

## KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

### **Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Kildare County Council Held at 2.00p.m on Monday, 25 May 2015 At Rathangan Community Centre, Rathangan, Co Kildare**

**Members Present:** Councillor F O'Loughlin (Mayor), Councillors A Breslin, A Breen, F Brett, K Byrne, B Caldwell, D Callaghan, R Cronin, W Crowley, I Cussen, M Dalton, S Doyle, T Durkan, D Fitzpatrick, B Hillis, I Keatley, A Larkin, J Lawless, P McEvoy, P Kennedy, J McGinley, F McLoughlin-Healy, M Lynch, M. Miley Jnr, S Moore, T Murray, J Neville, N O'Cearuil, F O'Rourke, S O'Neill, J Pender, R Power, T Redmond, D Scully, M Stafford, M Wall, P Ward, B Weld and B Young

**Apologies:** S Power

**Also Present:** Mr. P Carey, Chief Executive, Messrs. J Boland, E O'Sullivan, P Minnock and T McDonnell, (Directors of Services), Ms. E Hanlon (Head of Finance), Ms. S Kavanagh (A/Director of Services), Ms. A. Aspell (Meetings Administrator) and other officials.

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The Mayor welcomed the members and staff to Rathangan for the May meeting of Kildare County Council. She paid tribute to Community Centre committee and made a presentation to Mairead Broderick thanking her and the committee for all their work in preparing for this occasion.

The Mayor described the historic building which was once a functioning church, then a school and centre for business. It is situated in the heart of Rathangan and fell into bad repair circa 15 years ago. She thanked the Leader Company for their funding towards the renovation and also Kildare County Council staff, Peter Minnock, Sharon Whelan and JP Holligan for their foresight and perseverance in sourcing further funding through the St Patrick's Park regeneration project. She said that the community is delighted to have this building and described the Youth Cafe and Yoga Room together with the Community Hall. She thanked the members for their courtesy and support in agreeing to the venue.

Councillor Stafford, also a native of Rathangan, welcomed the members and staff to Rathangan. He said that Councillor Kennedy, who is also from Rathangan, attended school in this building for two years. He said that he was proud of Rathangan and a little sad at the damaging impact that the downturn has had on the Main Street, but that he looked forward to the economic recovery and to the positive impact the Blueway will have in Rathangan.

## **01/0515**

### **Adoption of minutes**

The council considered the minutes of the 27 April 2015 together with the progress report.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Caldwell, seconded by Councillor O'Cearuil, that the minutes of 27 April 2015 be adopted and the progress report noted.

### **Matters Arising**

Councillor Cussen referred to record 16/0415 in relation to the 1916 Centenary Commemorations asking that it be amended to state that the message had not been communicated regarding the 1916 commemoration and the public need to be informed how to apply for the Glór na Cásca initiative.

**Resolved** With the agreement of the Mayor and members that the record be amended as outlined above.

Councillor Redmond referred to record 05/0415 and asked for clarification around the location of a bus hub in Naas. Mr O'Sullivan informed Councillor Redmond that the location for the proposed bus hub was in Market Square, Naas.

## **02/0515**

### **Disposal of Land**

To approve disposal of the following land:

#### **0.0294 ha of land at Kilbelin, Newbridge, Co Kildare**

The council considered statutory notice dated 13 May 2015 which had been circulated to the members pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 signifying intent to dispose of 0.0294 ha of land at Kilbelin, Newbridge, Co. Kildare

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Miley, seconded by Councillor Fitzpatrick, that pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, the council consent to disposal of the land in accordance with the terms set out in the statutory notice.

#### **0.0380 ha of land at Kilbelin, Newbridge, Co Kildare**

The council considered statutory notice dated 13 May 2015 which had been circulated to the members pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 signifying intent to dispose of 0.0380 ha of land at Kilbelin, Newbridge, Co. Kildare

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Miley, seconded by Councillor Fitzpatrick, that pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, the council consent to disposal of the land in accordance with the terms set out in the statutory notice.

