

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE UÍBH FHAILÍ

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER MONTHLY MEETING OF OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, TULLAMORE ON MONDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER 2008 AT 2.00P.M.

PRESENT: Cllr's. J. Carroll, Leas Cathaoirleach (Presiding) and B. Cowen, (Presiding), N. Bourke, M. Buckley, J. Butterfield, P. Clendennen, M. Corcoran-Kennedy, B. Cowen, D. Dolan, E. Dooley, T. Feighery, E. Fitzpatrick, J. Foran, M. Fox, C. Hanniffy, 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., Ms. Frank Heslin, D.O.S., Mr. S. Murray, D.O.S., Mr. G. Daly, S.P., Mr. A. O'Gorman, S.E.O.; Ms. A. Dillon, A/S.E.O., (Meetings Administrator), Mr. B. Pey, Housing Social and Community Co-ordinator, Ms. A. Pedlow, H. O., Ms. A. Walsh, E.P., Mr. S. Burt, E.P., Niamh Dowler, Community Forum Support Worker & Ms. Natasha Troy, C.O.

APOLOGIES: Cllr. G. Killally, Mr. D. Kirrane, D.O.S.

**PRESENTATION OF
THE EXCELLENCE
THROUGH PEOPLE
AWARD BY RODDY
MOLLOY, DIRECTOR
GENERAL OF FÁS:**

This item was brought forward.

Mr. Sean Murray, D.O.S., informed the members that following an evaluation of Human Resource Management Systems within Offaly nLocal Authorities that the organisation had achieved the FÁS Excellence Through People Award. He welcomed Mr. Roddy Molly, Director General of FÁS who spoke about the evaluation and subsequent report.

The County Manager thanked all of the staff involved in the evaluation and gave a commitment to working towards the recommendation in the report.

**COMHIRLE NA NÓG
PROGRAMME OF
VISITING SCHOOLS:**

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. B. Cowen welcomed all the 5th & 6th class students of Scoil Mhuire, Cloneygowan and their teachers, Maureen Cox & Catherine O'Neill to the meeting as part of the Comhirle na nÓg programme..

He also extended votes of sympathy to Michael Roche, D.O.S., on the death of his mother, Elizabeth and to Declan Kirrane, D.O.S., on the death of his brother, Noel.

The members joined with the Cathaoirleach in this regard.

**VOTES OF
SYMPATHY:**

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

Richard Mooney & Family, Lenamarron, Edenderry on the death of his brother, Frank.

Ita Heavey, Clonmore, Edenderry on the death of her brother in law, Frank Mooney.

Mrs. Theresa Dunne, 12 High Street, Birr on the death of her father, Jack.

Majella & Patrick Kenny, Beechgrone, Belmont on the death of their son, Patrick Jr.

Maureen & Noel Ryan, Belmont, Birr on the death of their daughter, Caoimhe.

Declan & Ann McEvoy & their family, Clonganlough, Athlone on the death of their son, Gordon.

Patrick Kelly & Family, Queen Street, Banagher on the death of his wife, Gabrielle.

Mrs. Boland & Family, Cappincur, Tullamore on the death of her husband, John.

Mrs. Gorman & Family, Cappincur, Tullamore on the death of her husband, Paddy.

Patsy Hennessy, Seffin, Birr on the death of her mother, Nancy Walsh.

Martin Teehan, Brosna, Birr on the death of Joseph Teehan.

Joseph Costello & Family, Garbally, Blueball, Tullamore on the death of his wife, Christina.

Teresa & Jimmy Feery, Durrow, Tullamore on the death of her sister, Annie Feery.

Jane Farrell, Rahan Road, Tullamore on the death of her mother, Annie Daly.

Mrs. Cronley & Family, Gortacor, Mountbolus on the death of her son, Pat.

The Feighery Family, Coolinharney, Blueball on the death of Tom.

VOTES OF SYMPATHY(cont'd):

Jane Farrell, Rahan Road, Tullamore on the death of mother, Annie Daly.

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. D. Dolan, seconded by Cllr. D. Owens the minutes of Offaly County Council's July monthly meeting held on 21st July 2008 were confirmed and signed.

