

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE UÍBH FHAILÍ**

**MINUTES OF DECEMBER MONTHLY MEETING  
OF OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, CHARLEVILLE ROAD, TULLAMORE  
ON MONDAY, 17TH DECEMBER 2018 AT 2.00 P.M.**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Cllr. D. Owens, Cathaoirleach (Presiding), Cllrs. N. Bourke, J. Carroll, J. Clendennen, N. Cribbin, D. Dolan, E. Dooley, E. Fitzpatrick, J. Foley, D. Harvey, J. Leahy, S. Maher, T. McCormack, T. McKeigue, F. Moran, P. Ormond; and L. Quinn
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	Cllrs. B. Killeavy and M. O'Reilly
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive; Mr. S. Murray, D.O.S.; Mr. T. Shanahan, D.O.S.; Mr. F. Heslin, D.O.S.; Mr. D. Conlon, H.O.F; Ms. M. Flynn Kenny, Meetings Administrator; Mr. D. Egan, S.O., Mr. Paddy Mathews, Head of Operations Fáilte Ireland, – Mr. Tom Donnellan, Chief Executive, Bord na Mona, Mr. Paul O’Riordan, Mr. Pat Sammon and Mr. Pat Fitzgerald Bord Na Mona and Ms. L. Carbery, C.O.
<b>VOTES OF SYMPATHY</b>	<p>Votes of sympathy were unanimously extended to the following: -</p> <p>Mr. and Mrs. Austin Walsh, White Forge, Coniker, Durrow, on the death of their son Kealan Walsh;</p> <p>Mr. Liam Hennessy, Rahan Road, Tullamore, on the death of his wife, Mary Hennessy;</p> <p>Mrs. Anne McGuigan, 14 Silverdale, Clara on the death of her husband Harry McGuigan;</p> <p>Mr. Michael O’Brien, Patrick Street, Portarlinton on the death of his father Cyril O’Brien;</p> <p>Mr. Aidan Keogh, Hammer Lane, Borness, Mountmellick on the death of his father Edward Keogh;</p> <p>Mr. Bill Carroll, Whiteford, Birr on the death of his wife Helen Carroll.</p> <p>The Chief Executive, on her own behalf and on behalf of the staff of Offaly County Council, joined with the members in these votes of sympathy.</p>
<b>CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES</b>	On the proposal of Cllr. L. Quinn and seconded by Cllr. D. Dolan the members resolved to adopt the Minutes of In-Committee Budget Meeting of Offaly County Council held in

	<p>Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2018;</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. T. McKeigue and seconded by Cllr. D. Harvey the members resolved to adopt the Minutes of Annual Statutory Budget Meeting of Offaly County Council held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018;</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. F. Moran and seconded by Cllr. J. Carroll the members resolved to adopt the Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Offaly County Council held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018</p>
<p><b>MINUTES FOR NOTING:</b></p>	<p>The members noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018;</li> <li>- Minutes of Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held in the offices of Offaly County Council, Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore on Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018;</li> <li>- Minutes of Housing, Social &amp; Cultural Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Municipal District of Tullamore on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2018.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001, AS AMENDED- SALE OF 0.0210 HECTARES IN ENDRIM FERBANE</b></p>	<p>On the proposal of Cllr. J. Clendennen, seconded by Cllr. J. Carroll the members resolved to the Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended- sale of 0.0210 hectares in Endrim Ferbane.</p>
<p><b>PRIDE OF PLACE AWARDS</b></p>	<p>Cllr. D. Owens, Cathaoirleach welcomed the three groups that had represented the county at the IPB Pride of Place Awards. He praised their hard work, dedication and civic pride. Mr. D. Egan introduced the Clonbullogue Development Association which represented the Edenderry Municipal District area in the Population: 300-1,000 category. He informed the members that the Clonbullogue Development Association was formed in 1972 and over the years has worked with the community, the Local Authority, Offaly Local Development Company, the employment services, and the Primary School. Built around a triangular green, this small community has much to be proud of, not least the successes in the National Tidy Town's Competition which has brought numerous awards most notable being Tidy Village including best village award on two occasions, population, category and over thirty County awards. Clonbullogue Development Association engages in all areas of development and community activity ranging from the preschool to the active retired and everything in between.</p> <p>Cllr. D. Owens, Cathaoirleach presented the Certificate of Recognition and Appreciation to Clonbullogue Development Association.</p>