### **03/0515**

#### **Management Report**

The members considered the monthly Management Report.

**Resolved** that the Monthly Management Report be noted.

### **04/0515**

#### **Date for annual meeting**

In accordance with standing orders, the Mayor proposed that the annual meeting shall be held on the last Friday in June, which is 26 June 2015.

**Resolved** On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Breen, that the annual meeting be held at 2pm on 26 June 2015.

### **05/0515**

#### **Mayor's Business**

The Mayor reminded members of the special meeting of Council scheduled for Monday, 8 June 2015 to prepare an integrated response to the planning application for the Maighne Wind Farm project currently before An Bord Pleanála.

An ecumenical service for deceased members and staff will be held on Friday, 5 June 2015.

The Mayor attended the launch of SMART which is an initiative from the GAA clubs of Sarsfields, Moorefield, Allenwood, Round Towers. The clubs have joined forces in the fight against cancer in a charity football match due to be held on Saturday, 30 May 2015.

The Mayor attended the launch of the Playground and Outdoor gym and Skate Park in Athy which is a fabulous facility funded by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, Kildare County Council and the former Athy Town Council.

The Mayor commended the Intel Volunteer Recognition day. This is an initiative where Intel matches every voluntary hour with a donation of \$10/hour. €493,000 has been given out to 153 organisations around the country with €250,000 being given to organisations in Kildare.

The Mayor attended the North Kildare Expo on behalf of the members.

The Mayor reminded members that the closing date for submissions on the County Development Plan is 29 May 2015 and she commended the work of the staff in the Planning Department in facilitating the workshops throughout the county.

The Mayor attended the workshop for the Decade of Commemoration Committee held in the Osprey Hotel and congratulated the work of the committee

The Mayor commended Neil Jackman, Executive Director of Travel Guides Ltd and Abarta Audioguides and actor Liam Quinlivan for the launch of a Monastic Trails App.

The Mayor attended the IFA dinner dance and spoke of the significance of farming and agriculture for Kildare

The Mayor attended the launch of Biodiversity week in Lullymore.

**06/0515**

**Votes of Sympathy**

Sympathy is extended to the family of the late:

Mr Gerry O'Brien, brother of Aisling O'Brien, Motor Tax

Ms Bernadine Flanagan, sister of Madeleine Flanagan, Environment Section

Mrs Noleen Aspell, mother-in-law of Annette Aspell, Corporate Services

**07/0515**

**Conferences and Training**

The Meetings Administrator referred to report dated 25 April 2015 circulated to the members regarding conference and training events in accordance with Section 53(2) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

**Resolved** On the proposal of Councillor Caldwell, seconded by Councillor O'Rourke, that the members approve the attendance of

Members (to be decided) at the AILG Training in Longford on 13 June 2015

Councillor Hillis at the AILG training in Roscommon on 23 June 2015 and

retrospectively approve the attendance of Councillors Dalton, Ward, Brett and Crowley at the AILG training in the Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise on 21 May 2015.

**08/0515**

**Format of Monthly Meeting**

The following motion in the name of Councillor Moore was considered

That the present format for the monthly meeting of 40 elected members in the council is unfit for business purposes and should be re-assessed by management and the Protocol Committee in favour of a greater screening and processing of motions before they come to full council. Full council meetings should be used to approve policy changes, to agree final business decisions and to give support to proposals and recommendations that have received adequate and proper debate at lower committee levels of Kildare Local Government. Emergency motions would be the exception.

This motion was proposed by Councillor Moore and seconded by Councillor Dalton.

A report from Mr O'Sullivan, Director of Services stated that the business and proceedings at meetings of the council are regulated by standing orders as adopted by the members. Standing orders for meetings of the plenary council have been reviewed and amended on three occasions since April 2014 in order to accommodate changes to the local government system arising from the increase in membership of Kildare County Council and the introduction of municipal districts. Review and amendment of standing orders is a matter for the members. Normal practice has been that amendments are in the first instance considered by the Protocol Committee and, once an agreed position has been reached by this committee, submitted to full council for consideration and adoption of revised standing orders. The current set of standing orders was adopted by the plenary council on 26 November 2014. With regard to motions for meetings of the plenary council, standing orders allow for each member to submit one motion per meeting with priority being given to motions relating to council functions over those relating to non-council functions.

