her brother in law, Tom.

Mr. Seamus Tylor, High St, Belmont on the death of his mother, Judy.

Michael & Brigid Kidney, Clara Road, Tullmaore on the death of their son, Michael.

Ms Ann Martin, Daingean Road, Tullamore on the death of her brother, John.

Willie & Joan Mooney and family, Clononey, Shannon Harbour, Birr on the death of his mother, Margaret.

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.

**SUSPENSION OF
STANDING ORDERS:**

A request was made to suspend standing orders to allow for discussion on the Government's budgetary decision to apply a means testing system before providing medical cards for the over 70s.

On the proposal of Cllr. T. McKeigue, seconded by Cllr. M. Buckley it was agreed to suspend standing orders, without a formal vote, to facilitate the request.

A full and frank discussion ensued and the members expressed their disapproval of the Governments decision to revoke the medical card for the over 70's.

In responding, the Cathaoirleach, Cllr. B. Cowen, reiterated a statement made by the Taoiseach on the previous day stating that:

- That the current proposal would be modified and adapted.
- The present scheme cannot be assumed.
- A solution must be found
- Eligibility criteria has to be revisited.

The members expressed their opposition to the decision and proposed the following motion:

"That this Council calls on the Government to restore the medical card in full universally for the over 70s".

The motion was agreed.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES:

On the proposal of Cllr. E. Dooley, seconded by Cllr. C. Hanniffy the minutes of Offaly County Council's September monthly meeting held on 15th September 2008 were confirmed and signed.

NOTING OF MINUTES:

The following minutes were noted:

- Minutes of Transportation & Infrastructure SPC held on Friday the 9th May 2008.
- Minutes of meeting of Tullamore Area Committee held on Tuesday 27th May 2008.
- Minutes of Housing, Social & Cultural SPC held on 3rd June 2008. (amendment will not feature until the September minutes)
- Minutes of Birr Area Committee meeting held on 9th June 2008.
- Minutes of Ferbane Area Committee meeting held on 9th June 2008.
- Minutes of In-committee meeting of Edenderry Area Committee re Portarlinton joint meeting with Laois Co. Co. held on Monday 1st September, 2008.
- Minutes of Edenderry Area Committee meeting held on Monday 1st September 2008.

REVIEW OF BIRR TOWN AND ENVIRONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2004-2010: MANAGER'S REPORT ON SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED:

Mr. G. Daly, S.P., informed the members that the review process for the Birr Town & Environs Development Plan 2004-2010 is a two year process which began in April of this year. He stated that the first stage of Public Consultation was completed on the 19th August and advised that two submissions had been received. He directed the member's attention to the Manager's Report on submissions received, which had been previously circulated, for their consideration.

On the proposal of Cllr. S. Moylan-Ryan, seconded by Cllr. J. Carroll, the recommendations as set out in the Managers Report dated 19/08/2008 were adopted.

ADOPTION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION GRANTS SCHEME 2008/2009:

Mr. H. O'Donoghue, A/D.O.S. directed the members to the Higher Education Grants Scheme 2008/2009 which had been circulated in August. He requested that the scheme be adopted as circulated.

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Butterfield, seconded by Cllr. E. Dooley the council adopted the Higher Education Grants Scheme 2008 as circulation.

**SPEED LIMIT REVIEW
FOR THE TULLAMORE
BYPASS:**

Mr. C. McCarthy, A/D.O.S. informed the members that the 2006 Speed Limits for Tullamore and Mucklagh, were reviewed in July 2008, to facilitate the Tullamore Bypass. He advised that draft Bye-Laws were prepared and displayed in the Roads Department for a period of 30 days which ended on the 24th July 2008. He confirmed that no submissions were received. He also advised that the NRA and the Gardai were informed of the proposed changes. He referred the member's attention to the maps and advised that it was proposed to amend the Offaly County Council Speed Limit Bye-Laws of 2006, for the town of Tullamore and the village of Mucklagh as circulated.

