



**Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Offaly County Council**  
Held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at 2.00 pm, in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road,  
Tullamore and via Zoom

**Present**

Cllr. Frank Moran Cathaoirleach

Cllr. John Carroll	Cllr. Declan Harvey
Cllr. Clare Claffey	Cllr. John Leahy
Cllr. John Clendennen	Cllr. Tony McCormack
Cllr. Noel Cribbin	Cllr. Robert McDermott
Cllr. Eamon Dooley	Cllr. Sean O'Brien
Cllr. Neil Feighery	Cllr. Peter Ormond
Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick	Cllr. Danny Owens
Cllr. Mark Hackett	Cllr. Liam Quinn
	Cllr. Ken Smollen

The Meetings Administrator carried out a roll call to confirm attendance.

**Apologies**

Cllr. J. Foley

**Officials in Attendance**

Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive; Mr. T. Shanahan, D.O.S.; Ms. S. Kennedy, D.O.S.; Mr. M. Connolly, H.O.F.; Ms. O. Martin, A/D.O.S.; Ms. A. Dillon S.E.O. ; Mr. E. Fennell, S.E.O., Mr. G. Bruton, Meetings Administrator; Mr. C. Kelly, S.O. and Ms. L. Carbery, C.O.

**Suspension of Standing Orders**

On the proposal of Cllr. E. Dooley, seconded by Cllr. J. Leahy, the members agreed to suspend Standing Orders to hold a minutes silence for former employee of Offaly County Council, Ms. Una Harvey, RIP.

**Votes of Sympathy**

A Vote of Sympathy was proposed for John Harvey and the Harvey Family, Moylena, Tullamore on the death of his wife Una Harvey.

## **1. Confirmation of Minutes**

On the proposal of Cllr. R. McDermott, seconded by Cllr. J. Carroll, the members resolved to adopt the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Offaly County Council held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

On the proposal of Cllr. D. Harvey, seconded by Cllr. R. McDermott, the members resolved to adopt the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Offaly County Council held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

## **2. Minutes for Noting**

The members noted the following minutes:

- Minutes of the Land Use, Planning and Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee held on 29th March 2022
- Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on Friday 13th May 2022

## **3. Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001**

On the proposal of Cllr. N. Feighery, seconded by Cllr. S. O'Brien, the members resolved to adopt Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, to sell 0.070 acres of land at Cappancur, Tullamore to Brendan Mann and Aisling Tannian in the amount of €1,000 plus legal fees.

## **4. Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001**

On the proposal of Cllr. E. Dooley, seconded by Cllr. J. Clendennen, the members resolved to adopt Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 to sell 0.0438Ha of land at Ballyvora Grove Estate, Ferbane to Cathal and Rachel Egan in the amount of €4,000.

## **5. Planning and Development Act, 2000 as Amended, Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as Amended**

On the proposal of Cllr. S. O'Brien, seconded by Cllr. D. Harvey, the members resolved to adopt the Offaly County Council Planning & Development Act 2000 (Section 179)(as amended) Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) - Public Space Scheme 2021 Lloyd Town Park Tullamore.

## **6. 5.Planning and Development Act, 2000 as Amended, Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as Amended**

Mr. T. Shanahan briefed the members on the Chief Executive report outlining the funding streams and the extent and nature of the project Mucklagh Town & Village Renewal (Brocca Road). He brought their attention to the submission from Inland Fisheries Ireland and the proposed modification to include a by-pass interceptor with grit trap. He thanked the landowners for their co-operation, the members for their support and the Tullamore Municipal District staff.

The members welcomed the project, citing the necessity for health and safety and the benefits to the community of Mucklagh.

On the proposal of Cllr. N. Feighery, seconded by Cllr. D. Owens The members resolved to adopt Offaly County Council Planning & Development Act 2000 (Section 179)(as amended) Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) – Mucklagh Town & Village Renewal (Brocca Road)

### **7. Borrowing of monies for Housing Loans to be set at €4,000,000 for Local Authority Home Loans**

Ms. S. Kennedy, D.O.S. updated the members on the introduction of the Local Authority Home Loan (LAHL) scheme, which replaced the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan (RIHL) scheme, effective from 4th January 2022. She sought approval to set the borrowing for housing loans at €4,000,000 in line with the borrowing limit set for previous home loan scheme (RIHL), which ran from 2018 to 2021 “Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan”. She noted the total drawdowns for Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan for this period was €2,096,665.

Cllr. J. Leahy sought a further breakdown on the take up of loans, changes in criteria and affordability in the next housing report to the council.

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Leahy, seconded by Cllr. N. Cribbin, the members resolved to set the borrowing for housing loans at €4,000,000 in line with borrowing limit set for the previous home loan scheme (RIHL), which ran from 2018 to 2021 “Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan”.

