

**Minutes of Athy Municipal District Meeting held at 10.15 am on
18 July 2016 in Athy Municipal District Office, Rathstewart, Athy,
Co. Kildare**

Members Present: Councillor A Breslin (Cathaoirleach), Councillors M Dalton, I Keatley, T Redmond and M Wall

Apologies: Councillor M Miley

Officials Present: Mr J Boland (District Manager), Mr D O'Flaherty (District Engineer), Ms E Wright (Senior Executive Officer), Ms C Lyons and Mr W Hannigan (Senior Executive Engineers), Mr S Cunningham (Staff Officer), Ms M Dalton (Meetings Administrator) and Ms O Mooney (Secretary)

After the annual meeting commenced, Councillor Breslin had to leave the meeting. Councillor Keatley took the chair. Councillor Breslin asked that her motions and questions be proposed in her absence.

AY03/1607

Minutes and Progress Report

The members considered the minutes of the special meeting held on 27 June 2016 and monthly meeting of Athy Municipal District meeting held on 20 June, 2016.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Keatley, seconded by Councillor Wall, that the minutes be confirmed and taken as read. The progress report was noted.

Matters Arising

Road Preparations in the Athy Area for the National Cycling Championships taking place from 23-26 June 2016 (AY12/1606)

Councillor Keatley thanked the District Engineer and his staff for all the works carried out in preparation of these championships.

Briefing from Respond Housing Association on proposed development at Flinter's Field (AY01/1605)

Councillor Redmond asked for an update in regard to house sizes for this development. The meetings administrator informed the members that Mr McLoughlin, Acting Senior Executive Officer, Housing was unable to attend the meeting today but she would refer this issue to him and a report would be circulated to the members.

Bord na Mona - Meeting Request (AY30/1602)

Councillor Redmond stated that the members were waiting months to hear from this organisation and that follow-up letters had issued. He asked that a further letter issue to Bord na Mona asking them to attend the September meeting to discuss the use of boglands in the Athy Municipal District when milling of peat was finished in 2028.

Bridge at Distillery Court, Monasterevin (AY13/1505)

Councillor Redmond asked for an update on this matter. Mr Cunningham stated that contact had been made with Liberty and they have contacted their engineers. Mr Hannigan stated that he would be meeting with the Engineers next week and that he would consult with the residents. He stated that the members would be kept updated.

Tomard Road (AY08/1602)

Councillor Wall asked for an update on this matter. He noted that this matter was to be put on a list for funding. He stated that the road surface was in need of repair. The District Engineer said that works had been carried out on this road a number of years ago and that there were no plans to do any further work at the present time. He added that he cannot update the railway bridge and that works had been carried out on the Bert Cross to Geraldine Cross in recent times and that traffic should be diverted onto this road.

Coill Diarmada - Ard na Laoi (end site) and Ardan na Coille (bonfire site) (AY09/1409)

Councillor Wall asked for an update on this matter. The District Manager stated that he would make himself available to meet with the residents and that these cases were before the Athy District Court last week but were deferred to the September Court.

Taking in Charge of Priory Village Estate in Calverstown (AY22/1604)

In reply to Councillor Wall's query on whether the storm drains would be cleaned, the District Engineer stated that this work was completed.

Upgrade of road from Junction with N78 with the R428 Stradbally Road, Woodstock out to Cardington (AY11/1606)

Councillor Wall asked for an update on this matter. He stated that there were many bollards at this location. The District Engineer stated that works would commence in the coming weeks and that road surfacing would be carried out first and that public lighting would be looked into at a later stage.

Re-Development of Edmund Rice Square, Athy (AY14/1606)

Councillor Breslin asked for an update on this matter. The District Engineer stated that a draft plan had been drawn up and that the next step would be Part 8 consultation. The members to be kept informed.

Entrance to Woodstock Close at the traffic lights on the junction of the Fortbarrington Road and the N78 (AY07/1511)

Councillor Breslin thanked the District Engineer and his staff for works completed at this location.

Update on Community and Economic Development Issues - Regeneration Committee (AY04/1606).

The District Manager asked whether 9.30 am on Thursday 21 July 2016 in the Clonard Hotel would be suitable. The members stated that they were not available on that date and the District Manager stated that he would come back to them with an alternative date.

Increase Staff Numbers in Municipal District Roads Section (AY15/1606)

Councillor Keatley asked for an update on this matter. The members were informed that three gateway workers were recruited for the summer period but there was no further update on long-term replacements at present. Ms Wright stated that she noted the members concerns about extra staffing for the municipal district office. She stated that the Director of Transportation had internal discussions recently and she undertook to revert back to the members with an update for the next meeting.

Safety Measures - Kildangan Bridge, Kildangan (AY08/1606)

Councillor Redmond asked for an update on this matter and Councillor Wall asked whether funding had been identified. The District Engineer stated that the council would have to work with other bodies and the community as many large agricultural machinery use this bridge.