NOTING OF MINUTES:

The following minutes were noted:

- Minutes of Housing, Social & Cultural SPC held on 3rd June 2008. (to be reviewed)
- Minutes of Edenderry Area Committee Meeting held 7th July 2008.
- Minutes of Housing, Social & Cultural SPC held on 16th June 2008.
- Minutes of Ferbane Area Committee Meeting to discuss Draft County Development Plan held 16th July 2008.
- Minutes of Edenderry Area Committee Meeting to discuss Draft County Development Plan held 16th July 2008.
- Minutes of Tullamore Area Committee Meeting to discuss Draft County Development Plan held 17th July 2008.
- Minutes of Birr Area Committee Meeting to discuss Draft County Development Plan held 17th July 2008.

Cllr. J. Carroll noted that the minutes of the Housing, Social & Cultural SPC held on the 3rd June 2008 did not include an amendment which had been approved at their last meeting. It was agreed to defer the minutes until the October meeting for clarification.

SECTION 9.3. (A) OF THE PLANNING DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000. PROPOSAL TO JOINTLY REVIEW TULLAMORE & ENVIRONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2004 - 2010 AND TO PREPARE THE TULLAMORE & ENVIRONS PLAN 2010 TO 2016:

It was agreed to bring this item forward.

Mr. Gordon Daly, Senior Planner advised that under Section 9.3 a) of the Planning Development Act 2000 it was proposed to jointly review the Tullamore & Environs Development Plan 2004-2010 and to prepare the Tullamore & Environs Plan 2010-2016.

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Dolan, seconded by Cllr. D. Owens the council agreed to the proposal to jointly review the Tullamore & Environs Development Plan 2004-2010 and to prepare the Tullamore & Environs Plan 2010-2016.

FIXING OF DATE AND TIME OF MEETINGS IN RELATION TO REVIEW OF BIRR TOWN AND ENVIRONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2004-2010 TO DISCUSS MANAGER'S REPORT ON SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED.

Mr. Gordon Daly, Senior Planner advised that the council are required to make the final decision with regard to the adoption of the Birr Town & Environs Development Plan 2004-2010 on the 27th October 2008. Therefore, it was proposed to place as an item on the agenda for the October monthly meeting to discuss the Manager's Report on submissions received.

It was agreed to place the Review of Birr Town & Environs Development Plan 2004-2010, Manager's Report on submissions received as an item on the agenda for the October monthly meeting due to be held on 20th October 2008.

DRAFT HOMELESS STRATEGY:

Mr. Sean Murray, D.O.S., informed the members' that the Draft Homeless Strategy was prepared by a subcommittee of the Offaly Homeless Forum which comprises of representatives from the Local Authority and the H.S.E. in consultation with voluntary organisations. The strategy was developed to look at homelessness in its widest context. He introduced the chairperson of the Offaly Homeless Forum Subcommittee, Cllr. M. Buckley to summarise the strategy.

Cllr. M. Buckley advised that the subcommittee holds meetings every quarter and was established to develop "The Offaly Homeless Strategy", which is a three year action plan, setting out what services are to be provided to the homeless in County Offaly and whose responsibility it will be to provide these services. She outlined the strategy to the members', stating that homelessness is a complex social problem and understanding the problem is vital to developing the appropriate response. She stressed that homelessness is not just about providing accommodation and there are other needs which are required to be met in tandem i.e. health and welfare. She noted the following points from the strategy:

- Homeless people are exposed to the same but increased risk factors for physical illness as the general population as well as additional factors resulting specifically from the homeless lifestyle.
- Some factors involved in ill health are poor living conditions, exposure to violence, trauma, extreme weather and cramped conditions combined with a lack of access to food, water, exercising facilities, hygiene facilities, health facilities and services etc.
- Other determinants of health or ill health that are recognised as playing a role of a homeless person are smoking, alcohol use/misuse, drug misuse, mental distress/illness.
- Causes of homelessness can include physical or sexual abuse, family disputes, family violence, a background of institutional care, offending behaviour, depts, drug or alcohol abuse, mental health problems, poor physical health and eviction.

**DRAFT HOMELESS
STRATEGY (cont'd):**

- The strategy also included a breakdown of homelessness in the County in 2006 and the main reasons why people presented as homeless, the system of assessment to determine the next course of action to be taken in any case and the scope of current accommodation provision in the county.

