

Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Kildare County Council
held at 2.00p.m on Monday, 30 November 2015
at Áras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare

Members Present: Councillor B Weld (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, P Kennedy, A Larkin, P McEvoy, J Lawless, J McGinley, F McLoughlin-Healy, M Miley Jnr, S Moore, T Murray, J Neville, N O’Cearuil, F O’Loughlin, S O’Neill, J Pender, R Power, S Power, T Redmond, D Scully, M Stafford, M Wall, and B Young

Apologies: Councillors M Lynch, F O’Rourke and P Ward

Also Present: Mr P Carey, Chief Executive, Messrs E O’Sullivan, T McDonnell, P Minnock. N Morrissey, J Boland (Directors of Services), Ms E Hanlon (Head of Finance), Ms A. Aspell (Meetings Administrator) and other officials.

01/1115

Votes of Sympathy

The Mayor welcomed everybody to the meeting and called for a few moments reflection. He said that today marked the first anniversary of the late Councillor Willie Callaghan and his colleagues will remember him in their reflection.

Councillor Caldwell expressed condolences to the family of the late Michael Rogers a former member of Leixlip Town Council who died yesterday.

The Mayor and members expressed sympathy to the family of the late:

Mr John Russell, father of Lucina Russell, Library Services

Mrs Meta Mullaney wife of the former secretary of Kildare County Council, John Mullaney

Victims of the Paris attack

Oliver Dunne, brother of Liam Dunne, Environment Department

Patrick (Pat) O’Shea, father of Deirdre Ryan, Environment Department.

02/1115

Adoption of minutes

The council considered the minutes of the monthly meeting of 19 October 2015 and special meeting of 5 November 2015 together with the progress report.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Wall, seconded by Councillor Caldwell, that the minutes of the monthly meeting of 19 October 2015 and special meeting of 5 November 2015 be adopted and the progress report noted.

Matters Arising

Councillor Keatley asked the Mayor to confirm that the special meeting of 5 November 2015 to discuss the Development Contributions Scheme was not in committee and that the press had been invited to that meeting. Councillor McEvoy said that he heard it stated at a public meeting that this meeting was in committee and he would be glad to have the status clarified. The Mayor confirmed that the Development Contributions meeting held on 5 November 2015 was a statutory meeting and not an in committee meeting. The scheme had to be reviewed at the direction of the Minister and it was a public open meeting.

03/1115

Disposal of Land

To approve the disposal of the following land:

0.021ha of land at Ballintine, Kilmeague, Co. Kildare.

0.021ha of land at Ballintine, Kilmeague from Kildare County Council to Mrs Connie Keaveney in return for €100 plus the transfer of 0.029 ha of land from Mrs Keaveney to Kildare County Council. In accordance with Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, statutory notice dated 27 October 2015 was circulated to the members.

Resolved On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Fitzpatrick pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, the Council consent to the disposal of the land in accordance with the statutory notice dated 27 October 2015.

Lease of 6.14 acres of land in St. Patrick's Park, Celbridge

Lease of 6.14 acres of land for 99 years at St Patrick's Park, Celbridge, to Celbridge Town Football Club for a sum of €350 per annum. In accordance with Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, statutory notice dated 27 October 2015 was circulated to the members

Resolved On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Fitzpatrick, pursuant to

Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, the Council consent to the lease as set out in the statutory notice dated 27 October 2015.

04/1115

Vacancy on the Environmental Services and Water Strategic Policy Committee

A report dated 13 October 2015 was circulated to the members informing them that correspondence has been received from the Environmental Pillar advising that Mr David Walsh has resigned from the Environmental Services and Water Strategic Policy Committee and that Ms Deirdre Lane has been chosen as their nominee to replace Mr Walsh.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor S Power, seconded by Councillor O'Cearuil, that Ms Deirdre Lane, 56, College Park, Newbridge, Co Kildare be appointed to the Environmental Services and Water Strategic Policy Committee.

05/1115

Management Report

Councillor Pender stated that information in relation to Housing which was specifically requested was not included in the Management Report. Councillor Cussen noted the vacant house report and said that there are two fire damaged houses which have been vacant since 2012 and this is not acceptable. She also queried the fact that the vacant houses in St Patrick's Park in Rathangan are not included in the vacant house report. Councillor Young requested clarification on the process for allocations to Voluntary Housing bodies. Councillor Wall questioned the time frame for the turnaround of vacant units and Councillor Redmond referred to the 5/6week turnaround which the Approved Housing Bodies were reaching.

