

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE UÍBH FHAILÍ

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

**HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, CHARLEVILLE ROAD, TULLAMORE ON
MONDAY 17TH JANUARY 2022 AT 2.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:	Cllr. D. Harvey, Cathaoirleach, Cllrs. J. Carroll (R); C. Claffey (R), J. Clendennen (R), N. Cribbin(R), E. Dooley (R), N. Feighery (R), J. Foley (R), M. Hackett (R), J. Leahy (R), T. McCormack (R), R. McDermott (R), F. Moran (R), S. O'Brien (R), P. Ormond (R), D. Owens (R), L. Quinn and K. Smollen (R)
APOLOGIES:	Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick
IN ATTENDANCE:	Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive; Mr. T. Shanahan, D.O.S. (R); Ms. S. Kennedy, D.O.S. (R); Mr. S. Duclot D.O.S. (R); Mr. M. Connolly, H.O.F.; Ms. M. Healy, E.S.O. (R); Ms. E. McGinn, C.L; Mr. E. Fennell, S.E.O., Mr. G. Bruton, Meetings Administrator, and Ms. L. Carbery, C.O. (R)
SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS	<p>On the proposal of Cllr. D. Owens, seconded by Cllr. N. Feighery the members agreed to suspend Standing Orders to hold a minute's silence for Ashling Murphy.</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. K. Smollen, seconded by Cllr. N. Feighery the members agreed to adjourn the meeting for ten minutes as a mark of respect for Ashling Murphy.</p> <p>Cllr. D. Harvey, Cathaoirleach on behalf of himself and the members extended sincerest condolences to family of Ashling Murphy.</p> <p>Cllr. D. Owens, noted it has been one of the darkest weeks in Offaly history and he offered his deepest condolences to the Murphy family, her boyfriend and extended family and friends. He said that Ashling represented everything that was good. Ashling brought great energy to everything she did and as a school teacher she made an instant impact on teachers, students and the Durrow community. He cited her love of music and camogie, noting she was an outstanding musician and she excelled for club Kilcormac Killoughey and will be missed by her team mates and club members. She was a vibrant person that had more to give. He paid tribute to the community and emergency services who had assisted Ashling.</p> <p>Cllr. N. Feighery conveyed his condolences to the family and friends of Ashling Murphy. He noted the sense of shock in the</p>

	<p>local community and the outpouring of sympathy and support in Offaly and across the world in solidarity for her family. He called on everyone to remember the life she lived, noting that she was immersed in the community and was so accomplished. He remembered her leading the choir at Christmas in O'Connor Square, saying it is a lovely memory to have.</p> <p>Ms. A. Delaney, on behalf of management and staff of Offaly County Council, extended her deepest condolences to the family, boyfriend, extended family, teachers, students and community on the huge loss of Ashling Murphy. She informed the members that an online book of condolences has been opened and she noted that Ashling's death has resonated deeply in the community, who struggled to understand her tragic death. Ar dheis De go raibh a hanam d'fílis.</p>
VOTES OF SYMPATHY	<p>Vote of sympathy was unanimously extended to the following:</p> <p>The Murphy Family, Cully, Blueball, on the death of their daughter Ashling Murphy;</p> <p>Mrs. Ruth Dunican and Family, Castletown, Fortal, Birr on the death of her husband Thomas Dunican.</p> <p>The Chief Executive, on her own behalf and on behalf of the staff of Offaly County Council, joined with the members in this vote of sympathy.</p>
CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES	<p>On the proposal of Cllr. J. Carroll, seconded by Cllr. N. Cribbin, the members resolved to adopt the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Offaly County Council held on Monday 13th December 2021.</p>
MINUTES FOR NOTING	<p>The members noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of the Community, Cultural and Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee held on 22nd September 2021; • Minutes of the Housing Strategic Policy Committee meeting held on 29th September 2021; • Minutes of Meeting of Land Use, Planning and Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee held on 5 October 2021; • Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on 8th November 2021; • Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on 12th November 2021.
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT, 2000 AS AMENDED, PART 8	<p>Mr. S. Duclot informed the members of the proposal for a shared 'Route to the trails' cyclist and pedestrian path of 790 metres in length and predominantly 2.3 meters in width along the R421 regional road between Kinnitty Village and leading to the</p>