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Butterfield, seconded by Cllr. D. Owens the council approved the proposed speed limits as circulated.

The Cathaoirleach also proposed that speed limits in housing estates be reviewed.

**PART VIII - WESTERN
RELIEF ROAD CLARA:**

Deferred until November meeting.

**SECTION 183 OF LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ACT
2001 – DISPOSAL OF
LANDS AT:- COOLCOR,
RHODE, CO. OFFALY:**

On the proposal of Cllr. N. Bourke, seconded by Cllr. P. Ormond the council approved of the disposal of lands at Coolcor, Rhode in accordance with the terms of the Section 183 notice dated 3rd October 2008.

**SECTION 183 OF LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ACT
2001 – DISPOSAL OF
FREEHOLD INTEREST
IN PROPERTY AT:- 70
ST. JOSEPH'S
TERRACE,
PORTARLINGTON:**

On the proposal of Cllr. F. McDonnell, seconded by Cllr. N. Bourke the council approved of the disposal of freehold interest in property at 70 St. Joseph's Tce. Portarlinton in accordance with the terms of the Section 183 notice dated 1st October 2008.

**SECTION 183 OF LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ACT
2001 – DISPOSAL OF
LANDS AT:- GALLEN,
FERBANE:**

On the proposal of Cllr. E. Dooley, seconded by Cllr. M. Corcoran-Kennedy the council approved of the disposal of lands in property at Gallen, Ferbane in accordance with the terms of the Section 183 notice dated 6th October 2008.

SECTION 183 OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 – DISPOSAL OF FREEHOLD INTEREST IN PROPERTY AT: GLEN CUIMIN, SHINRONE; ARMSTRONG GROVE, CLARA; NEWBERRY MEWS, EDENDERRY; ARD GLAS, BALLYVORA, FERBANE; CLUAIN FIA, CURRAGH ROAD, CLARA:

On the proposal of Cllr. P. Ormond, seconded by Cllr. P. Clendennen the council approved, in accordance with the terms of the Section 183 notice, dated 1st October 2008 of the disposal of freehold interest in property as follows:

- No. 5 Glen Cuimin, Shinrone
- No. 38 Armstrong Grove, Clara
- No. 9 Newberry Mews, Edenderry
- No. 13 Ard Glas, Ballyvora, Ferbane
- No. 33 Cluain Fia, Curragh, Road, Clara
- No. 35 Cluain Fia, Curragh Road, Clara

SECTION 183 OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 – DISPOSAL OF FREEHOLD INTEREST IN PROPERTY AT:- HEATHER GROVE, CLARA:

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Dolan, seconded by Cllr. T. McKeigue the council approved of the disposal of freehold interest in property, in accordance with the terms of the Section 183 notice dated 1st October 2008 as follows:

- No. 20 Heather Grove, Clara
- No. 21 Heather Grove, Clara
- No. 22 Heather Grove, Clara
- No. 23 Heather Grove, Clara

PROGRESS REPORT ON WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN:

Mr. D. Hogan, A/D.O.S. advised that as part of the current Waste Management Plan we are obliged to give an annual progress report to the members. He referred the members to the Progress Report on year 2 of 5, which had been circulated with the Agenda and gave a brief outline some of the following points:

- Statistical Information: details of waste generation and management in the municipal waste stream, in the midlands region; Key Service Indicators; LA Service Indicators.
- Progress Achieved: Awareness/education/training campaigns on waste management; waste prevention (including reuse) – household, commercial and industrial; recycling; uncollected waste; monitoring/validation of waste statistics; biological treatment of biodegradable municipal waste; construction and demolition waste; WEEE; end-of-life vehicle; hazardous waste; packaging waste; energy recovery; landfill disposal
- Priorities for next year

