

# COMHAIRLE CHONTAE UÍBH FHAILÍ

## MINUTES OF MARCH MONTHLY MEETING OF OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, TULLAMORE ON MONDAY, 23<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2009 AT 2.00P.M.

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr. P. Gallagher, County Manager, Mr. M. Roche, D.O.S., Mr. D. Kirrane, DOS, Mr. S. Murray, D.O.S., Mr. F. Heslin, D.O.S., Mr. D. Conlon, D.O.S., Mr. C. McCarthy, S.E., Mr. E. O' Ceilleachair, C.F.O., Ms. M. Stuart, Co. Librarian, Ms. A. Dillon, S.E.O., Mr. D. Mahon, S.E.O., Ms. M. Cleary, S.E.O. (Meetings Administrator), Mr. E. Henry, S.P.F., Ms. N. Dowler, C.F.S.W., Ms. S. O'Reilly, A.O., Olivia Murphy, S.P.A., Ms. C. Dunne, C.O. & Ms. N. Troy, C.O.

**APOLOGIES:** Cllrs. G. Killally and J. Foran

**COMHIRLE NA NÓG  
PROGRAMME OF  
VISITING SCHOOLS:** Cathaoirleach, Cllr. B. Cowen welcomed the students of Scoil Charthaigh Naofa, Rahan and their teacher, Ms. Neville to the meeting as part of the Comhairle na nÓg programme.

**VOTES OF  
SYMPATHY:** The members extended votes of sympathy to families of the following: -

Mr. John Flanagan, Bachelor's Walk, Tullamore, Co Offaly on the death of his wife, Catherine (Kitty).

Cllr. Marcella Corcoran Kennedy, Oakley Park, Clareen, Co Offaly on the death of her mother, Kathleen.

Mr. Tom Barry & Family, Arden Heights, Tullamore, Co Offaly on the death of his wife, Marie.

Ronald & Judy Bryant, Rathrobin, Mountbolus, Tullamore, Co Offaly on the death of her mother, Dorris Connors.

Ronald & Judy Bryant, Rathrobin, Mountbolus, Tullamore, Co Offaly on the death of his uncle, Robert Thompson.

Bernie & Tom Dunne, Roscore, Blueball, Co Offaly on the death of their son, Colin.

Sr. Columba Gargan, Convent of Mercy, Tullamore, Co Offaly on the death of her brother, Seamus.

**VOTES OF SYMPATHY:**

Liam & Grainne Cushen, Seffin Avenue, Birr, Co Offaly on the death of her mother, Helen Hogan.

Mr. Kevin McNamara, Parkrise, Birr, Co Offaly on the death of his brother Michael.

Mr. & Mrs. Connors, Ballygaddy, Clareen, Birr, Co Offaly on the death of their daughter, Melissa.

Mrs. Irena De Clair, Kinnity, Birr, Co Offaly on the death of her brother, Enrols Cibulskis.

Mr. Tony Kenny & Family, Rathgreeden Lane, Edenderry, Co Offaly on the death of his wife, Sinead.

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:**

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. B. Cowen directed the members' attention to an amendment to the minutes which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Dolan seconded by Cllr. P. Clendennen the amended minutes of Offaly County Council's February Monthly Meeting, held in Áras an Chontae, Tullamore on Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2009 at 2.00 p.m., were confirmed and signed.

**NOTING OF MINUTES:**

The following minutes were noted:

- Transportation & Infrastructure SPC held 14th November 2008
- Birr Area Committee held on 19th December 2008
- Ferbane Area Committee held on 19th December 2008
- Edenderry Area Committee held on Friday 23rd January 2009

**AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT:**

Mr. Peter Scully, Chairman of the Audit Committee, presented the Audit Committee's first Annual Report for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008. He advised that the Audit Committee, established by resolution of the Council, in March 2008 has an independent advisory role. He advised that they meet on a quarterly basis. He outlined the Audit Committees role as follows:

- promoting good accounting practices
- ensuring better and more informed decision making
- improving the focus on value for money throughout the organisation
- supports the work of the Internal Audit Unit
- advises the County Manager in relation to the operation and development of that Unit

**AUDIT COMMITTEE  
ANNUAL REPORT  
(cont'd):**

He advised that Offaly County Council's Internal Audit Unit was established in 2008 and expressed satisfaction with the financial management of the activities examined by the Audit Committee in 2008.

On responding to queries raised the County Manager, P. Gallagher advised that the Council submitted a financial report, on a quarterly basis, to the C.P.G. However, due to the economic downturn income and expenditure would be closely monitored and reported to the C.P.G. every two months. He stated that these financial reports would be circulated to all members. In response to a query raised he advised that information would be provided regarding the cost of professional services.