Mr McDonnell, Director of Services, stated that the information referred to by Councillor Pender will be included in the December Management report. He said that the average time in Kildare for returning a vacant house to use was better than the national average. He confirmed that the houses at St Patrick's Park were not included on that report as they are part of a regeneration project and he said that he would speak to Councillor Young separately to explain that process.

Resolved That the Management Report be noted.

06/1115

Section 85 Agreements

The members considered draft agreement dated March 2015 between Kildare County Council and Carlow County Council in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001, for the purpose of Bridge Rehabilitation Works at N80 Ballintrane Bridge, N80 Boggan Bridge and N81 Clash Bridge.

Resolved On the proposal of Councillor Caldwell, seconded by Councillor Kennedy, and agreed by all members that, in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001, approval be given to agreement with Carlow County Council for the purpose of the works outlined above.

The members considered draft agreement dated March 2015 between Kildare County Council and Wexford County Council in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001, for the purpose of Bridge Rehabilitation Works at N11 Glebe Bridge.

Resolved On the proposal of Councillor Caldwell, seconded by Councillor Kennedy, and agreed by all members that, in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001, approval be given to agreement with Wexford County Council for the purpose of the works outlined above.

07/1115

Presentation from Kildare Failte

Brian Fallon and Phil Donnelly gave a comprehensive presentation on the background and work programme of Kildare Failte. There are 130 members who directly contribute €50,000 to the organisation. The 2016 Strategy sets out the goals, the membership model, the Marketing Platform, Team Kildare, Ireland's Ancient East, Foodscape Kildare initiatives with the aim of creating Kildare's Tourism culture. The Into Kildare network liaise with the members of Kildare County Council, Failte Ireland, Discover Ireland, Kildare Leader Partnership, tourists, the press, tour operators, outdoor tourism groups, Kildare County Library and Arts service and the Heritage Officer. This collaboration has led to the production of a calendar which is a very useful guide in promoting key events scheduled in the county. The members are planning to expand their involvement in advertising through the use of digital and social media together with the more traditional forms of communication.

The Mayor thanked Brian and Phil for their insightful presentation.

The members joined in their congratulations on the presentation and the invaluable work being

undertaken to place Kildare firmly on the tourism map. A discussion followed on how to keep encourage visitors to stay in the county, with members noting that there are wonderful places to go, walks to enjoy, but that they are predominantly day trips. Suggestions were made around further promotion of the Curragh, and perhaps more focus on the north of the county. Members enquired about the process of becoming a member and acknowledged the fact that Kildare County Council provides financial assistance to Kildare Failte.

08/1115

Report from the Environmental Services and Water Strategic Policy Committee

Councillor S Power circulated a comprehensive report setting out the meetings which were held in 2015 and the schedule of work that the committee has agreed. Councillor Power thanked Mr David Walsh for his contribution to the committee and welcomed his replacement, Ms Deirdre Lane.

Resolved that the report be noted.

09/1115

Litter Management Plan

Mr Boland, Director of Services, introduced the Draft Litter Management Plan and introduced Dara Wyer who made the presentation to the members.

Mr Wyer outlined the scope and format of the plan, the definition of litter, facts and figures in relation to litter and the responsibilities of businesses and the public. The Litter Pollution Act requires the Council to include details of its educational and information measures aimed specifically at young persons in this plan. A comprehensive schools environmental education programme which combines a friendly and informative approach with practical supports designed to ensure that an anti-litter ethos is fostered at all times has been developed in Kildare. Mr Wyer spoke about litter prevention and control where strategies such as street sweeping, street litterbins, the National Litter Pollution Monitoring System and the work of the Environmental crew are key. Enforcement, community involvement tidy towns groups, recycling and recovery of waste were explained in the context of the plan.

The members thanked Mr Wyer for the presentation and also acknowledged the work of Mr Boland and the Environment team in this area. Some members expressed reservation about adopting the plan today as they considered that there was a deficit of information to assist them in

their decision. The issues of dog fouling and flytipping were discussed and members said that there could be more innovative strategies in the plan.

A proposal from Councillor Cussen, seconded by Councillor O'Neill to defer the adoption of the Draft Litter Plan until January was defeated with 14 members voting in favour of deferring and 16 members voting against.

Resolved On the proposal of Councillor Brett, seconded by Councillor Moore, with 16 members voting in favour and 14 members voting against the Litter Management Plan 2016 – 2019 was adopted.