Councillor Moore thanked the Director for the report and said that it would be appropriate to consider his motion at the Protocol committee. He said that there are now 40 elected members and that with each member entitled to table a motion and speak on that motion for 5 minutes in accordance with standing orders, and other members entitled to speak for 2 minutes on each motion, it is extremely difficult to get through the agenda within the time frame of 4 hours. Councillor Moore asked the members for their support on the motion and to consider alternatives such as committee stage discussion and/or the Strategic Policy Committees meeting once every month rather than every three months as is the current practice.

The Mayor said she had some sympathy with the motion and referred to a recent decision of publishing the minutes of the Strategic Policy Committees on the MembersNet as being positive and agreed with the report from the Director which advised that the motion could be considered by the Protocol Committee.

The members debated the motion with some expressing disappointment and stating that it was in direct conflict with local government reform and in particular, the Putting People First document while others agreed with the sentiments of the motion but were concerned as to how it could be implemented. The Protocol Committee have put through several amendments to Standing Orders in the last 10 months as evidenced in the report from the Director. There was disagreement among members as to whether to vote on the motion now or await the recommendation of the Protocol committee.

Mr O'Sullivan, Director of Services, advised the members that there was a balance to be achieved and that the motion should be considered by the Protocol Committee who would advise the full council who would then be in a position to vote

Councillor Young proposed that a vote be taken now on the motion. This was seconded by Councillor Redmond.

**Resolved** with 8 members voting in favour, 28 members voting against and 2 abstentions, the proposal to vote on the motion was defeated.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor O'Loughlin, that this motion be referred to the Protocol Committee for consideration and report.

## 09/0515

### Support for Comhairle na nOg events

The following motion in the name of Councillor McGinley was considered

That this council supports Comhairle na nÓg's Let's Go Mental events throughout the county.

This motion was proposed by Councillor McGinley and seconded by Councillor Brett.

A report circulated to the members stated that the Kildare Comhairle Na Nog County Panel are planning their Let's Go Mental event which will/may take place on October 21st (provisional date). Kildare County Council will be working with the panel to give support where necessary. An update can be given when a detailed programme is agreed. Information on Let's Go Mental is available on the following website: <http://www.comhairlenanog.ie/lets-go-mental/>.

Councillor McGinley stated that 31 regional events were planned from June to October, there will be a launch in June and he encouraged all members to support the initiative. There was general agreement among the members to supporting the Let's Go Mental initiative.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor McGinley, seconded by Councillor Brett, with all the members in agreement the motion was carried.

**10/0515**

**Community Gain Policy**

The following motion in the name of Councillors McEvoy and Kennedy was considered  
That the council develop a community gain policy to ensure equity, oversight and best practice for community gain compensation schemes that may arise in relation to Strategic Infrastructure Development planning permissions.

This motion was proposed by Councillor McEvoy and seconded by Councillor Larkin.

A report from Mr Minnock, Director of Services, stated that Strategic Infrastructure Development planning applications are made to and adjudicated on by An Bord Pleanala who will determine the conditions attaching to any such applications. The members might wish to consider referring this item to the Local Community and Cultural SPC for further discussion. However it is worth noting that this may be premature in the event that no such compensation requirement is included in any relevant planning permission granted by the Board.

Councillor McEvoy thanked Mr Minnock for the report and stated that he would like to see a framework and policy in place.

A discussion on the motion followed and there was general agreement that there was merit in the proposal, but that it should not necessarily be linked to any one particular planning application. Mr Minnock cited the Drehid Scheme as a model for what can be done, but advised that we must be measured and have regard to the proper planning and development of the county. While there would be a benefit in having a framework, he agreed that it cannot be directed at any one particular application.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Larkin, with all the members in agreement, that the motion be referred to the Local Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee.