**PROGRESS REPORT ON
WASTE MANAGEMENT
PLAN (cont'd):**

He informed the members that a regional booklet giving advice to small and medium sized enterprises titled 'A business guide to Wise Waste Management' was launch by An Taoiseach, Brian Cowen in September 08. He also advised that the Environment S.P.C. had put forward the following two proposals:

- Roll out of a 3rd (brown) bin
- Charge by weight

FLOODING REPORT:

Mr. C. McCarthy, A/D.O.S. advised that the flood report had been prepared in response to a motion passed at the September Monthly Meeting. He outlined the following points from the report:

- Offaly County Council, in light of recent flooding events throughout the county will carry out a review of the Councils current Drainage Programme to assess its adequacy and ascertain whether it needs to be improved.
- Drainage is broken into two areas; 1. Road drainage and 2. River drainage.
- Offaly County Council has total responsibility for the drainage of public roads whereas river drainage is jointly the responsibility of O.C.C., Office of Public Works and various Drainage Boards.
- Existing drainage programme and the proposed drainage programme in relation to roads, which includes a 'Road Drainage Inspection & Maintenance Programme'.
- Drainage districts presently maintained by Offaly County Council and expenditure on these drainage districts
- O.C.C. proposes to liaise with the O.P.W. to develop an appropriate maintenance programme.
- Cost of repairs that need to be carried out to roads, bridges and other property in charge of O.C.C. i.e. Emergency Response Costs and cost of Remedial Works.
- Funding

In responding to queries raised, Mr. McCarthy advised that the Tullamore Flood Risk Report was carried out by the O.P.W. and a number of recommendations were made. He stated that O.C.C. is currently in consultation with the O.P.W. to ascertain the best way forward. He advised that he did not know who had responsibility for the Daingean River but that he would investigate the matter and that South of the Drumcullen bridge is the responsibility of OCC but North is the Fisheries Board. He confirmed that we will be progressively looking for funding from the O.P.W.

**PRESENTATION BY
GERRY GEOGHEGAN
ON THE DUBLIN
WATER SUPPLY
PROJECT:**

Mr. Gerry Geoghegan, RPS Consulting, gave a very presentation to the members on the Dublin Water Supply Project i.e. project to supply water to the Dublin Region from 2016 onwards. He informed them that ten options are currently being studied by engineering consultants RPS – Veolia in order to assess their full potential for providing water to the Dublin Region. He advised that as well as direct options involving Lough Ree, Lough Derg and Parteen Basin on the Shannon river system, abstractions of water from the Shannon combined with storage in former bogs are also being investigated. He stated that all Shannon options contain provision for making treated water supplies available to Offaly and Westmeath County Council.

Mr. Geoghegan advised that a statutory process, called a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), is underway in relation to the plan and includes a formal public consultation process at which time everyone will have time and opportunity to make their views known on all aspects of the plan. He added that following the public consultation period, RPS will assess the feedback and a shortlist of viable water supply options, which meet the sustainability assessment criteria, will be prepared in February 2009. He advised that at this stage Preliminary Reports will be undertaken and submitted to Dublin City Council in approximately June 09. Dublin City Council in conjunction with the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government will then select a preferred option, expected in late 2009.

The members welcomed Mr. Geoghegan and thanked him for his presentation.

In responding to queries raised, Mr. Geoghegan advised that the disruption would be similar to laying the gas pipelines. He confirmed that there were countless examples of such a project in England. He noted that Lough Derg is operated by the ESB and indicated that the project would not do much to help the flooding situation as the reduction levels on the river Shannon would be very low. He stated that it would not be for him to say if there would be a financial return for the midlands.

**2008 WORK
PROGRAMME
PROGRESS REPORT
FROM COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT
BOARD:**

Deferred until November meeting.