	<p>Mr. D. Egan introduced the Acquired Brain Injury Ireland (ABII) Mounbolus who represented the Tullamore Municipal District area and acquitted themselves with some distinction on judging day. Mr. D. Egan informed the members that Acquired Brain Injury Ireland is the Country's leading provider of community rehabilitation for those of working age (18-65 years) living with and recovering from an acquired brain injury from causes including stroke, road collisions, falls and assaults. A brain injury can affect a person's ability to manage their own life and Acquired Brain Injury Ireland deliver services in communities across Ireland to support and empower people to rebuild their lives. Regionally, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland are piloting a number of paediatric support services in the midlands. It is a national not-for-profit organisation which also campaigns, educates and advocates for the rights and needs of this hidden group in society. At any one time, they deliver dedicated individual neuro-rehabilitation to an estimated 1,100 people nationally and 162 regionally through residential, community and day services.</p> <p>Cllr. Danny Owens, Cathaoirleach presented the Certificate of Recognition and Appreciation to Acquired Brain Injury Ireland (ABII) Mounbolus.</p> <p>Mr. D. Egan introduced the Moneygall Development Association who represented the Birr Municipal District and won the Community Tourism Category. He informed the members that the Moneygall Development Association is a voluntary community organisation that was established in 2011 following the visit of President Obama. The primary focus of the association is to improve community living through the enhancement of local facilities and the encouragement of Community participation. Moneygall Development Association comprises local residents, public representative, business representatives and clergy, they all have an interest in developing a strong vibrant village in Moneygall which offers a pleasant and attractive place to live and work and is a destination for tourists, both local and overseas.</p> <p>Cllr. Danny Owens, Cathaoirleach presented the Certificate of Recognition and Appreciation to Moneygall Development Association.</p> <p>The members joined with the staff of Offaly County Council in congratulating the three groups on their achievements.</p>
<p><b>FÁILTE IRELAND PRESENTATION</b></p>	<p>Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive welcomed Mr. P. Mathews to the meeting and informed the members that the Hidden Heartlands Brand was launched in April and Fáilte Ireland have been working in conjunction with the Tourism Team to promote the brand in Offaly.</p> <p>Mr. P. Mathews provided the members with a detailed presentation on the promotion of the Hidden Heartlands since its launch. He advised the members that Offaly overlaps both</p>