10/1115

Presentation from the Alzheimer Society of Ireland

Joanna Joyce and Donal Murphy made a presentation to the members on behalf of the Alzheimer Society of Ireland.

The work of the Society in assisting sufferers and their families was outlined. Services in Kildare require investment and improvement and there is a need for a collaborative approach. Ms Joyce asked the members for their support and involvement in the Kildare branch of the Society so that a plan could be agreed to expand the services. Mr Murphy said that he hoped that Kildare would become a dementia friendly county and that this would only be possible with the support of the members and the Government.

The Mayor and members thanked Ms Joyce and Mr Murphy for their presentation.

The Irish Wheelchair Association has become involved and engaged with the process of the review of the County Development Plan and the members recommended that this was a way of promoting awareness of the challenges that people with dementia face.

There was huge empathy among the members' for sufferers and their families and the involvement of the Alzheimers society through this process would be a pragmatic approach towards engaging with the members in promoting awareness of the illness and also becoming involved in providing practical solutions to the challenges.

11/1115

Briefing on Water Framework Directive

Mr Boland, Director of Services, gave a brief overview of the Water Framework Directive and introduced Michael Holligan, Senior Executive Engineer, to make a presentation to the members.

Mr Holligan outlined the background of the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC enacted in 2003 by regulation in Ireland. He stated that the River Basin Management Plans are used in all EU member states to address challenges in an integrated manner. Ireland is now preparing the second cycle of plans which will be in place by the end of 2017. All waters are included, surface water, groundwater, lakes, coastal waters and transition waters. Mr Holligan outlined the governance structure and the structure and role of the Water Framework Directive Office. He advised members of the national challenges and then detailed the Kildare catchments, sub-catchments and water bodies. The members and the public are invited to become involved in the consultation process which will help prioritise the issues to be included in the revised Significant Water Management Issues in Ireland document and inform the later development of River Basin Management Plans.

The members thanked Mr Holligan for the informative presentation and contributed to a discussion around the issues raised. Mr Boland encouraged the members to become involved in the consultation process, and said that submissions must be made by 18 December 2015.

12/1115

Meetings Calendar for 2016

The Meetings Calendar for 2016 was circulated to the members.

Resolved The 2016 meetings calendar was noted and approved

13/1115

Mayor's Business

The Mayor informed the members that the December meeting will be held at 2pm on Friday, 18th December rather than Monday, 21st December as previously scheduled.

The Mayor informed the members that he attended the Pride of Place in Ennis, Co Clare and encouraged the members to become involved in new projects in this area.

The Mayor reminded members that the use of cameras or recording equipment was prohibited in the Chamber and it had come to his attention that photographs were being taken. He asked members to respect standing orders and desist from using such equipment.

The Mayor extended birthday wishes to Mr Bernard Campbell from Rathcoffey who celebrated his 100th birthday recently.

14/1115

Correspondence

The Meetings Administrator informed the members that a letter dated 23 November 2015 was received from Noirin O'Sullivan, Commissioner of An Garda Síochána, acknowledging the letter and Book of Condolence expressing sympathy concerning the murder of Garda Anthony Golden on Sunday, 11 October 2015 while assisting a member of the public in the normal course of his duties.

Councillor Pender asked for support and solidarity from the members in relation to the Women's Aid 16 days of action campaign which runs from 25 November to 10 December (which is International Human Rights Day).

15/1115

Staff working during the hours of winter darkness

The Mayor proposed to take motions 15, 20 and 25 together as their subject matter was related.

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

That the Chief Executive now assure the population of Kildare that the dispute with Roads Services is resolved and that staff will now turn out and return lost services during the hours of winter darkness, in line with the out turn during such hours as presently performed by the Health Services, ESB, Gas Energy Services or private companies on call-out.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Moore and seconded by Councillor Breen.

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

That the council immediately put in place a response to extreme weather conditions in which trees and flooding incidents can be dealt with immediately.

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

A report from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety department stated that the management of Kildare County Council is seeking to recommence an out-of-hours emergency response and has submitted a proposal to SIPTU for comment. A meeting with SIPTU is scheduled for 1 December and it should be noted that this is a national issue and not specific to Kildare.

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

That Kildare fire fighters be allowed to call out to fallen trees and an explanation be given as to why there was serious difficulty in getting them removed when reported by members of the public and other emergency services.