**11/0515**

**Annual Bursuary Award**

The following motion in the name of Councillors Larkin and Murray was considered  
That the council develop an annual bursary/grant, from 2016, to assist high performance sports competitors from County Kildare in achieving and sustaining international class in their field.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Larkin and seconded by Councillor Murray

A report from the Sports Partnership Co-Ordinator stated that funding under the Sports Partnership Programme is restricted to focusing on increasing participation in sport and physical activity for those who do not normally partake as laid out by the Irish Sports Council. If a Bursary or grant funding for High Performance or athletes who have achieved international status is requested members would have to come agree a budget from Council funds for 2016.

Councillor Larkin thanked Mr Merrins for the report and asked the members to support the motion. He said that, through the process, athletes would become ambassadors for the county. He said that we need to be in at the beginning of the process and that some athletes underperform because of the pressure of identifying funding to meet their goals.

Members contributed to a discussion generally supporting the motion and suggesting that it could be considered at the Local Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee and in the context of Budget 2016. Members agreed that the Kildare Sports Partnership had the expertise to manage such an initiative

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Larkin, seconded by Councillor Murray, with all the members in agreement, the motion to be referred to the Local Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee.

## **12/0515**

### **Pay Parking**

The following motion in the name of Councillor McLoughlin-Healy was considered  
That as part of the current, county wide parking review that the council give serious consideration to piloting Newbridge Chamber's proposal that they manage a new system of pay-parking in Newbridge. The proposed model could operate as a non-profit with a portion of the cost savings redistributed for the benefit of businesses in the Kildare-Newbridge Municipal District.

The motion was proposed by Councillor McLoughlin-Healy and seconded by Councillor Durkan.

A report from the Roads Transportation and Public Safety Department stated that the council is willing to consider all viable options in relation to the operation of Pay Parking and invited Newbridge Chamber to submit details of its proposal so that it can be examined.

Councillor McLoughlin-Healy stated that different pay parking schemes are in operation across the county. She said that the cost of the scheme in Newbridge was particularly high when compared to the Naas scheme. The last update was that there was a review of pay parking underway and Councillor McLoughlin-Healy asked what is the position on the review at the moment, has that



information been transferred to the Strategic Policy Committee and what is the position on the contract.

Members contributed to a lengthy discussion around the issue of pay parking and suggested that this motion was more appropriate for discussion at Municipal District level. There was agreement that one size does not fit all and caution was advised regarding the procurement process and it was very important that members are impartial and cannot be seen to have a preference for any provider over another.

Ms Kavanagh, A/Director of Services, stated that the current contract for a period of 1 year will be signed on 1st July. All viable options will be considered and the cost of the enforcement contract will come through a procurement process that will present best value for money that can be secured in the market as it stands. Ms Kavanagh stated that there is an overlap with the Strategic Policy Committee.

Councillor McLoughlin-Healy clarified that she was not necessarily stating that one size fits all. She is requesting a pilot project and she asked for an update on the information that she sought 10 months ago, but was informed that it was commercially sensitive.

Ms Kavanagh stated that in order to assess any proposal, it must be submitted. The pay parking contract will be signed on 1 July 2015 and, after that date, the information sought will be circulated. The Mayor stated that the motion cannot be considered because it was essential that there was accountability and openness in respect of public procurement.

**Resolved** That the report was noted.

**13/0515**

### **Age Friendly Initiative**

The following motion in the name of Councillor Lynch was considered

That this council, in an effort to demonstrate being an age friendly county, offers the freedom of the county to any person born or currently residing in County Kildare who reaches one hundred years of age and in addition the municipal district offers the same person the freedom of their local town upon reaching this same centenary year.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Lynch and seconded by Councillor O'Neill.

Councillor Lynch spoke on the merits of the proposal and said that such an award would respect the ability and willingness of the person to receive it.