	<p>the Hidden Heartlands and the Ancient East brand and that international research undertaken had shown that visitors did not have a clear idea of the attractions available across the country. He stated that each tourist attractions in the county could decide which brand to use. He outlined the marketing campaign that had taken place to build brand awareness and acknowledged the support of the Offaly County Council Tourism team. He updated the members on the 2019 campaign stating that a major promotion of the brand would take place at the tour operators conference Meitheal 2019 and ongoing marketing would continue throughout the year.</p> <p>Cllr. D. Owens thanked him for his presentation and queried if the Offaly link would feature on their website. The members joined the Cathaoirleach in thanking Mr. P. Mathews and raised a number of queries with regard to better publicity for Offaly, access to grants, linking greenways and how to engage more with Fáilte Ireland. They noted that there could be a market for Chinese tourists and that Offaly provides unique experience with attractions such as Clonmacnoise, Lough Boora and Birr Castle. They queried if the Hidden Heartlands had been provided with the same level of investment as the Wild Atlantic Way. They raised concerns with the lack of development of Durrow Abbey, the Clara Bog Interpretative Centre and noted that research is required for the County Development Plan.</p> <p>In responding to the members queries Mr. P. Mathews advised the members that while Offaly did not appear in the TV adverts, the county received equal publicity in other areas and that the publicity will be reviewed each year. He agreed that Offaly have not currently been approved for grant funding but that building on a working relationship with the Offaly Tourism team applications can be submitted in the future. He pointed out that the links on the websites are multi layered starting from National to regional and then onto local links. He confirmed that Fáilte Ireland do not have access to Greenway funding but could work with the relevant bodies to assist in the development of the Greenways. He stated that Clonmacnoise is an iconic attraction that is unique and a great asset and also that Durrow and Clara Bog are assets that need to be converted into experiences. He confirmed that they are looking at the Chinese market and that to date €2m has been invested in the Hidden Heartlands which is on par with the start-up of the Wild Atlantic Way. He suggested that an Offaly Tourism Ambassador Programme similar to the one provided by the Rotary Club would be beneficial and agreed work in conjunction with them to deliver another programme.</p> <p>Ms A. Delaney, Chief Executive thanked Mr. P. Mathews for his informative presentation.</p>
<p><b>BORD NA MONA PRESENTATION</b></p>	<p>Cllr. D. Owens informed the members that he and Ms. A. Delaney as part of a team, met with other stakeholders to help with efforts to find alternative employment opportunities for Bord Na Mona workers affected by impending job cuts. He advised the members that they met with Minister Richard Bruton, Minister Heather Humphreys and Minister of State,</p>

Sean Canney, to co-ordinate funding for projects that could help individuals and areas that are set to be affected. Ms. A. Delaney advised the members that they are to devise proposals to bring to the next meeting in six months and welcomed the Bord na Mona team to the meeting for their presentation.

Mr. T. Donnellan, Chief Executive provided the members with an informative presentation on the restructuring plans for Bord na Mona. He informed the members that Bord na Mona's mandate is to be commercially viable and to provide jobs. He outlined the current diversification into waste and renewable energy. He advised the members of the challenges going forward with the reduction of peat in energy provision, in the UK horticulture market and with the possible introduction of carbon tax. He informed the members on the projects being piloted such as the Aquaculture project in Mountlucas, the development of herb growth and energy parks. He noted that Bord na Mona landbanks are a great asset. He informed the members that Bord na Mona are developing their waste business with their tyre recycling plant employing 50 people and that they are diversifying into plastic recycling. He stated that they would further develop their parks and recreation and confirmed that a study is being undertaken to develop Lough Boora as their showcase.

The members thanked Mr. T. Donnellan for his comprehensive report and responded with their queries. Cllr. E. Dooley stated that an investment fund is required to provide training and job creation. The members voiced their concerns about the timeline for the ceasing of peat use, Brexit and further windfarm development but agreed that the Bord na Mona windfarms are well operated. They requested clarification on the future use of the Lough Boora workshops, the possibility of going into windfarm component production and cost of importing biomass.

Mr. T. Donnellan agreed that there are serious challenges ahead and they will require support for the diversification plans. He also noted that climate change policies could speed up the timeline for peat reduction. He advised the members that the workshop at Lough Boora is included in the study they are undertaking to further develop Lough Boora. He informed the members that they have precautionary measures in place for Brexit, positioning supplies and they do not import from the UK.

Mr. P. Fitzgerald updated the members on the plans for Cloncreen Windfarm and advised that Bord Na Mona have recently gone public with a project in Derrinlough. He informed the members that communities can gain from the windfarms and there are spinoff employment opportunities. He pointed out that 30-40 thousand visitors utilise the amenity aspect of Mountlucas currently and this had been a planning condition. He pointed out that studies have shown windfarms have no impact on tourism. He informed the members that biomass significantly reduces the carbon footprint compared to peat usage. He advised the members that production of