<p>OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, 2001 AS AMENDED FOR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT KINNITTY</p>	<p>Kinnitty GAA sports grounds entrance. This would improve access from the village of Kinnitty to the Slieve Blooms Mountain Bike Trails.</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. J. Clendennen, seconded by Cllr. P. Ormond, the members resolved to adopt the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as Amended, Part 8 of The Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as Amended for Proposed Development at Kinnitty.</p>
<p>SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL PROPOSES TO DISPOSE OF 0.001 ACRES AT MCCAULEY DRIVE, BIRR TO ESB IN THE SUM OF €1</p>	<p>On the proposal of Cllr. J. Carroll, seconded by Cllr. J. Clendennen, the members resolved to adopt Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 to dispose of 0.001 acres at McCauley Drive, Birr to the ESB in the sum of €1.</p>
<p>DRAFT LITTER MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022-2024</p>	<p>Mr. T. Shanahan, D.O.S. brought the members attention to the Draft Litter Management Plan 2022-2024 and pointed out the obligation of a local authority to produce a Litter Management Plan as set out in Section 10 of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997. He informed the members that Local Authorities are required to make and implement a Litter Management Plan for its own functional area. The Litter Management Plan is a reserved function within a Local Authority, to be adopted by the members and reviewed every three years. He advised the members that the previous Litter Management Plan was reviewed and extended for three years to December 2021 in accordance with Section 12 of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997. He informed the members that in preparing a Litter Management Plan, the local authority is obliged to consult with other sectors before the plan is adopted by the members. The core of the approach to drafting the new plan is engagement with the public and interested parties such as local community groups, elected representatives and the business sector.</p> <p>The members joined with Cllr. J. Leahy, in commending the staff and work of the Climate Action, Environment, Water and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee and they welcomed the use of fines to prevent littering and education to promote litter awareness. They acknowledged the contribution of community groups such as Tidy Towns in their efforts to clean ups in towns and villages across the county. They highlighted the various litter and pollution issues such as fly tipping. They welcomed engagement from the public on the draft plan. Cllr. E. Dooley suggested that an arrangement should be discussed with Bord Na Mona for the use of CCTV and drones to manage fires and dumping on the cut away bogs and called on street and road signs to be kept clean. Cllr. F. Moran suggested that the Drug and</p>

	<p>Alcohol Task force could provide a presentation to the members on any supports they may be able to provide.</p> <p>Mr. T. Shanahan noted the members concerns and queries. He advised that they will be taken into consideration and a further presentation will be given to the members before the plan is adopted. He advised Cllr. Moran that Ms. M. Hussey will revert to him with regard to his suggestion for the Drug and Alcohol Task Force to give a presentation.</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. J. Leahy, seconded by Cllr. M. Hackett, the members resolved to send the Draft Litter Management Plan 2022-2024 for public consultation.</p>
<p>DRAFT RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR IRELAND 2022-2027</p>	<p>Mr. T. Shanahan advised the members the National plan drafted by the Department of Housing, and to be adopted by the government, will lead to county level implementation. The member’s views will be taken into consideration in the development of the plan.</p> <p>Ms. M. Healy, Executive Scientist provided the members with a comprehensive presentation on the Draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027, noting it is open for public consultation to 31st March 2022. She advised the members that this is a national plan that aims to protect and restore good water quality across Ireland. In Offaly it relates to our rivers and groundwaters as part of Irelands plan to achieve the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive. She noted that this will benefit health, biodiversity, climate, communities, tourism and jobs. Maps and data are available to all at www.catchments.ie</p> <p>She updated the members on the tools used by EPA to define the Ecological Status of a waterbody including chemical samples, biological Q rating, fish surveys and hydromorphology. She advised the members that just over half (53%) of surface waters are in good or high ecological status across Ireland and overall water quality is not improving at a fast enough pace. She informed the members that in Offaly the key trends are a decline in “Good Status” and an increase in our “Poor Status” and she outlined the “At Risk” water bodies. She advised the members that the EPA have identified multiple pressures on many rivers and the need to assess river catchment on the ground and address the relevant issues. She informed the members of the top three pressures with agriculture at 34.5%, quarries and peat extraction at 21.4% and 14.3% in hydromorphology which looks at areas such as water flow, sediment, movement and physical habitat.</p> <p>Ms. M. Healy outlined the main themes addressed in the River Basin Management Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased national ambition to halt the decline in water quality and reverse the damage.

