

**Minutes of the Special Joint Meeting of the
Clane & Celbridge Area Committees
Held at 11am on Monday 29th July 2013
In the Council Chamber, Aras Chill Dara**

Members Present: Councillors Frank O'Rourke, John McGinley, Senan Griffin, Kevin Byrne, Colm Purcell, Anthony Larkin, Theresa Byrne, Brendan Weld, Liam Doyle, Seamus Langan and Padraig McEvoy

Also Present: Michael O'Leary, A/Director of Service, Sonya Kavanagh, Senior Executive Officer, Jonathan Deane, Area Engineer, Michael Kenny, Senior Planner, Wesley Keogh, Assistant Planner, David Conway and Sinead Gavin, Roughan O'Donovan

To consider the draft Part 8 Managers Report for the development of a shared pedestrian and cycle greenway facility, Canal Harbour, Maynooth to Kildare/Meath border.

Michael O'Leary, A/Director of Service, apologised to the members for the delay in circulating the Managers Report and reminded them that this was due to the tight deadline around the funding of the project. The Director advised the members that there had been three Part 8 processes en train in Counties Kildare, Meath and Westmeath. Two had already been completed and this was the last section of the proposed route. The proposed development covered approximately 17 kms from Maynooth to Moyvalley and funding had been committed to the project by the NRA. The Manager's report confirmed that the proposed development will be in compliance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The Director recommended the scheme to the members and invited questions.

Cllr. McGinley stated that he had serious misgivings regarding the proposed scheme. He was concerned that walkers, who currently enjoyed the amenity of

the canal, may be intimidated by speeding cyclists using the path. He was also concerned about the integrity of some portions of the college wall and the proposed width of certain sections of the path.

Cllr. Griffin welcomed the scheme. He felt that quarry dust was the optimum surface dressing for all concerned as it would limit the speed that cyclists could travel.

Cllr. Byrne also had concerns about pedestrians and cyclists sharing the facility. She felt that it was important that all those using this amenity respected each other.

Cllr. Weld agreed with Cllr. McGinley that the college wall needed to be inspected. He also raised the issue of the loss of car parking spaces in Kilcock and asked about the proposed works around the junction in Kilcock. He acknowledged that there were concerns around pedestrians and cyclists sharing the space but overall he welcomed the scheme.

Cllr. Purcell noted that different groups (anglers, school groups, walkers) currently access the amenity of the canal and he felt that these groups should not be adversely affected by speeding cyclists. He suggested the use of bye-laws to regulate the shared space.

Cllr. L. Doyle felt that the proposed scheme was new and innovative and would have a positive impact on the area by attracting tourists and improving paths at the canal that needed to be improved. He stated that no one group should have a monopoly over the use of this amenity. Good manners would be expected from all people using the space. He also commented on an area of particular concern where the path was moving from the north bank to the south bank. He felt that this was a retrograde step and offered to assist in terms of negotiations with landowners in order to resolve any outstanding issues. The issue of horses

using the space was also raised. Cllr. Doyle felt that they should be allowed to use the space.

Cllr. McEvoy stated that he was largely supportive of the scheme. He noted that the scheme was geared towards leisure cycling rather than racing and that good behaviour would be expected from all parties. He enquired as to the possibility of some post implementation monitoring. With regard to the loss of spaces in Kilcock he enquired if spaces could be created elsewhere. He also welcomed the proposed linkage between Killcok and Maynooth as there were no existing public transport links between the towns.

J. Deane, Area Engineer, then responded to the issues raised by the elected members. He reminded the members that the NRA were promoting this scheme to encourage tourism and not as a commuter type scheme. He said that there was a proposal to develop a second scheme from Maynooth to Dublin and the focus of that particular scheme would be on creating commuting routes.

With regard to the issue of the shared space and the possibility of cyclists speeding etc. he referenced other schemes in Ireland where the shared space was working very well and there was very positive feedback given in this regard. It was noted that college wall was in fair repair and would benefit from maintenance. It was also noted that the wall was already in a publicly accessible place.

In relation to Kilcock; both the treatment of the junction and the loss of parking spaces; J. Deane stated that the area could be looked at to determine if there was capacity to compensate for the lost spaces elsewhere. With regard to the junction he stated that the junction was already completely saturated at peak commuting times and that the installation of traffic lights (as proposed in the scheme) would greatly improve the efficiency of the junction.

On the issue of horses, J. Deane stated that it was already the policy of Waterways Ireland that horses should not be using the towpaths and the gates along the proposed development would not be “horse friendly”.

Cllr. Langan stated that he welcomed the project but he would be disappointed if horses could not use the space.

Cllr. L. Doyle asked if the use of the facility by horses could be reconsidered. He also asked that (a) the members of the Clane Area Committee be shown the model for the proposed new junction in Kilcock, and (b) the inclusion of a loading bay be considered in the Harbour area. It was agreed both of these issues would be looked at. Cllr. Doyle also asked about the possibility of the route being upgraded to a commuting route and asked who he should make representations to.

Cllr. McGinley stated that he was interested in hearing about other locations where this type of development is already in place and working. He hoped that this would be the case but he felt that he must voice the concerns of walkers who already frequent this area. He would not be in favour of this route being used for commuting as he felt that the amenity of the area would be lessened by such a development.

Cllr. Griffin suggested that bins be included along the route to encourage dog walkers to dispose of dog waste appropriately. He also suggested that at each of the entry points to the route there should be signage / notices with clear instructions regarding the use of the route.

Cllr. Larkin stated that he was fully in support of the scheme. He felt that the construction stage would bring financial benefits to the locality and that, when opened, the route would bring economic benefits and health benefits. He felt that the benefits far outweighed any suggested negatives.

Cllr. O'Rourke informed the meeting that he was supportive of the scheme. He felt that the investment was very much welcome and would have a positive effect on the area. He also offered to assist / help the project along in anyway that he could.

Cllr. Griffin then recommended that the proposed development be considered by full Council that afternoon. Cllr. O'Rourke seconded the proposal.

The meeting then concluded.