Cllr. Buckley outlined the actions proposed in the strategy, which included:

Emergency accommodation

- i) Tullamore Housing Assoc. agreed to make available one of its ten existing units, as an emergency accommodation unit.
- ii) Construction of an additional fifteen units by Tullamore Housing Assoc. to its complex at Clontarf Road. Four of which will be made available for emergency accommodation.
- iii) Offaly Homeless Forum has given a mandate to the Midlands SIMON Community to investigate suitable premises. If deemed suitable they can be purchased under a Capital Assistance Scheme application.

Midlands SIMON Community – Settlement Service

- i) Offaly, Laois, Westmeath & Longford have subscribed to the settlement services. Settlement workers are assigned to each county. Currently two in Offaly. Cases are assessed and may be assigned to an individual worker if deemed suitable.

Integrated approach

- i) All agencies involved in health, social or accommodation services need to agree common definitions, policies and protocols that are workable, realistic and useful. The Offaly Homeless Forum have negotiated a protocol with the Probation Services and are currently working on an agreed protocol with the H.S.E.
- ii) M.H.B. research shows the majority of homeless people interviewed stated that health services should be accessed through G.P.'s
- iii) Provision of a drop in centre that could provide facilities i.e. place to wash, cook, use the telephone, sleep, counselling and the support to develop skills to live more comfortably i.e. budgeting, cooking, cleaning, literacy, etc. The concept of "educate before settlement is crucial and may involve services of specialist agencies such as a Tenant Liaison Officer, Midlands SIMON Community, Barnardo's, Citizens Advice, Adult VEC, M.A.B.S.
- iv) May also be a requirement for the development of services to meet specific needs, for example, consideration of the use of 'dry' or 'wet' houses (facilities for people who have issues related to alcohol abuse).

DRAFT HOMELESS STRATEGY (cont'd):

- v) All such actions must be proofed' by the experts in the area – homeless people. On this front, it is envisaged to nominate a member of the Midlands SIMON Community consumer panel to sit on the Offaly Homeless Forum.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Buckley, seconded by Cllr. S. Moylan-Ryan, the council adopted the draft Homeless Strategy as circulated with the Agenda.

Cllr. Moylan-Ryan, Chair of the Housing, Social & Cultural S.P.C. asked members to support the Strategy. It was proposed to circulate the Strategy to Birr & Tullamore Town Councils.

Mr. Brian Pey, Housing Social and Community Co-ordinator, in responding to queries raised advised that in respect of homeless figures, county Offaly is below the national average and on a par with the regional average. He specified that the strategy is aimed at people in crisis situations and confirmed a lot of people are presenting themselves as homeless but that they would not necessarily fulfil the criteria as set out in the strategy.

DRAFT ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY:

Mr. S. Murray, D.O.S. referred the members' to the draft Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, which he advised had been reviewed in an effort to deal with anti-social behaviour which is a ongoing issue around the County. He introduced Cllr. S. Moylan-Ryan, Chairperson of the Housing, Social & Cultural S.P.C. to briefly outline the policy.

- Cllr. S. Moylan-Ryan expressed her thanks to Mr. Brian Pey and the housing staff on their efforts in preparing the draft Anti-Social Policy. She emphasised the importance of the document and urged the members for their support in adopting the policy. She advised that the revised strategy aims to build on the original document and to set out the current policies, procedures and relevant legislative provisions which will be utilised by Offaly County Council (O.C.C.) in order to achieve the their objectives in the area of anti-social behaviour. She stated that whilst there may only be a small number of individuals involved in anti-social behaviour, their activities can have major repercussions for a large number of residents who are unable to enjoy the peaceful occupation of their homes and neighbourhood and adopting a clear, pro-active and structured approach to dealing with this issue is the most effective way of combating this type of unacceptable behaviour and ensuring that people can enjoy a good quality of life in their local community.

**DRAFT ANTI-SOCIAL
BEHAVIOUR POLICY
(cont'd):**

The policy sets out the following:

- The objectives of the policy: define anti-social behaviour, outline the relevant legal framework, state clearly O.C.C.'s policy on the prevention of anti-social behaviour, procedures for receiving/recording/ investigating complaints, level of service to be expected, effective method of monitoring performance in service delivery.

The strategies to achieve the objectives: tenancy agreement/enforcement of conditions, legislation, partnership with Gardaí and other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies such as the H.S.E. and other housing authorities, design of housing estates, educations, estate management, monitor & review.

On the proposal of Cllr. S. Moylan-Ryan, seconded by Cllr. T. McKeigue the council adopted the draft Anti-Social Behaviour Policy as circulated.