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

In response to this motion, the report from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety department stated that the priority of Kildare Fire Service is the protection of life and property and the resources of the services have to be maintained in a state of readiness to respond to emergency calls and not be diverted to activities that would render the service unavailable in a true emergency.

Councillor Moore said that this impasse had arisen following a fatal accident and he said that it was very disappointing to note that other service providers were out and working during the recent storms, but that there was no progress on the dispute in Kildare. Councillor Moore asked was there a financial issue in the dispute, given that SIPTU were involved.

Councillor Miley said that he agreed with the points made by Councillor Moore. In recent days there were several roads blocked with fallen trees. The farming community reacted, but he urged the settlement of this issue as the weather was likely to worsen over the coming weeks.

Councillor Redmond referred to the ancillary powers under the Fire Services Act 1981 and asked why the fire services were not responding as they do in Dublin. He considered that the public in Kildare are not getting the same service as the public in Dublin.

The members joined in a discussion and were in broad agreement with all three motions. There was a call for clear guidance in the event of storms, having regard to the health and safety of employees. The legislation was discussed, but there were differing opinions on recommendations to amend it. There was a suggestion to employ contractors pending the resolution of the dispute. The responsibility of the landowners in the case of trees must be clear. The message needs to go out from this meeting that landowners must be vigilant and comply with the law.

Mr O'Sullivan, Director of Services stated that he understood the frustration of the members. However, there is a meeting scheduled for 1st December and it would not be helpful to comment at this stage as industrial relations issues are negotiated in private. The members asked Mr O'Sullivan to inform them of the outcome of the talks as soon as possible.

Resolved that the reports be noted.

16/1115

Timing of Meetings

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

Due to the fact that many members are not full time public representatives and are employed or self-employed in other sectors, that this council look at holding statutory meetings in late afternoons or early evenings to allow for full attendance.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Scully and seconded by Councillor Durkan.

A report from the Economic Development, Enterprise and Corporate Services directorate stated that meetings of full council and municipal districts are governed by standing orders, which include time and day of meeting. Any change to the time a meeting is held will require an amendment to standing orders, which is a matter for the members. Current standing orders for full council were

adopted on 26 November 2014 and municipal district standing orders were adopted in October/November 2014. A committee of the council has been established to consider matters relating to protocol and procedures and, in this regard, amendments to standing orders would require consideration by the Protocol Committee and a resolution of full council or municipal district as appropriate. Other meetings of committees of the council are listed on the annual meetings calendar, including the time of the meeting.

Councillor Scully thanked the Director for the report and asked that his motion be referred to the Protocol committee.

Resolved That this motion be referred to the Protocol Committee

17/1115

Section 38 Public Consultation Process

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

That this council updates the Section 38 Road Traffic Public Consultation Advertisement process to allow e-mail submissions.

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

A report from the Roads, Transportation and Public Services department stated that this request will be implemented and a specific e-mail address will be created for that purpose.

Councillor Cussen thanked the Director for this positive response.

Resolved That the report be noted.

18/1115

Part V111 Public Consultation Process

The following motion in the names of Councillors McEvoy and Murray was considered:

That Part 8 development proposals by the local authority are processed for public consultation using the online planning enquiry system.

The motion was proposed by Councillor McEvoy and seconded by Councilor Murray.

A report from the Planning Community and Culture Directorate stated that the current IT system does not allow for this request. However, the Council's IT department is investigating the possibility of modifying the system to make this possible.

Councillor McEvoy thanked the Director for the positive response. Councillor Murray asked that an update be given early in 2016 on progress.

Resolved That the report be noted.

19/1115

Bicycle Counts for 2014 and 2015

The following motion in the names of Councillors Kennedy and Larkin was considered:

In light of ambitious proposals for measures to increase cycle use and infrastructure by the National Transport Authority Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016 – 2035, that the council publish annual bicycle counts for 2014 and 2015 and engage the County Cycle Forum in policy development and with the aims of the Local Economic and Community Plan.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Kennedy and seconded by Councillor Larkin.

A report from the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety department stated that the Kildare County Council Cycling Officer proposes to issue both 2014 and 2015 cycling survey results in Quarter 1 of 2016 and will also engage with the Kildare Cycle Forum to discuss policy development and other matters in relation to cycling.

Councillor Larkin asked for confirmation as to whether the forum has convened. Councillor Kennedy thanked the Director for the report and asked for clarification as to how Kildare compares with the greater Dublin area and there was a question regarding the take up on the Cycle to Work scheme.

Mr Morrissey undertook to check the figures and revert to the members.