**REGISTER OF
ELECTORS:**

Mr. H. O'Donoghue, A/D.O.S. advised that the area meetings are due to be held on 24th /25th of November and that a letter would issue a week in advance. He confirmed that the Claim Courts would be advertised and attended by Ms. V. Lambe, County Registrar. He urged the Councillors and the public to take a pro-active role in checking that Register and advised that RFA1 forms were available from Corporate Services. He emphasised that the closing date for checking the Register is the 25th November and date of publication is the 1st November 2008.

NOTICES OF MOTION:

The following motion was proposed Cllr's Percy Clendennen, Marcella Corcoran-Kennedy and Connie Hanniffy:

(a) "To ask Offaly County Council to bring the staffing levels in Banagher Fire Station up from five firemen to nine firemen as they are completely understaffed at the moment".

In responding, Mr. Gallagher, County Manager advised that it was agreed in 2005 that Banagher Fire Station would employ 8 firemen. He confirmed that Offaly County Council has advertised for part-time firefighters and a very small number of applications were received. He also noted that some staff who had been appointed left the service not long after being trained. He could not confirm when the next appointment would be as it would have to be included in the 2009 Budget.

The following motion was proposed by Cllr. Molly Buckley, seconded by Cllr. T. McKeigue and agreed.

(b) "That Offaly County Council write to the Taoiseach and the Minister for Education and Science regarding the delay in providing funds to build a new school for Tullamore College".

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

(c) "That Offaly County Council write to the Minister for Communications Energy and Natural Resources regarding the unnecessary high energy prices which is causing energy poverty in Ireland".

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

The following motion was deferred until the November meeting:

(d) "That this Council engage in joint ventures to provide necessary services and employment".

The County Manager, in responding confirmed that the S.P.C. were reviewing the policy at the moment.

Cllr. T. McKeigue proposed the following motion, which was seconded by Cllr. M. Buckley.

(e) "That Offaly County Council calls on the Minister to increase the House Purchasing Loans operated by Local Authorities from the present total of €185,000 to €220,000 to reflect current house prices".

Mr. Gallagher, in responding, advised that information regarding then New Home Choice Loan, announced in the Budget had been circulated to members by email.

Cllr. T. McKeigue proposed the following motion, which was seconded by Cllr. M. Buckley.

(f) "That this Council adopt a policy to harvest rain water in all new housing schemes to be used for the purpose of flushing toilets etc. and by doing so make savings on the amount of treated water that is currently wasted".

COMHDHÁLACHA:

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Buckley, seconded by Cllr. T. McKeigue the Council approved of the members attendance at conferences as follows:

Chambers Ireland
Local Government Financing
7th November 2008
Noone expressed an interest in this conference

Training Seminar for Councillors
Public Relations and Communications Skills for Councillors
14th – 16th November 2008
Noone expressed an interest in this conference

L.A.M.A. Conference
26th – 27th November 2008
It was agreed to send Cllr. M. Buckley, Cllr. M. Corcoran-Kennedy, Cllr. T. McKeigue, Cllr. P. Clendennen, Cllr. M. Fox, Cllr. C. Hanniffy, Cllr. S. Moylan-Ryan, Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, Cllr. N. Bourke

**COMHDHÁLACHA
(cont'd):**

Co-Operation & Integration
The Key to successful Tourism
27th, 28th and 29th November 2008

It was agreed to send Cllr. C. Hanniffy, Cllr. J. Carroll and Cllr. N. Bourke

It was agreed that all future conferences would go to the C.P.G. for approval before being listed

ANY OTHER BUSINESS: Midlands Airport

Cllr. M. Buckley advised that the proposed airport was at an advanced stage of design, a site has been selected and the developers are currently commencing the Environmental Study. She confirmed that a submission had been sent in on the County Development Plan and suggested that a presentation be given to the Council in December.

Mr. Gallagher in responding advised that an planning application had not been received and so the process was not at a stage where he felt a presentation should be given to the Council.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

MINUTES CONFIRMED: -

CATHAOIRLEACH

MEETINGS ADMINISTATOR

17TH NOVEMBER 2008