It was proposed to circulate the policy document to Birr & Tullamore Town Councils.

In answering queries raised, Mr. S. Murray advised that vacant houses around the county have received considerable attention this year and the waiting times to re-let houses have decreased considerably. He assured the members that in cases of anti-social behaviour the focus is on the offender and that O.C.C. are willing to take any situation as far as they have to, including legal action. He stated in response to a comment made with regard to playgrounds attracting anti-social behaviour that he would support a joint venture with the Gardaí and community groups to help manage the problem.

Cllr. M. Corcoran-Kennedy proposed that the Housing, Social & Cultural S.P.C. draft bye-laws to deal with playgrounds. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. C. Hanniffy.

**SECTION 183 OF LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ACT
2001 – DISPOSAL OF
LANDS AT:- 31 EISCIR
SUMMER ROAD,
TULLAMORE:**

On the proposal of Cllr. T. McKeigue, seconded by Cllr. D. Dolan the council approved of the disposal of freehold interest in property at 31 Eiscir Summer Road, Tullamore in accordance with the terms of the Section 183 notice dated 1st September 2008.

**SECTION 183 OF LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ACT
2001 – DISPOSAL OF
FREEHOLD INTEREST
IN PROPERTY AT:- 18
CLUAIN ABHAINN,
CLARA:**

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Dolan, seconded by Cllr. T. McKeigue the council approved of the disposal of freehold interest in property at 18 Cluain Abhainn, Clara in accordance with the terms of the Section 183 notice, dated 1st September 2008.

SECTION 183 OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 – DISPOSAL OF LAND AT:- MUCKLAGH: On the proposal of Cllr. T. McKeigue, seconded by Cllr. D. Owens the council approved of the disposal of land at Mucklagh, in accordance with the terms of the Section 183 notice dated 1st September 2008.

SECTION 183 OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 – DISPOSAL OF LAND AT:- BRACKNAGH, RATHANGAN: On the proposal of Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. J. Foran the council approved of the disposal of land at Bracknagh, Rathangan in accordance with the terms of the Section 183 notice dated 1st September 2008.

SECTION 183 OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 – DISPOSAL OF LAND AT:- KILLANE, EDENDERRY: On the proposal of Cllr. N. Bourke, seconded by Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick the council approved of the disposal of land at Killane, Edenderry in accordance with the terms of the Section 183 notice dated 1st September 2008.

CLONMACNOISE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE BID: The Cathaoirleach welcomed the delegation from the D.E.H.L.G.

Mr. Brian Lucas, Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government opened by thanking Offaly County Council officials, particularly Andrew Murray for facilitating the presentation. He briefed the members on the background of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, which Ireland signed up to in 1991 and the Minister's UNESCO Programme, the objective of which is to identify and inscribe on UNESCO's World Heritage List, Irish heritage sites deemed to be of "Outstanding Universal Value" i.e. meaning heritage significance on a global level. The key initiatives of the programme are set out as follows:

- The preparation of a UNESCO World Heritage Site nomination and site management plan for Clonmacnoise heritage site with a view to inscription on the World Heritage List (WH List) by July 2010.
- A review of the current tentative list which dates back to 1992 and consideration with the advice of a world heritage expert, of the nomination of further sites from the remaining 8 sites currently on Ireland's tentative list for world heritage status.
- The establishment of a new tentative list with an agreed programme of applications to UNESCO. This process will be overseen by an Advisory Panel representative of both national and international experts, who will present a short list to be approved by the Minister by the end of 2008.
- The heightening of Ireland's profile in UNESCO World Heritage circles.

**CLONMACNOISE
UNESCO WORLD
HERITAGE SITE BID
(cont'd):**

With regard to the Tentative List he stated the following:

- Drawn up initially after Ireland signed up in 1992. It is an inventory of those properties which each State Party intends to consider for nomination to the World Heritage List in the next 5 to 10 years.
- Following consideration by officials and limited public consultation process, these were listed: Bru na Boinne, Skellig Michael, Western Stone Forts, Rock of Cashel, Killarney National Park, Clara Bog, North West Mayo Boglands, Clonmacnoise, The Burren and Cide Fields.
- Two sites from that list have been successfully inscribed on the World Heritage List i.e. Bru na Boinne and Skellig Michael. There is a third site in Ireland, inscribed for Northern Ireland, namely, the Giants Causeway.
- Clonmacnoise is listed and so is eligible.
- UNESCO expert Dr. Jukka Jokilehto visited a number of these sites and reported positively on Clonmacnoise

He advised of the qualities which are required for a site to be listed on the World Heritage (WH) list and outlined some common myths about WH List status i.e. that WH designation does not mean pots of money for an area, however enhanced heritage status facilitates EU funding and grant applications when you have the WH designation. He also stated that WH designation does bring with it increased international recognition and prestige, improved protection and management of the site and increased tourism.