Resolved That the report be noted.

20/1115

NTA Funding

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

Given that Kildare has the lowest amount of funding from the NTA at 2% in 2013, that this council moves to increase its projects and funding from the NTA funds to at least be in line with that of Wicklow (6%) and Meath (7%)

The motion was proposed by Councillor O'Neill and seconded by Councillor Redmond

A report from the Department of Roads, Transportation and Public Services stated that the number of projects approved for funding and the amount of that funding is entirely at the discretion of the National Transport Authority. Kildare County Council submitted 86 projects in 2015 and the Authority approved funding for 11.

Councillor O'Neill said she did not accept this response. Her question was in relation to 2013 and the response refers to 2015. The councillor stated that Kildare has a higher population and we have failed to get a pedestrian crossing outside Naas Hospital, yet 10 pedestrian crossings were provided in Meath. Wicklow has received funding for 9 bus shelters.

The members contributed to a discussion where there was broad agreement for this motion. There was a call for greater preparation in the applications to the National Transport Authority, having regard to their strategy. Each Municipal District should agree and prioritise their projects and this should be clear in the submission. The members said that while projects have been funded, that they are not the projects identified by the democratically elected members.

Councillor O'Neill asked that a letter be issued to the National Transport Authority notifying them of this motion and asking for a response. Councillor McGinley requested that the notice of motion passed some months ago would be referred to in this letter also.

Mr Morrissey stated that the National Transport Authority priorities may not be the same as Kildare County Council priorities, however, we are trying to maximize funding.

Resolved That a letter be issued to the National Transport Authority.

21/1115

Health and Safety Guidelines

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

That the Chief Executive and the Housing Section inform this council of the current situation in regards to fire regulations and health and safety guidelines in all Traveller Accommodation under the auspices of Kildare County Council. If such information is not satisfactory to members, that a health and safety audit be taken on all halting sites in the county.

The motion was proposed by Councillor O'Cearuil and seconded by Councillor Fitzpatrick.

A report from the Housing Directorate stated that the Fire Service in consultation with the Housing Department have commenced a programme to review fire safety in Traveller accommodation. A local review steering group consisting of staff from both departments have met and agreed a fire safety programme. The Fire Service (accompanied by Staff from the Housing Department) have carried out inspections on all four Council owned Halting Sites and recommendations in respect of these inspections are now being implemented by the Housing Department. Community fire safety initiatives have commenced with a community fire safety talk held on one halting site with arrangements being made for additional talks in consultation with Traveller representatives and the local steering group.

Councillor O'Cearuil said that he welcomed the report and it was positive to note that the Council had been proactive rather than reactive in this matter.

Resolved That the report be noted.

22/1115

Signs for Clearance Space for Cyclists

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

That the council adopts the position of many other County Councils, by placing on all council vehicles, where appropriate, signs to indicate the appropriate space to give a cyclist when overtaking is a minimum of 1.5m clearance. The cost of each sign is estimated between €6 and €10. There is currently a cycling safety campaign called 'Stayin alive at 1.5' to ultimately pursue the adoption of a law that requires motorists to give cyclists 1.5metres when overtaking, which would be in line with many other countries and jurisdictions worldwide. A major component of this is awareness, specifically making motorists aware of how to overtake cyclists safely. Given the

ongoing efforts to develop and enhance cycle routes throughout County Kildare I think this would be a positive step towards greater awareness and road safety.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Lawless and seconded by Councillor R Power.

A report from the Roads, Transportation and Public Services Directorate stated that this proposal would be examined and that a report would be made available to the members.

Councillor Lawless referred to the national campaign in relation to awareness and signage and he looked forward to receiving the report.

Resolved That a report be made available to the members.

23/1115

Text Alert System

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

Given the recent bad weather and in preparation for any future events, that the council inform its members of the current state of development of a text alert system to link up with local text alert schemes as previously discussed and that such a system be developed if not already in operation given the benefit it would have to the population of Kildare.

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

A report from the Economic Development, Enterprise and Corporate Services Directorate stated that the Community Alert Initiative was developed by the Customer Service Section in October 2014. Its objective was to increase instant communication on disruption of our main services, either planned or emergency, amongst community alert groups that have given contact details via text system. The report outlined how the system operates, noting that there are presently 8 public/community alert groups set up on the Community Alert System. The system has the potential to expand to organisations throughout the county but this would require the support of local public/community groups.