	<p>windfarm components was very dependent on certified standards that may not be available in the workforce.</p> <p>Ms. A. Delaney thanked the Bord na Mona team for their presentation and assured them that the LEO and planning staff would welcome any engagement with them to support their plans.</p>
<b>OFFALY LCDC MEMBERSHIP</b>	<p>Mr. F. Heslin, D.O.S. advised that a casual vacancy had arisen in the local and community interests sector of Offaly Local Community Development Committee (L.C.D.C.) On the recommendation of the Chief Officer, it was proposed by Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick and seconded by Cllr. D. Harvey that Mr. Fechin Daly fill the vacancy on the Offaly LCDC.</p>
<b>MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT:</b>	<p>Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive, drew the members' attention to the monthly management report. She updated the members on the Urban Regeneration Fund approved in the amount of €3m, the €458,240 awarded for Creative Suite in Birr Technology Centre and the additional funding of €1.24m for national roads pavement schemes and €0.5m for regional and local roads maintenance works. She advised the members that the Fleadh Ceoil application for 2020 was unsuccessful, but that efforts would continue to host the event in future years. She updated the members on the LIS, CIS and TVR schemes. She brought their attention to the Strategic Infrastructure Development at West Offaly Peat which was lodged with An Bord Pleanála on 26th November 2018 and the Waterways Ireland application, on behalf of Offaly County Council, Kildare County Council and South Dublin County Council submitted to complete the 140km Grand Canal Greenway. She advised the members that the emergency services details would be circulated to them before Christmas. She informed the members that there was a good spend on the Leader Programme, that a Comhairle na nÓg brief would be presented to the members in the first quarter of 2019 and the Archive project would also be completed in the first quarter of 2019.</p> <p>The members thanked the Chief Executive for the comprehensive report.</p>
<b>CORPORATE POLICY GROUP REPORT:</b>	<p>Cllr. D. Owens Cathaoirleach informed the members that the Corporate Policy Group met earlier that day to consider the various items on the Council agenda. He advised the members that the conferences and training had been agreed.</p>
<b>NOTICES OF MOTION</b>	<p>The Notices of Motion were deferred until the January 2018 meeting.</p>
<b>COMHDHÁLACHA</b>	<p><b><u>Conferences</u></b></p> <p>'The Finance Act 2018' The Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth from the 11th to 13th January 2019. <i>It was agreed no member would attend</i></p>

	<p>'Understanding the Asylum Process in Ireland ' O'Donovan's Hotel, Main Street, Clonakilty, Co. Cork from the 18th to 20th January 2019. <i>It was agreed no member would attend</i></p> <p>'Retirement Entitlements and Taxation Benefits for Councillors ' The Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork from the 25th to 27th January 2019. <i>It was agreed no member would attend</i></p> <p><b><u>Training</u></b></p> <p>Institute of Professional Training - Insolvency Services in Ireland, Friday 25th, Saturday 26th &amp; Sunday 27th January 2019, Gold Coast Hotel, Ballinacourty, Dungarvan,Co. Waterford <i>It was agreed no member would attend</i></p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. E. Dooley, seconded by Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick the members' noted and approved the conferences and training seminars.</p>
<b>COMHFHREAGRAS:</b>	Further correspondence that issued with the Agenda was noted.
<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS:</b>	<p>On the proposal of Cllr. D. Dolan, seconded by Cllr. J. Carroll the members resolved to write to the Minister of Agriculture to request them to publicly name the meat factories that had received fines in 2016 and 2018 for their practices in trimming beef and also to seek compensation for the farmers that had been underpaid due this practice.</p> <p>Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive agreed to write to the Minister on behalf of the Members and Offaly County Council.</p> <p>Cllr. N. Cribbin requested that the CCTV issue be discussed at the January 2019 Ordinary meeting of Offaly County Council.</p> <p>Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive agreed to provide an update on CCTV in January 2019.</p> <p>Cllr. D. Harvey and the members wished the Arts Officer Mary Brady best of luck in her future endeavours upon her departure from Offaly County Council in December.</p>

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**MINUTES CONFIRMED:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **CATHAOIRLEACH**

\_\_\_\_\_ **RUNAÍ**

21<sup>st</sup> January 2018