Councillor Wall asked for a commitment that the Part 8 would be brought to the September meeting. Members to be updated at next meeting.

AY04/1607

Update on the Schedule of Municipal District Works

The District Engineer gave a comprehensive report of the works being carried out as part of the restoration maintenance works for the Athy Municipal District including bituminous overlay of roads at Passlands, Monasterevin, Duneany, Oghill and Clonegath. Preparation and surface dressing of roads at Riverstown, Ashgrove, Larchill and preparation of roads at Halverstown, Killinane, Baronsland, Ballymount, Ballybarney and Calverstown. Municipal District street sweeping and litter bin collection plan has been implemented. Comprehensive maintenance operations undertaken throughout the south of the county. Work has been completed on local property tax footpath in Castledermot. The District Engineer clarified that he had money for storm drain works for damaged roads. Councillor Keatley noted the completion of the footpath in Castledermot and he thanked the District Engineer and his staff in this regard. The report was noted.

AY05/1607

Athy Distributor Road

Ms Lyons updated the members and stated that the draft variation was submitted. She added that a word document had been circulated to the members and would be published over a four week period. She added that a planning report would be produced and would be submitted in October to full council and Athy Municipal District. The route selection report would be officially published in late August to the members and they would be ready to send the application to An Bord Pleanala by the end of the year. The project was proceeding well and on target at this stage.

AY06/1607

Improvement Works and install a footpath on the road that links the R418 and the L4007

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Breslin:

That the council carry out improvement works and also install a footpath on the road that links the R418 to the L4007.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Wall and seconded by Councillor Keatley.

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that the road that links the R418 and the L4007 was the L40071-1. This road was only taken over by the council from Athy Town Council in the last two years. What was required here was a realignment of the existing road, footpaths and lighting can be added on as development occurs. While this matter had been referred to Road Design for examination, there are current finance and resource constraints.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Wall, seconded by Councillor Keatley that the report be taken as read as Councillor Breslin was not present and that the matter remain on the progress report.

AY07/1607

Development of a Policy and Progress Projects for Woodstock Forum Area of Athy

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Wall:

That the council develop a policy and progress projects through its Municipal District Office , Environment Section and Parks Section for the Woodstock forum area of Athy, considering the great work being carried out by the Resident Associations there.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Wall and seconded by Councillor Redmond.

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that the Municipal District Office deals primarily with road maintenance issues, and supports in principle a policy and a plan for the future in the Woodstock Area. As the roads section is currently restricted by resource and financial issues, the lead on such a project may be best placed in the Athy Regeneration Project.

Councillor Wall stated that he had previously spoken with the Parks Superintendent in this regard and he had given him his commitment to support clean-ups. He added that the residents were out daily cleaning up the estates and he congratulated them for all their ongoing work. He stated that Woodstock Forum would need to work more closely with the council in order to get funding needed to help with these clean-ups. He added that funding should be allocated to residents associations to assist with clean-ups when required and local press had included photographs promoting the residents associations hard work over the last couple of weeks.

The District Manager stated that the Environment Section had a procedure in place to support clean-ups in estates.

The District Engineer stated that the road section do assist with clean-ups but stated that their core work was road maintenance and that the matter would need to be led by the Environment/Parks Section and not roads section.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Wall, seconded by Councillor Redmond that funding be sought to help with clean-up of estates.

AY08/1607

Development of a Policy or Assist local community alerts in the maintaining of sight lines at junctions throughout the Athy Area

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Wall:

Can the council develop a policy or assist local community alerts in the maintaining of sight lines at junctions throughout the Athy area given the problems being highlighted at the moment?

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that the Athy Municipal District Office does not have the resources to commit to such an undertaking in relation to junctions throughout the Athy area.

Councillor Wall stated that he had spoken with the District Engineer regarding salting works and he was contacted by Community Alerts regarding overgrown grass at junctions causing problems with sight lines. He asked that junctions be cleared and maybe the council could involve the local community to help.

The District Engineer stated that when the council work with communities, you can get the best results. However, issues with regard to indemnity would be huge issue and the matter would have to be looked into by our Risk Management Section. The members to be updated at their next meeting.

AY09/1607

Minutes of Silence - Nice Tragedy

On the proposal of Councillor Dalton, seconded by Councillor Keatley that as it was 11.00, a minute silence be taken. The deputy cathaoirleach stated that the Book of Condolence would

be opened in Naas in the afternoon. The members extended their sympathies to all those involved in the tragic events in Nice over the last week.

AY10/1607

Resurfacing of the R424 from Passlands in Monasterevin

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Wall:

Can the council confirm when they will re-surface the R424 from Passlands in Monasterevin and if they will consider strengthening the road?

A report was received from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Section informing the members that the R424 was scheduled for resurfacing in the coming weeks. The road had to be strengthened in a number of areas before resurfacing takes place in August. The report was noted.