- Integrated Catchment Planning for the 46 hydrometric catchments across Ireland
- From this Offaly County Council will be required to develop a County Level Implementation Plan.
- Greater coordination and collaboration between State agencies, local authorities, and LAWPRO.
- Delivering multiple benefits for nature, air quality, climate change, and local communities.

She advised the members that Appendix 2 of the plan contains 111 different measures with some key themes including a review of Local Authority resources, strengthening water services policy and focus on sustainability in farming. She highlighted the proposed areas for action in Offaly County Council which are to protect 5 water bodies' good status, to restore 8 water bodies to good status and assessment of all water bodies that require focus. She noted that it is an exciting crossroads for water quality, a time of change, but also a challenging time that will require resources to achieve results.

Cllr. J. Leahy, Chairperson of the SPC joined with the members in thanking Ms. Healy for her informative presentation. He expressed his disappointment in the decline in Offaly water bodies citing lack of resources. He highlighted the need for the plan to work to promote tourism, angling and to reduce the cost of treating drinking water and he proposed that Offaly County Council commission a report to see what resources are needed.

Cllr. J. Carroll pointed out that the farming sector have invested in measures to prevent pollution and are open to co-operating to improve river quality. He noted that identifying what body is in charge of particular water bodies is an issue.

In response to the members queries Mr. T. Shanahan advised that the issues that are illustrated reflect the national picture and that pressure is coming from a lot of different sources. Following public consultation, the adoption of the plan will lead to an implementation plan for Offaly, in conjunction with other agencies.

Ms. M. Healy responded that a broader advisory approach is required. The plan will identify what resources are needed for each waterbody and work will be undertaken with stakeholders involved.

Ms. M. Hussey thanked Ms. Healy for her work and she noted that the intention is to collate all comments and use same in the Council's submission. She advised the members that the scientific data will be examined to ensure that the right measures are used in the right place. She agreed that there are a lot of stakeholders involved. She highlighted that in Offaly there are two high quality rivers which is rare nationally and that a report has already been commissioned to review resources.

**DRAFT OFFALY
LIBRARIES INTERIM
DEVELOPMENT
PLAN**

Ms. S. Kennedy brought the members attention to the Draft Interim Development Plan 2022-2023 with its focus on creating collaborative communities. She advised the members that considerable consultation has taken place internally and externally. She highlighted the importance of the Library Services, in particular the support, resilience and flexibility the Library services staff provided throughout the pandemic and how important the service is to the community. She expressed the need to continue to develop the service and she thanked the members and the SPC for their engagement.

Ms. E. McGinn, County Librarian provided the members with a presentation on the Interim Development Plan, noting the key elements including aligning national and local strategies and a strategic analysis of user needs. She outlined the Interim Plan Structure and the Mission Statement to provide free and equitable access to quality information, resources, education, creativity and culture. She informed the members of the various publications that informed the drafting of the plan.