**ROAD WORKS  
PROGRAMME 2009:**

Mr. F. Heslin, DOS, referred the members to the draft Road Works Programme 2009 which had been circulated with the Agenda. The total allocation received for the proposed works is €42,653,268, down slightly on last year. Funding as set out in Offaly County Council's 2009 Budget is as follows:

<b>Sources</b>	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Capital (estimate)</b>
NRA	1,445,569	30 million
DOT	9,748,000	11.5 million
Own resources	4,040,687	1.5 million
	<b>15,234,256</b>	

Some members referred to a recent newspaper article which implied there may be funding issues with regard to local and national roads. Mr. Frank Heslin, D.O.S., advised that the article referred to a letter received from the Department of Transport, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> February, and which had been circulated to members. He informed the members that the Council had sought clarification from the Department with regard to what contracts the Department letter refers to. The Council was awaiting a response.

On the proposal of Cllr. N. Bourke, seconded by Cllr. D. Dolan, the members approved the Road Works Programme for 2009, as circulated.

**PART VIII - CLARA  
RELIEF ROAD:**

Mr. F. Heslin, DOS, directed the members to the report which had been circulated with the Agenda. He outlined the nature and extent of the proposed works. He advised that the public consultation phase began on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2008 and continued for a period of six weeks thereafter during which time four (4) submissions/observations were received and considered. He was now recommending that the proposed works proceed.

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Dolan, seconded by Cllr. T. McKeigue, the Council agreed to proceed with the proposed Clara Relief Road, as outlined in the report, in accordance with Local Government (Planning & Development) Regulations 2001 (Part VIII).

**PART VIII -  
EDENDERRY RELIEF  
ROAD:**

Mr. F. Heslin, DOS, referred the members to the report which had been previously circulated. He outlined the proposed works and advised that during the period of public consultation which commenced on 6<sup>th</sup> November, five submissions/observations were received and considered. He was now recommending that the proposed works proceed as outlined in the report.

On the proposal of Cllr. N. Bourke, seconded by Cllr. F. McDonnell, the Council agreed to proceed with the proposed Edenderry Relief Road, as outlined in the report, in accordance with Local Government (Planning & Development) Regulations 2001 (Part VIII).

**SECTION 183 OF  
LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT ACT  
2001 – DISPOSAL OF  
FREEHOLD  
INTEREST IN LANDS  
AT: NO. 6 GLEN  
CUIMIN, SHINRONE;  
NO. 19 CLUAIN  
ABHAINN, CLARA;  
NO. 24 HEATHER  
GROVE, CLARA:**

On the proposal of Cllr. T. Feighery, seconded by Cllr. P. Ormond, the Council approved the disposal of freehold interest in lands in accordance with the terms of the Section 183 notice dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2009 as follows:

- No. 6 Glen Cuimin, Shinrone
- No. 19 Cluain Abhainn, Clara
- No. 24 Heather Grove, Clara

**SECTION 183 OF  
LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT ACT  
2001 – DISCHARGE  
OF FREEHOLD  
INTEREST AT: SITE  
NO.11 MUCKLAGH:**

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Owens, seconded by Cllr. M. Buckley, the council approved of the disposal of lands at Site No. 11, Mucklagh in accordance with the terms of the Section 183 notice dated 24<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

**SECTION 183 OF  
LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT ACT  
2001 – DISCHARGE  
OF FREEHOLD  
INTEREST AT: SITE  
NO. 8 MUCKLAGH:**

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Owens, seconded by Cllr. M. Buckley, the council approved the disposal of lands at Site No. 8, Mucklagh in accordance with the terms of the Section 183 notice dated 24<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

**ARTS ACT GRANTS &  
ARTS SERVICE  
ANNUAL PLAN -  
PRESENTATION BY  
SINEAD O'REILLY,  
ARTS OFFICER:**

Mr. S. Murray, DOS, referred to the report which had been circulated with the Agenda. He advised that the allocation for Arts Act Grants for 2009 was €20,000. Seventy-four (74) applications were received, two (2) of which were referred to other funding schemes. The average award was €280 per applicant.

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Dolan, seconded by Cllr. M. Corcoran-Kennedy, the members approved the Arts Grants 2009 as circulated.

Ms. Sinead O'Reilly, Arts Officer, gave a presentation to the members on the Arts Programme for 2009. Her presentation incorporated:

- A breakdown of the Arts Budget.
- Funding for festivals – Shannonbridge Midsummer Music festival, Castlepalooza, Phoenix Festival, Bealtaine Festival, Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival, Slieve Bloom Storytelling Festival and Hullabaloo Children's Arts Festival.
- Productive Investment - Film Offaly.
- Cultural Infrastructure i.e. Birr Theatre, Belmont Mills, *Sculpture in the Parklands*, *Per cent* for art scheme, midland projects i.e. Arts & Culture Magazine, Midlands Youth Orchestra, Midland Master classes.
- Youth Programmes – Offaly Youth Dance Co., Kindermusic, Floating Theatre Co., School of Rock, Touring theatre to schools, Youth Literature.
- Arts in Health.
- Culture & Economics.