Following on, Dr. Martin Critchley gave an informative presentation to the members on the Clonmacnoise World Heritage Bid, which included the process involved in nominating the site, research carried out, Clonmacnoise's O.U.V. (Outstanding Universal Value) etc. He also outlined what a World Heritage Site status inscription would mean to an area, enforcements, restrictions etc., and the management objectives and issues to be considered.

In responding to queries raised, Mr. Critchley advised that the old burial ground closed in the 1950s and confirmed that the new one adjacent to the site is nearly full. He advised that this is the responsibility of the Local Authority. With regard to buffer zones he stated they are defined as required to protect the core zone. He confirmed that there would be no need to restrict cultural practise.

Mr. Brian Lucas informed the meeting that a public consultation meeting was arranged that night in Clonfanlough Hall at 7.00p.m.

**2008 WORK
PROGRAMME
PROGRESS REPORTS
FROM PLANNING &
ROADS STRATEGIC
POLICY COMMITTEES
AND THE COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT
BOARD:**

County Development Board Progress Report:
Cathaoirleach, Cllr B. Cowen postponed the County Development Board report to the October meeting due the absence of Mr. D. Kirrane, D.O.S.

Planning S.P.C. Progress Report:

Cllr. D. Owens, Chair of the Planning & Economic Development S.P.C. in referring to the report which had been circulated with the Agenda stated that there had been 5 meetings held this year, to date, with an average of 64% attendance. He advised that the following policy, programme and initiatives were reviewed and discussed:

- Programme of Works for 2008
 - Draft House Design Guidelines - completed
 - Draft Housing Strategy – completed
 - Gateway – ongoing
 - Economic Development & Tourism Projects – completed
- Review of Draft Development Contribution Scheme – completed
- Draft Wind Strategy – Public Consultation Phase
- Draft Retail Strategy – Public Consultation Phase
- Review of Tullamore & Birr Town and Environs Development Plans 2004-2010 – out soon
- Variation to Tullamore Town & Environs Development Plan 2004-2010 – out soon
- Integrated Area Plan Process – presentation by Ciaran Lynch – local planning
- Resourcing the Planning System – consultation process.
- Clara Sewerage Scheme – Policy
- Developments along part of N80 including Clara Cowpark
- Taking in Charge of Estates
- Presentation by Shannon Development on role and current projects in South Offaly
- Review of bond amount for housing developments
- Economic development – presentation by Ray Carroll

Roads SPC Progress Report:

Cllr. T. McLoughlin, Chair of the Transportation & Infrastructure S.P.C., directed the members' attention to the report which had been previously circulated. He advised that there had been two meetings held this year to date, with an average of 81% attendance. He informed the members' that the following policies, programmes & initiatives had been reviewed and discussed:

**2008 WORK
PROGRAMME
PROGRESS REPORTS
FROM PLANNING &
ROADS S.P.C.'S. AND
COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(cont'd):**

- Public lighting – negotiating new contract for maintenance in 2009.
- Unauthorised vehicles on public roads
- 2020 vision – sustainable travel and transport – submission sent to Dept. of Transport
- Taking in charge of residential development
- Local Improvement Schemes

He stated that the following policy recommendations had been made:

- Unauthorised vehicles on public roads
- Taking in charge of residential developments (revised policy) This is a long drawn out procedure. Quite a number around the county have not been taken over. Developer has 5 years to apply and a further 7 years before the process is completed.

Cllr. McLoughlin also advised that items currently under discussion are:

- County Roads Networks
- Quarries
- Access Audit.

**ENVIRONMENTAL
GRANTS 2008:**

Mr. M. Roche, D.O.S., directed the members' attention to the Environmental Grants for 2008 which had previously been circulated. The report sets out proposed grants to various community groups, Tidy Towns and Residents Associations. He was now seeking approval from the council.