She provided the members with a look back on the services from 2014 to date and highlighted the success of the pilot programme of My open library in Offaly, the implementation of the national library management system, national catalogue and archives. She pointed out the various initiatives undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic including providing more e-services, digital library and new services such as Ask the Librarian, newsletters, and tailored contact and collect services. She advised the members that the staff embraced the changes throughout and they also engaged in the community helpline. She outlined the consultation process that took place in the drafting of the plan, leading to action plan objectives over areas such as Infrastructure & Service, Promotion & Marketing, and Partnership & Collaborations. She advised the members of the 3 pillars focussing on reading/literacy, learning/information and Community/Culture. She welcomed the development of the Edenderry Library and Art space and further development in Banagher and Ferbane. She noted that the plan will be reviewed and monitored. She highlighted that Tullamore Library celebrated their 100th anniversary in May and she thanked members for their time.

Cllr. L. Quinn, chair of the SPC, joined with the members in thanking Ms. E. McGinn for her comprehensive update and he acknowledged that a lot of time has been spent with the team compiling the plan. He noted that Offaly is at an exciting juncture and the development of eservices is very welcome. He highlighted the capital investment in Library Services and the access available to the community. He acknowledged the challenges in securing as much funding as possible and he complemented the Library team on their dedication and hard work.

	<p>Ms. S. Kennedy thanked the members for their comments and she welcomed the changes in library services and in particular My Open library providing access for busy households to attend in their own space and time.</p> <p>In response to the member's comments, Ms. E. McGinn noted that Offaly Library Services has exceeded funding expectations by successfully engaging with stakeholders to avail of funding. She also highlighted that the Irish language is explicitly mentioned in the plan. She advised members that the collection of material in Irish will grow and the Irish programme will expand. She agreed that the new library in Edenderry will provide the public with excellent services. She welcomed the abolishment of fines and she noted the diaspora is included in the plan through such services as the local studies collection and outreach programme. She highlighted that the technology for My Open Library is being upgraded in Tullamore and Banagher and she is hopeful that there may be further funding for this initiative. She noted that while there is no mobile library service, the library delivery van circulates and delivers programmes to schools and this will be developed further in the future.</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. L. Quinn, seconded by Cllr. J. Carroll, the members resolved to adopt the Offaly Libraries Interim Development Plan 2022-2023.</p>
<p>SPC REPRESENTATIVES</p>	<p>Mr. G. Bruton brought the members attention to the item on SPC Representatives. He advised that six new PPN sectoral nominees were elected as representatives to SPC's/Committees following PPN elections which were held in November 2021. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the nominees were ratified by the PPN members via email in December 2021. Ratification of changes to nominees to SPC's is a reserved function. Nominees to JPC's/Heritage Forum are not included under the reserved function, but their details and appointment should be noted by the elected members.</p> <p>Mr. G. Bruton requested a proposer and seconder for the SPC nominees.</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. J. Leahy, seconded by Cllr. E. Dooley the members resolved to appoint the nominees as listed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Newman to the Climate Action, Environment, Water & Transportation SPC • Diane Serviss to the Housing SPC • Ruth Keane to the Housing SPC • Stephen Keogh to the Housing SPC
<p>DRAFT SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2022</p>	<p>On the proposal of Cllr. T. McCormack, seconded by Cllr. F. Moran, the members resolved to adopt the schedule of meetings 2022.</p>