There was general agreement for the spirit and sentiment of the motion, but the members agreed that it needed further research and examination before it could be considered by full Council. It was agreed that the motion should be referred to the Local Community and Culture Strategic Policy Committee. If such an award is agreed by full Council, it would be positive to have an agreed policy and protocol in place so that those people born in 1916 and reaching their 100th birthday in 2016 will receive recognition.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Lynch, seconded by Councillor O'Neill that the motion be referred to the Local Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee.

## **14/0515**

### **Development Levies**

The following motion in the name of Councillor Pender was considered

That the council outline what development levies are proposed to be vested to Irish Water and what debts, if any, are to be transferred to the utility and that the council retains all development levies relating to the period prior to the establishment of Irish Water.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Pender and seconded by Councillor Young

A report from Mr Boland, Director of Services, and Ms Hanlon, Head of Finance, outlined the statutory position as follows

With effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2014 Irish Water is responsible for public water services. The Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 provided for a range of matters consequent upon the transfer of functions in relation to public water services from local authorities to Irish Water. This includes the mechanisms for the transfer of assets and liabilities from local authorities. In particular, Section 12 (8) provides for the transfer of development levies received by local authorities for Water Services to be transferred to Irish Water and provides that such levies can only be expended by Irish Water in the functional area of the local authority concerned. On the 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2015, the Minister signed an Order in accordance with Section 12 of the Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 providing for the transfer from the local authorities to Irish Water of monies received or due to be received, in accordance with Section 48/49 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (i.e. development levies). While the foregoing gives the legal context for the transfer of these monies, the resulting financial transactions have not, as yet, been fully concluded. Considerable accounting work, however, has been carried out and matters are now close to a final resolution. In the case of Kildare County Council the position is as follows:-

<b>Balancing Statement 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014</b>	<b>€000</b>
Unallocated development levies collected	6,372
Less: Debts accrued/unfunded balances	<u>-2,837</u>
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>3,535</b>
Deduct contingency in respect of future liabilities (e.g. wayleaves to be finalised o/s legal accounts etc.)	-1,521
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<b>Net cash balance</b>	<b>2,014</b>

Attention is drawn to the members, in particular, to the requirements on the part of Irish Water to expend as such levies on capital projects in County Kildare. In this context, schemes approved in Irish Water's existing Capital Investment Programme (CIP) include:-

- Kildare Town Sewerage Scheme
- Newbridge Interceptor Sewer
- Osberstown Network
- Completion of existing projects e.g. Osberstown and Leixlip Wastewater Treatment Plants, upgrade to sewer and water network in North-East Kildare to facilitate economic development etc.

Councillor Pender thanked Mr Boland and Ms Hanlon for the report. She said that these figures do not give a clear indication of the actual amount of money transferred to Irish Water. The Minister has stated that the cost of Irish Water is €47m and the government is taking local authority funding to pay and the taxpayer is losing out. Councillor Pender questioned how many times the taxpayer has to pay.

A lengthy debate followed with members asking for confirmation of a review of the development levies scheme, the legality of transferring money to Irish Water, and the issue of Kildare County Council collecting money on behalf of Irish Water.

Mr Boland responded to the issues raised and stated that the process has been open and transparent. He stated that the transfer of funds relates to water and waste water only and that no other money will be transferred to Irish Water. All fixed assets will be transferred to Irish Water and Mr Boland outlined the statutory responsibilities of Kildare County Council and Irish Water.

Councillor Pender responded that the report does not reflect the position prior to the establishment of Irish Water. She asked for a vote on the motion.

The Mayor stated that there was not a requirement to vote on the motion as the report circulated to the members addressed the issues raised in the motion.