AY11/1607

Update on the improvements on the sewerage network planned for Narraghmore

The District Manager stated that an Engineer's report had been presented to the council and that the works were extensive but the scope of works were well set out. Some works may not be necessary and there was some funding available from a bond. He stated he had asked Alan Dunney, Senior Executive Officer to meet with Irish Water to discuss funding and scope of works. He added that this work was going to tender shortly. Mr Hannigan stated that the Engineer's report was very comprehensive and that the meeting should be taking place later in the week. He stated that this project was going in the right direction and that tankering would still continue. The District Manager stated that funding would not be a barrier to getting this project progressed. The members to be kept updated.

AY12/1607

Former Model School - Athy

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Wall:

That the council confirms, as previously discussed, the up to date position with the former Model School in Athy and its possible future.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Wall and seconded by Councillor Dalton.

A report was received from the District Manager informing the members that the council was in discussions with the owner of the building, as well as the Kildare Wicklow Educate

Together Board (KWETB) with a view to progressing a possible initiative. The members would be kept informed.

Councillor Wall stated he was delighted to see the roof fixed on this school and was happy that the integrity of the building was maintained. He stated that the barriers need to be removed from around the building and the building re-opened for use. Councillor Dalton stated that the model school was one of the jewels of the town and that he was absolutely determined to restore the building for public use. The District Manager stated that the building was not owned by the council but he agreed with the members. He stated that the council had been involved behind the scenes and he added that the costs would be very high to restore this building.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Wall, seconded by Councillor Dalton that the members be updated at the next meeting.

AY13/1607

Taking in charge of the following private housing estate - Cluain Bhearu, Athy

The members considered a report from the planning department to approve the taking in charge of Cluain Bhearu, Athy.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Wall, seconded by Councillor Dalton and agreed by all the members that Cluain Bhearu, Athy be taken in charge.

AY14/1607

Restoration of the Memorial Seat to the late Councillor Noel Scully

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Breslin:

Can the members have the up to date position of the restoration of the memorial seat to the late Councillor Noel Scully?

The District Engineer stated that this seat would be replaced next week.

AY15/1607

Horse Project in Athy Area

The members considered the following motion in the name of Councillor Breslin:

That the council enter into discussions with the Kildare Traveller Action Group to identify land in the council's ownership that would be suitable for a horse project in the Athy area. (A similar project has been rolled out by Kilkenny County Council).

The motion was proposed by Councillor Wall and seconded by Councillor Keatley.

A report was received from the District Manager informing the members that the council was currently in discussions with the Department of Agriculture and Kildare Leader Partnership regarding a possible initiative in the area of equine education in the Athy area. This would not, however, involve the identification of any lands. This initiative, should it progress, would likely be coordinated by the council's community section.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Wall, seconded by Councillor Keatley that report be taken as read.

AY16/1607

Self Help Scheme 2016

The members considered the following question in the name of Councillor Breslin:

Can a date be given for the commencement of the 2016 Self Help Scheme?

A report was received from the Housing Section informing the members that the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government had sanctioned our request for a staff resource to administer the self-help scheme. Confirmation was awaited from our Human Resources Department as to when the member of staff would be assigned to the housing department. The scheme would become operational as soon as the member of staff was in place. The report was taken as read.

AY17/1607

Accident and Emergency (A&E) Services at Naas and Portlaoise Hospitals

The members considered the following motion in the names of Councillors Breslin, Dalton, Keatley, Miley, Redmond and Wall:

Given the reports in various media outlets over the last number of days , the members of the Athy Municipal District call on all those with responsibility, to maintain all accident and emergency (A&E) services at Naas and Portlaoise hospitals.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Redmond and seconded by Councillor Wall.

The members noted letter dated 28 June 2016 from Dr Susan O'Reilly, Chief Executive Officer, Health Service Executive stating that the draft plan had been submitted to the Health Service Executive and to the Department of Health and further work was ongoing to finalise this document prior to any final decision on the future design of service provision at Portlaoise Hospital.

Councillor Redmond stated that nine trauma units were to be closed and he asked that this report be publicised immediately.

Councillor Wall stated that general practices and primary care units need to be accessible and fit for use for minor injuries not to be taking up places in A & Es and that accident and emergency units should not be taken away until this happens.

Councillor Dalton asked for clarity. He hoped that the new Minister for Health would get a grip of the health service as it needs to have proper structure and needs reform as it was a vital service.

The members asked that a letter issue to the Minister for Health and the Health Service Executive stating their concerns in regard to the draft plan and that this report be published immediately.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Redmond, seconded by Councillor Wall that a letter issue to the Minister for Health and the Dr Susan O'Reilly, Health Service Executive stating the members concerns in regard to the draft plan and requesting that this report be published immediately.

The meeting then concluded.