<p>DRAFT ANNUAL SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN</p>	<p>Mr. M. Connolly, H.O.F. drew the members’ attention to the draft Annual Service Delivery Plan 2022, as circulated with the agenda. He informed the meeting that the preparation of an Annual Service Delivery Plan is provided for on a statutory basis in the Local Government Reform Act 2014.</p> <p>He advised that the draft Service Delivery Plan for 2022 identified the various services that the Council propose to provide in the year ahead and that it takes account of, and is consistent with, the Corporate Plan 2019-2024 (adopted December 16th 2019) and Budget 2022 (adopted November 15th 2021).</p> <p>On the proposal of S. O’Brien, seconded by Cllr. T. McCormack, the members resolved to adopt the Annual Service Delivery Plan 2022.</p>
<p>JUST TRANSITION</p>	<p>Mr. S. Duclot, D.O.S. updated the members on Just Transition, noting that 7 more National Just Transition projects have been approved, including the Shannonbridge Action Group. He pointed out that Ireland must prepare a Territorial Just Transition Plan, following public consultation which will close on 14th February 2022. An Online questionnaire and virtual workshops are provided, consisting of two for the general public taking place on 18th and 25th January and a youth workshop for 16-24 year olds being organised directly with national youth representative organisations. A workshop will also be provided for the wider midland regional authorities, and be available to Local Authority members on 26th January and for the executive on 20th January 2022.</p> <p>He advised that based on research and consultation the draft Territorial Just Transition Plan will identifies needs and associated actions to modernise the business environment, enhance skills, promote environmental sustainability and industrial heritage, and promote the region as place to live and work.</p> <p>He informed the members that Offaly County Council is preparing a submission and he invited feedback on same from the Elected Members. The Territorial Just Transition Plan will then be submitted to the EU commission for approval.</p> <p>Cllr. E. Dooley joined with the members in thanking Mr. S. Duclot, Ms. A. Dillon, Mr. A. Murray and Ms Orla Martin for their work and he highlighted that it is important to make our views known and he encouraged submissions from the public.</p>
<p>MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT</p>	<p>Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive brought the members attention to the monthly management report. She advised that there will be a housing presentation at the February meeting. She welcomed the successful grant application for the outdoor</p>

	<p>recreation development in Clara and Derrycastle Lakes, and the Town and Village Renewal funding to develop a master plan for Clara. She highlighted the success of the Rural regeneration schemes in Edenderry and Ferbane and other funding streams such as Built Heritage in the development of Birr Court House.</p> <p>She advised the members that the Local Enterprise Office continue to provide services and support to businesses and tenders are being sought for and Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 2027. She acknowledged the demand for business sites.</p> <p>Cllr. S. O’Brien expressed his concerns that the N52 Tullamore to Killbeggan link may not proceed as scheduled.</p> <p>Cllr. E. Dooley welcomed the funding for St Josephs Convent, Ferbane and acknowledged the waiver of Estate Agent Fees by Cllr. J. Leahy. He noted the the Offaly Local Development Company and Laois Offaly Education Training Board are showing interest in its development.</p> <p>Cllr. F. Moran welcomed the approval of grants for Clashawaun and the Clara master plan, the commitment to public consultation and the approval of Stage 1 for Sycamore Drive in Ballycumber. He sought an update on the Raheen Housing development and on the progress on the three houses obtained by Compulsory Purchase Orders in 2021.</p> <p>Cllr. K. Smollen sought an update on the Retrofit Programme and the situation for tenants in Lock House, Tullamore that have received a termination notice from their Landlord.</p> <p>Cllr. N. Cribbin thanked the team for their work in the approval of €2.1m funding for Edenderry.</p> <p>In response, Ms. A. Delaney advised the members that a meeting is due to take place in regard to the N52 and she will update them following same.</p> <p>Ms. S. Kennedy responded that the approval for Raheen Housing Development was submitted to the Department in December and no response has been received to date. She advised that two of the Compulsory Purchase Orders in Tullamore are progressing and she will revert back to members in regard to the third. She agreed that Housing will give a full presentation to the members in February including details of the Retrofit Programme and she advised that housing are aware of the issue at Lock House View. Some of the houses are within social housing leasing arrangements and the housing officer is dealing with those currently.</p>
<p>CORPORATE POLICY GROUP REPORT</p>	<p>Cllr. D. Harvey, Cathaoirleach, advised the members that at the Corporate Policy Group Meeting they discussed the agenda for today’s meeting.</p>