The members thanked Sinead for the presentation and for her work throughout the county.

In response to queries raised regarding the Tullamore Arts Centre, Mr. P. Gallagher informed the members that:

- the original application had been for €6.5 million;
- funding of €2 million was approved through the ACCESS II Programme in 2007;
- various options with regard to the project had been investigated;
- the Development Contributions Fund is a countywide scheme: it is not envisaged that the total funding would be expended on one project;
- the Council must work within the constraints of the approval and had sought a meeting with the Department for Arts & Tourism to establish the terms of the approval and what flexibility might exist in using the grant to deliver a range of options;

**ARTS ACT GRANTS &  
ARTS SERVICE  
ANNUAL PLAN -  
PRESENTATION BY  
SINEAD O'REILLY,  
ARTS OFFICER  
(cont'd):**

- he acknowledged and welcomed the community's support for the project, he advised that the project would require the co-operation of all parties and he welcomed any suggestions with regard to the role the community might play.

Cllr. B. Cowen informed the meeting that a public meeting, in Hugh Lynch's Public House, is being held to discuss the Tullamore Arts Centre.

**H.R., PAYROLL AND  
SUPERANNUATION  
PROJECT UPDATE:**

Mr. S. Murray, DOS, referred the members to the report which had been circulated with the Agenda and gave an update of the new HR, Payroll and Superannuation project which is currently being implemented within the organisation. The report, he advised, is for general information only.

**PRESENTATION ON  
LOCAL SPORTS  
PARTNERSHIP  
INITIATIVES & 2009  
PRIORITIES BY  
EAMON HENRY L.S.P.  
CO-ORDINATOR:**

Mr. Eamon Henry, Sports Partnership Facilitator, gave a presentation to the members regarding the *Offaly Sports Partnership Work Plan 2009* which included the following points:

- Background to Offaly Local Sports Partnership;
- Priorities identified for the period 2008 – 2010 including promotion of increased participation in six (6) low participation groups, increase the capacity of the local sports sector, help secure investment to develop sporting infrastructure;
- Highlights from 2008;
- Inclusion Actions.

Replying to queries, Mr. Henry advised that their work is determined by resources, both financial and human. He stated that the approach of Offaly Local Sports Partnership is to increase participation and encourage children to develop fundamental skills to assist participation in a range of sports.

The members complimented Eamon on his presentation and his work to date.

**NOTICES OF MOTION:**

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Buckley, seconded by Cllr. D. Owens, the council approved the following motion:

(a) *“That Offaly County Council review its policy on the 3% quota for people with a disability, and ensure that we have reached that quota”*

Mr. Sean Murray, DOS advised that the council had submitted its return to the department in 2008 and confirmed that the Council was currently collating the data with regard to the 2009 return. He informed the members that the HR department are holding a competition for Clerical Officer (confined to persons with disabilities) in the coming weeks.

The following motion was proposed by Cllr. M. Buckley, seconded by Cllr M. Corcoran Kennedy and agreed.

(b) *“That Offaly County Council contact the Minister for Social & Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin, to insist that there be no cuts in the rates of payment for all Social Welfare recipients”*

It was agreed to circulate the motion to other councils.

**COMHDHÁLACHA:**

The members approved attendance at conferences as follows:

**Kerry Literacy & Cultural Centre Listowel Conference 2009**  
**“The Economic & Social Benefits of Preserving Our Cultural Heritage”.**  
**26<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> March 2009**  
No members attended this conference.

**Superior Training Civic Leadership & Local Government**  
**27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> March 2009**  
Cllr. J. Butterfield to attend.

**Mitchelstown Forum Optimising Resources in a Pessimistic Climate.**  
**27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> March 2009**  
No members attended this conference.

**The Institute Of Professional Training “Public Relations & The Media”**  
**3<sup>rd</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> April 2009**  
No members attended this conference.

**Association of County & City Councils Annual Conference.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2009**  
Cllr. C. Hanniffy & Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick to attend.

**Training Seminar for Councillors “Environmental management**  
**4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> April 2009**  
Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick to attend.

**L.A.M.A. Spring Conference**  
**16<sup>th</sup> /17<sup>th</sup> April 2009**  
Cllr. C. Hanniffy & Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick to attend.

**4<sup>th</sup> IRDA Planning Conference**  
**22/23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009**  
Cllr. J. Butterfield to attend.

**ANY OTHER  
BUSINESS:**

Mr. D. Kirrane, DOS informed the meeting that Bord na Mona Energy Ltd. had submitted a planning application to An Bord Pleanála for a proposed power plant at Derrygreenagh. This development was classified as major infrastructure. The matter will come before the Council, for formal consideration, at the April meeting. In the interim the file was available for viewing in the Planning office.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**MINUTES CONFIRMED: -**

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**CATHAOIRLEACH**

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**MEETINGS ADMINISTATOR**

**20<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2009**