On the proposal Cllr. D. Owens, seconded by Cllr. J. Butterfield the members approved the Environmental Grants Scheme 2008 as circulated.

Cllr. D. Owens expressed his disappointment that Mountbolus Tidy Towns Committee did not receive an allocation, as their application was submitted after the deadline. He emphasised that a lot of work and money had been put into community and requested that the executive reconsider including them under the scheme. Cathaoirleach, Cllr. B. Cowen asked if anything could be done. Mr. M. Roche, D.O.S. in responding agreed to consider.

Cllr. T. McKeigue asked that greater priority be given to voluntary groups without the resources of Community Employment Schemes.

NOTICES OF MOTION:

The following motion was proposed Cllr. J. Butterfield, seconded by Cllr. M. Corcoran-Kennedy.

(a) “That this Council review the occupancy clause in relation to planning permissions because of the changing financial position which applicants now find themselves in”.

A lengthy discussion followed this motion. Cllr. Butterfield expressed his dissatisfaction with the current policy. He stated that with the economy as it is at the moment some people can no longer afford to pay their mortgages. In referring to a specific case, he argued that people are restricted from selling their house on the open market and can only sell the house to someone who fulfils the local need criteria, even though, if the house is repossessed by the mortgage company, it can be sold on the open market. He appealed to the meeting to change the policy for humanitarian reasons.

Mr. Gordon Daly, S.P., in responding stated that there are cases where such circumstances would be taken into consideration but that generally it would only be a small number. He advised that “local need” applies in areas of high amenity and added that the wording used in the policy/condition is used nationally. He stressed that it does allow for options in certain cases. He confirmed that the policy does allow for resale, by the mortgage company, on the open market.

The County Manager, Mr. P. Gallagher, advised that this policy is normal practice and that noted that Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government allow for the resale of a house on the open market by mortgage companies. He emphasised that the Planning Department allow for every opportunity in these cases and indicated that he was not aware of the specific details of the case in which Cllr. Butterfield was referring but assured him that he would examine same if the particulars were submitted. In responding to a comment that was made by Cllr. Butterfield in relation to the contractor who is overseeing the Tullamore Bypass project, the Manager said he was unaware of the situation and requested that the specific details also be brought to him for his attention.

The following motion was proposed by Cllr’s. Marcella Corcoran Kennedy, Tommy McKeigue, Molly Buckley, Percy Clendennen, John Foran, Mick Fox and Connie Hanniffy, seconded by Cllr. T. McKeigue.

(b) “That Offaly County Council in light of recent severe flooding throughout the County immediately implement the following:

1. A review of the Council's current drainage programme to assess its adequacy and ascertain whether it needs to be improved.

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

2. *Calculate the total cost of repairs that need to be carried out to roads, bridges and to other property in the charge of Offaly County Council.*
3. *Ascertain where funding is going to come from to carry out this work.*
4. *To ascertain whether detailed inspections should be carried out at construction stage of properties to ensure that work does not interfere with drains, water courses and piping.*
5. *To immediately request the OPW to carry out a flood plain study of the entire county to ascertain what area is suitable for development and to examine where barriers or other corrective measures need to be put in place for existing properties”.*

In responding, Mr. F. Heslin, D.O.S., stated that there had been exceptional flooding in recent times. He advised that substantial damage had been done to the roads and repair works were planned. He informed the members that the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government have requested a report which should be completed soon. He indicated that he would have a further report at the next meeting.

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

(c) “That Offaly County Council contacts the Minister for Transport regarding the inaccessibility of trains to wheelchair users”.

It was agreed to circulate the motion to other councils.

The following motion was proposed by Cllr. M. Buckley:

(d) “That Offaly County Council review their Timber Purchasing Policy”

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) “In view of the recent job losses announced for Boston Scientific at their Tullamore Factory and the ongoing shedding of jobs across all sectors in the County I call on Offaly County Council to have a full debate on what action can be taken to attract new employment to the County and if the Council can give any assistance to people seeking employment”.