**Resolved** That the report be noted.

**15/0515**

**Compliance with Irish Language Act**

The following motion in the name of Councillor Cussen was considered:

The motion was proposed by Councillor Cussen and seconded by Councillor Redmond

That this council update the members on the status of the council in respect of the following and could we have details as to what steps we have taken to rectify the situation; The report for year 2014 presented by An Coimisinéir Teanga in March 2015 states that following an audit of the use of official languages on recorded oral announcements in use by local authorities that only two local authorities were found to be fully compliant (Donegal and Laois). Non compliant local authorities were asked to ensure compliance in as short a time-frame as possible

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

A report from Mr O'Sullivan, Director of Services, stated that the Official Languages Act 2003 requires local authorities to use the official language of the state on all stationery, signage and oral announcements both live and recorded. Kildare was one of a number of local authorities found to be in breach of a section of the Act with regard to our out of hour's voice mail messages. This situation has now been rectified and An Coimisineir Teanga notified.

Councillor Cussen thanked Mr O'Sullivan for the report. She said that she heard the discussion on KFM and was disappointed to hear that Kildare County Council was not compliant with the Act.

The members agreed that it was unfortunate that because of the embargo on recruitment, we do not have a full time Irish Language Officer. The members acknowledged the work of the Irish Language Committee and Denis McDermott, who is carrying out the functions of the Irish Language Officer on a part time basis.

**Resolved** That the report be noted.

**16/0515**

**Leased Council Property**

The following motion in the name of Councillor Redmond was considered

That this council furnish the members with details of what premises in County Kildare, be it land, buildings or facilities, are being leased to organisations or individuals. I am seeking a list of all the properties, the leasee of each, start date and duration of each lease and the annual amount of rent payable and have any of these leases lapsed.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Redmond and seconded by Councillor Lynch

A report from Mr O'Sullivan, Director of Services, stated that Kildare County Council has granted a large number of leases over the years for a number of purposes, including:

- Amenity leases to various sports, recreation and community groups.
- Industrial leases to sites / units in 4 industrial estates.
- Commercial leases to business premises.
- Farming leases for grazing and tillage.
- Ad hoc leases to third parties for specific purposes such as car-parking arrangements.

In addition to the above, a large number of housing leases have been granted since the introduction of the Shared Ownership Loan Scheme in the early 1990's. Kildare County Council has compiled a list of all leases that it is aware of. This list has 72 entries, excluding Shared Ownership leases. This figure also excludes leases currently being negotiated and/or service level agreements, which are a different form of contract. The 72 current leases vary in duration from 11 months to 250 years. The basis of rent calculation also varies with some figures based on agricultural land values. Unfortunately, details of the individuals and businesses involved cannot be circulated in a public forum due to data protection concerns. The same applies to rent figures, which are commercially sensitive. If members have queries on individual lease arrangements relating to particular sites or buildings, they can be submitted to Tracy Keogh in the Property Interest Register Section, who will endeavour to deal with them. The relevant contact details are: (045) 980688 and tkeogh@kildarecoco.ie.

A Property Interest Register Team has been established to record all property in council ownership. This is a significant task which is ongoing. Reports and updates on progress is provided to the Audit Committee throughout the project.

Councillor Redmond thanked Mr O'Sullivan for the report.

**Resolved** That the report be noted.

**17/0516**

### **Amendment of Standing Orders**

The following motion in the name of Councillor Cronin was submitted

That this council amend Standing Orders so that reports for meetings of full council be issued to members two working days as opposed to three days in advance of full meeting. This was recently changed from three working days to three days but receiving reports late on Fridays prior to the Monday meeting is proving unsatisfactory.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Cronin and seconded by Councillor Cussen.

A report from Mr O'Sullivan, Director of Services, stated that the current standing orders for the regulation of business and proceedings at meetings of the council, adopted by members at meeting of Kildare County Council on 26 November 2014, amended standing order no 14 to allow

reports for meetings issue to members 3 days in advance of a meeting as opposed to 3 working days. Standing Orders adopted by the previous council on 28 April 2014 had included the reference to the timeframe for issue of reports for the first time. The amendment was brought to full council last November, on the recommendation of the Protocol Committee, it having been demonstrated to that committee by the Executive, the difficulties that were being encountered in meeting the requirement to issue reports 3 working days in advance of a meeting, given the short turnaround time remaining between the issuing of an agenda and the issuing of the reports. Review and amendment of standing orders is a matter for the members. Normal practice has been that amendments are in the first instance considered by the Protocol Committee and, once an agreed position has been reached by this committee, submitted to full council for consideration and adoption of revised standing orders. In the interim the meetings administrator will endeavour to ensure that reports for meetings of the plenary council are issued in accordance with the current standing orders and, where possible, in advance of that timeframe.