### **8. Nomination to Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly**

Mr. M. Connolly, H.O.F., invited Cllr. P. Ormond to brief members on the nomination to the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly. Cllr. P. Ormond advised the members it had been agreed that after 3 years, Cllr Tony McCormack would step down and Cllr. Danny Owens would replace him.

On the Proposal of Cllr. P. Ormond, seconded by Cllr. T. McCormack the members appointed Cllr. D. Owens to the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly.

### **9. Just Transition**

Ms. O. Martin A/D.O.S. updated the members on Just Transition. She advised them that the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications have finalised the Territorial Plan for the midlands region and it is now on the cabinet agenda to be agreed and subsequently forwarded to the European Union. She noted the operational programme is overseen by the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly and this will be submitted to the commission in due course.

The members thanked her for the update and welcomed the visit of Minister Simon Harris to the National Training Centre at Mount Lucas. They agreed the facility is very impressive and the Level 5 National Scaffolding Apprenticeship will be a great asset for the Laois Offaly Education Training Board and for County Offaly.

Cllr. E. Dooley sought more detail on the number of direct jobs that have been created as a result of Just Transition funding.

Cllr. J. Leahy sought clarification on the re-distribution of any surplus funding that has not been utilised.

Cllr. J. Clendennen sought a meeting with IDA.

Cllr. F. Moran noted the huge potential for the Mount Lucas Training Centre and congratulated the LOETB for providing a great facility.

In response to the members' queries, Ms. A. Delaney advised that the Department will not re-distribute any unspent funding and that currently the 2023 deadline for completion of projects is still in place. She informed the members of Minister Ryan's report that noted there were 19 direct jobs and 231 indirect jobs created through the 21 Just Transition projects, 18 of which are in Offaly. She welcomed the launch of the Scaffolding Apprenticeship Scheme by LOETB at Mount Lucas, noting it is a significant development. She advised the members on employment stakeholder engagement by Offaly County Council, including an action plan due from LEO in September and the success of the recent Offaly Jobs Fair. She noted that there is on-going engagement with the IDA and Enterprise Ireland. She highlighted the challenges facing the retrofit scheme with cost increases due to inflation and that a meeting with the Department on these issues was postponed. However, an update in writing will be provided to the members following the re-scheduled meeting.

## 10. Monthly Management Report

Ms. A. Delaney brought the members attention to the monthly management report. She updated the members on the development of the Greenways, the active travel projects including the new cycle way and pedestrian facilities at Hare's Lane Edenderry, and the new pedestrian facilities to St Michaels Cemetery Portarlinton. She welcomed the opening of the Edenderry Inner Relief Road and she thanked all those involved. She noted the housing report is available for their information and a comprehensive report will be presented to the members at the September meeting of the Council. She informed the members that the LCDC continues to meet and approve projects and all the relevant agencies involved in the Ukrainian crisis are interlinking and engaging with each other.

She advised the members of the Pride of Place competition involving Geashill and Mucklagh on 24<sup>th</sup> August and Pollagh on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August and she encouraged the members to attend. She acknowledged the significant achievement of Birr Tidy Towns in their nomination for Best Kept Town. She welcomed the recent Jobs Fair in Tullamore, supported by LEO, the return of the Tullamore Show and she highlighted the photos contained in the report showcasing the Town Enhancement Initiative. She noted the many activities on- going in the Library Services.

Cllr. S. O'Brien raised concerns about illegal encampments causing serious issues in Church Hill, Hop Hill and Church View. The members agreed a lot of funding and time has been allocated to these issues and the situation is not unique to County Offaly. Cllr. T. McCormack noted the estate management committee are a good working group and alongside Offaly County Council huge work has been carried out and he highlighted that legislation to deal with these issues needs to change.

Cllr. K. Smollen raised concerns on the housing figures and reiterated the need for the expansion of income thresholds.

Cllr. J. Clendennen welcomed the greenway development and he highlighted the need to identify locations for life buoys and to look out for the elderly and vulnerable in the current warm weather conditions.

Cllrs. R. McDermott and Cllr.N. Cribbin thanked Ms. A. Delaney and staff for attending the opening of the Edenderry Inner Relief Road.

Cllr. J. Carroll suggested that the process of raising issues at the monthly report should be reviewed by the Corporate Policy Group meeting.

Cllr. F. Moran wished Geashill, Mucklagh and Pollagh the best in Pride of Place competition and acknowledged the amount of work and preparation by the communities.