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

Mr. P. Gallagher, County Manager, in responding accepted the members' concerns. He advised that he would discuss the issue with the Director for Economic Development, Mr. D. Kirrane and the Economic Development Officer, Mr. R. Carroll. He confirmed that O.C.C. have contact with the statutory enterprise bodies on a regular basis i.e. the I.D.A., Enterprise Ireland etc. and noted that O.C.C. have put effort into co-financing broadband schemes to encourage new business into the town. He advised that a promotion of economic development, policies and programmes is in place. He suggested channelling the members' concerns through the County Enterprise Board (C.E.B.) as it would be the perfect forum with all the relevant stakeholders having reps on the board. He stated that we should maximise the potential of the forum that is there in the C.E.B. and advised that he would list as an item on the agenda for their meeting and ask the board to consider the view of the members with a view to developing a realistic action plan.

The following motion was proposed by Cllr. T. McKeigue and seconded by Cllr. M. Buckley:

(f) "That Offaly County Council provide the finances for the Disabled Persons Grant & The Essential Repair Grants to allow works to be carried out for the people in the County who cannot afford to fund these works themselves".

In responding, Mr. S. Murray, D.O.S., advised that the demand for such schemes will always exceed the supply. He outlined that there had been a lot of work carried out to date to reduce the lists and confirmed that meetings have already been held with the H.S.E. to discuss the amalgamation of files. He stated that the funding provided would be expended in the best way possible. He stated that careful consideration would have to be given to the suggestion made by Cllr. F. McDonnell to allow applicants to do the work themselves. The Cathaoirleach stated that the amount O.C.C. invests in these schemes determines the matching funding allocated by the Department.

COMHDHÁLACHA:

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

The Blascaid Commemoration 2008
Ionad an Bhlascaoid Mhoir, Dun Chaoin, Co. Chiarrai.
Noone expressed an interest in this conference.

**COMHDHÁLACHA
(cont'd):**

Irish Assoc. of Suicidology '12th Annual Conference' - Youth suicide in a changing society.
20th September 2008 – Sheraton Hotel, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
It was agreed to send Cllr. Hanniffy to this conference

Kerry Life Education Ltd.
“Getting a grip 2008 – Addiction proofing our Communities “
The Malton Hotel, Killarney, Co. Kerry
It was agreed to send Cllr. Marcella Corcoran-Kennedy , Cllr. Michael Fox and Cllr. J. Carroll

Third Sector Forum
“Local Authority financing – a crisis brewing, the challenge for Councillors” – Killarney Plaza Hotel, Kenmare Place, Co. Kerry
It was agreed to send Cllr. Michael Fox, Cllr. Marcella Corcoran-Kennedy, Cllr. Percy Clendennen and Cllr. J. Carroll

21st Douglas Hyde Conference – “Lost in Translation”
Abbeyfield Hotel, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon
It was agreed to send Cllr. M. Buckley, Cllr. T.McKeigue, and Cll. C. Hanniffy

2008 La Touche Legacy Seminar (20th)
“The Relationship between Local Authorities and the Business Sector”
It was agreed to send Cllr. Marcella Corcoran-Kennedy , Cllr. Michael Fox and Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick

**COMHFHREAGRAS
(cont'd):**

On the proposal of Cllr. T. Feighery, seconded by Cllr. F. McDonnell it was agreed to support the following motion by Cavan County Council:
“That Cavan County Council request the Minister for Transport and Justice to introduce penalty points for drivers discarding litter from their vehicles”.

On the proposal of Cllr. T. Feighery, seconded by Cllr. M. Corcoran-Kennedy it was agreed to support the following motion by Westmeath County Council:
“That Westmeath County Council discuss the severe implications that the EU directive on the Protection of Habitat Species is causing in our communities by the ban on turf cutting and also requests the Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government to accommodate the domestic turf cutters in these areas, as the EU has left this accommodation to the discretion of the individual countries”.

COMHFHREAGRAS:

On the proposal of Cllr. T. McKeigue, seconded by Cllr. M. Buckley it was agreed to support the following motion by Donegal County Council:

“That Donegal County Council ensure that all traffic islands are fitted with cats eyes on their cement bases to maximise their safety, both those that are under the NRA control and those that are local authority responsibilities”.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Buckley, it was agreed to support the following motion by Leitrim County Council:

“That Leitrim County Council calls on each Local Authority to use fair-trade products in their canteen where possible. This would help to give a fair wage for those who work to produce such products”.

The members’ expressed their disappointment at the response received by the Department of Health & Children with regard to our request which called on the Minister to increase the subvention payment for people in private nursing homes.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS: There was no any other business.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

MINUTES CONFIRMED: -

CATHAOIRLEACH

MEETINGS ADMINISTATOR

20TH OCTOBER 2008