Councillor Cronin thanked Mr O'Sullivan for the report and stated that she acknowledged that Kildare County Council lost over 30% of its staff over the past few years but she said that it was not satisfactory to get reports on Friday evening before the full council meeting on Monday. She noted that the reports for this meeting issued on Thursday afternoon and this was acceptable.

**Resolved** That the report be noted.

### **18/0515**

#### **Rural Post Offices**

The following motion in the name of Councillor O'Neill was considered:

That this council supports An Post postmasters' six point plan to save rural post offices and we relay that support to Government and the working group in currently reviewing post offices.

The motion was proposed by Councillor O'Neill and seconded by Councillor Cronin.

Councillor O'Neill referred to the Six Point Plan to sustain the Post Office network and support local communities:

- To recognise the post office network as a national asset
- To secure the role of post offices in delivering Department of Social Protection payments
- To provide funding for a standard bank account through the post office network
- To quantify the social role that post offices provide
- To instruct An Post to immediately cease any action, in relation to post and pay
- To carry out a comprehensive commercial review of the network

She asked the members for their support for the motion.

The members contributed to a discussion around the issue citing the detrimental effect of the closure of post offices on towns and villages in rural Ireland and several members complimented Councillor O'Neill for tabling this important motion.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor O'Neill, seconded by Councillor Cronin, with all the members in agreement the motion was carried.

## **19/0515**

### **Variable Interest Rates**

The following motion in the name of Councillor Young was considered

In the light of the bailed-out banks refusing to significantly reduce their variable interest rates to homeowners, the council declares that banks should work for society and not give primacy to profits for private shareholders and calls on the Minister for Finance to introduce legislation giving powers to the Central Bank to require banks that provide Irish residential mortgages to reduce their variable interest rates to levels not more than 0.5% above the Euribor rate, this being their effective cost of borrowing.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Young and seconded by Councillor Pender.

Councillor Young stated that the banks borrowed at the Euribor rate which is 0.01%. He stated that it was bizarre that the Central Bank does not want the power to instruct the banks to reduce their rates. The elected members are contacted on a daily basis by people who are facing repossession and there needs to be a response.

The members debated the motion, with reference being made to the previous motion from Councillor Moore which if it had been carried, would have resulted in this motion not being allowed on the agenda. Several members supported the spirit of the motion and empathised with families who are facing repossession.

The Mayor suggested to Councillor Young that he amend his motion as follows

In the light of the bailed-out banks refusing to significantly reduce their variable interest rates to homeowners, the council declares that banks should not give primacy to profits for private shareholders and calls on the Minister for Finance to introduce legislation giving powers to the Central Bank to require banks that provide Irish residential mortgages to reduce their variable interest rates to levels not more than 0.5% above the Euribor rate, this being their effective cost of borrowing.

The amendment was proposed by Councillor Young and seconded by Councillor Pender.

**Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Pender, with 19 members voting in favour, 7 members voting against and 5 members abstaining, the amended motion was carried.

The Mayor thanked the members and staff and all who attended the meeting in Rathangan today. She paid particular tribute to Noel Gorman, Facilities Manager, Annette Aspell, Meetings Administrator and her staff for their help and co-operation in making it all happen in such an efficient manner. She said that it was a proud day for her as her grandfather Joseph was a member of the first Kildare County Council and her father Jimmy was elected Chairman of Kildare County Council on three occasions, in 1984, 1989 and 1991.

The meeting concluded.

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