Ms. A. Delaney agreed to liaise with Water Safety Ireland in relation to life buoys and she reiterated the need to look after the elderly and vulnerable during the current weather spell. With regard to housing issues, she advised that staff work hard to alleviate residents' concerns. A number of measures have been implemented to deal with anti-social behaviour, including liaising with an Garda Síochána, legal and social inclusion supports, and she stressed that some issues are outside the remit of Offaly County Council.

Ms. S. Kennedy, D.O.S. informed the members that issues with unauthorised encampments are ongoing for a number of years. A sub-committee had been established to deal with this and a lot of work had been undertaken, including engagement with residents committees. Legal action has been taken and more notices are due to issue in next few days. She pointed out it is not always possible to fully engage with residents due to legal requirements, as much action as possible has been taken. Provision of traveller accommodation is ahead of target. She informed the members that the Housing for All programme has accelerated and 194 units are due for completion in the year ahead. She acknowledged there is a huge demand nationally and housing are working with agencies and contractors to provide as many units as possible. She thanked the members for their understanding and support to housing staff.

## 11. Corporate Policy Group Report

The Cathaoirleach reported on the meeting of the CPG held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

## 12. Notices of Motion

Cllr. M. Hackett proposed, *“that Offaly County Council engage with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with a view to availing of funding to recruit and employ a Biodiversity Officer”*.

Cllr. F. Moran, Cathaoirleach, advised that recruitment is a reserved function for the Executive.

In response, Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive informed the members that the pilot scheme for Biodiversity Officers has not been implemented to date by the Department and when it opens, Offaly County Council will look to avail of it, if in a position to do so.

Cllr. M. Hackett, proposed that Offaly County Council commits to maintaining hybrid style Council meetings in keeping with family friendly work practices and efforts to encourage more women to run

for election. This was seconded Cllr. C. Claffey. However, the members sought an amendment to include diversity in the proposal. Cllr. M. Hackett agreed to submit an amended version of his proposal.

### 13. Comhdhálacha / Conferences

#### Conferences

- Letterkenny Tidy Towns in conjunction with Letterkenny Cathedral Quarter on Dereliction in Dillons Hotel, on Friday, 22 July starting at 11am. This event is free. Tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/derelict-in-donegal-conference-tickets-368816759857>

*It was agreed Cllrs. N. Cribbin and R. McDermott would attend.*

- La Touche Legacy in association with Greystones Archaeological and Historical Society 7th Festival of History – 32nd La Touche Legacy Weekend “ Ireland Through the 40’s ..... and Before ” Friday 9th – Saturday 10th September 2022 at Greystones Golf Club, Whitshed Road, Greystones, Cost: €120 to include all lectures, documentation and Seminar Dinner

*It was agreed no member would attend.*

- Offaly Domestic Violence Support Services Conference at the Tullamore Court Hotel on 13th October 2022

*It was agreed no member would attend.*

#### Training

- The Autumn training conference will take place on the 14th and 15th September in the Knightsbrook Hotel, Trim, Co. Meath. The Conference will commence with registration at 5.00pm & official opening at 7.30pm on Wednesday 14th September 2022.

*It was agreed Cllrs. E. Fitzpatrick, D. Harvey, N. Cribbin would attend.*

Retrospective approval was sought for Cllr. E. Fitzparick to attend AILG Module 3 in Hodson Bay, Athlone on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and for Cllrs. R. McDermott and D. Harvey and F. Moran to attend the Suck Valley Way Conference on the 27th and 28th April in Roscommon.

### 14. Comhfhreagras/ Correspondence

Cllr. F. Moran, Cathaoirleach informed the members that he has received correspondence from Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive, by way of prescribed notification, to extend her tenure in accordance with the provisions of Section 147 of the Local Government Act, 2001, (as amended).

In accordance with the Act, he transmitted a copy of the notification to the Minister and to the Chief Executive of the Public Appointments Service. He was informing the members, at this meeting as required by the Act and the matter is for noting.

Cllr. D. Harvey joined with the members in congratulating Ms. A. Delaney on the extension of her tenure as Chief Executive.

## 15. Any Other Business

Cllr. F. Moran informed the members that he had a conflict of interest in relation to subject matter for any other business that had been brought to his attention. He called on the Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr. T. McCormack to chair the meeting as he excused himself.

Cllr. D. Harvey raised concerns about the National Ambulance Service and the level of complaints received by him and his fellow councillors, in relation to waiting times. The members expressed concerns with The National Ambulance Service and sought representatives from the Ambulance Service to attend a council meeting. Cllr. P. Ormond sought a meeting with the Minister for Health. It was agreed to write to the Minister of Health to request a meeting.

**MINUTES CONFIRMED:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**CATHAOIRLEACH**

\_\_\_\_\_

**RUNAÍ**

**19<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