Councillor Wall thanked Mr O'Sullivan for this comprehensive report. He said that he wished to congratulate those responsible for social media in Kildare County Council. Councillor Wall said that more groups should be encouraged to become involved and he asked for contact information so that groups could sign up. Councillor Breslin agreed that this was a very positive initiative and like Councillor Wall, she said that other groups should be encouraged to become involved. There was a discussion regarding this motion and all members were positive in relation to such an initiative and asked for more information as to how to become involved.

The meetings administrator stated that Corporate Services section would be happy to communicate with more groups. Ms Aspell informed the members that a Communications Graduate had been assigned and has been expanding our involvement in the area of social media.

Resolved That the report be noted and the members be given the relevant details to promote this initiative.

24/1115

Grants awarded by the Decade of Commemoration Committee

The following motion in the name of Councillor McLoughlin-Healy was considered:

That this council outlines the grants awarded or decisions made re the awarding of grants by the Commemoration committee.

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

A report from the A/County Librarian stated that 66 community groups/individuals received grants for 2016 commemorative projects and a list was circulated to the members for information. Upon the recommendations of the adjudication panel the Decade of Commemoration Committee approved applications for grant aid. The criteria for the grant process was as follows:

- The level of community participation in your project
- The use of innovations or imaginative approaches
- The capacity of the group to carry out the proposed project
- The quality of the application
- The extent of local contributions to the proposed project
- Final Approval of the grant will be given by the decade of Commemorations Committee of Kildare County Council.

The following criteria were desirable for events/projects:

- An event/project organised in partnership with another community/history group,
- Be aimed at a particular demographic group (e.g. young people, senior citizens),
- Focus on County Kildare,
- Involve a historian,
- Involve an artist or have an artistic/cultural dimension.

Councillor McLoughlin-Healy said that the genesis for this motion was a query whereby a friend, who is involved with the Laochra Gael project, asked her to clarify the criteria for the award of a grant for 2016 commemorative projects. Councillor McLoughlin-Healy described the project in detail and said that, in her view, according to the guidelines presented in the report, this particular project would have met the criteria. Councillor McLoughlin-Healy stated that she was providing detailed background information to the meeting in relation to this matter in order that it could be used as a comparator and raise questions about any possible conflict of interest. She stated that an annual festival group, Bluebells and Buskers, founded and promoted by the Chair of the committee, Councillor O'Loughlin, and her family, in honour of her late father, is listed as a beneficiary of the grants administered by the committee. Councillor McLoughlin-Healy, in light of the facts outlined, asked the Chief Executive and the Director of Services if they have any concerns around the governance of this committee.

Councillor O'Loughlin stated that, as Chair of the Decade of Commemorations, she is proud of the work of this committee. She described the merits of the project that had received funding. She said that she regretted that the Laochra Gael project referred to by Councillor McLoughlin-Healy did not receive funding and that perhaps with the additional funding from the Municipal Districts, it may be possible to re-examine this application. Councillor O'Loughlin said that a very serious allegation had been made about her by a colleague and that this was very regrettable.

Councillor McEvoy agreed that this was a very serious allegation. He said that the Decade of Commemoration Committee were an impartial group who assessed applications on the basis of the information submitted to them by the adjudication panel. Councillor McEvoy said that he was putting it on the record that he was happy to work with Councillor O'Loughlin on that committee. Councillor Cronin said that she is a member of that committee and that the project that Councillor

McLoughlin-Healy referred to sounded like a fine play and she suggested that an appeals procedure be put in place as this sounded like an interesting project.

The Mayor said that he also had enjoyed working with the Decade of Commemoration Committee and he said that nobody made representations on behalf of applicants and that Councillor O'Loughlin was very fair in her role as Chair. He agreed with Councillor Cronin that an appeals procedure would be a good idea.

Mr Minnock, Director of Services, said that he refuted any indication of a lack of integrity, either on the part of the adjudication panel or the members of the committee. All applications were assessed in accordance with the criteria. He was not aware of the specific application but he would check the position.

Councillor McLoughlin-Healy said that she was questioning the process, which she suggested warrants further investigation.

The Chief Executive said that people need to reflect on the manner in which things are being brought forward in the council chamber. He said that it was embarrassing and regrettable that an allegation casting doubt on the integrity of staff who are involved on the adjudication panel or the committee themselves should be made by the councillor. He asked that the record note that the staff who had dealt with applications for grant funding under the Decade of Commemorations programme had his full support. The Chief Executive advised members that they should not make unfounded allegations. Councillor McLoughlin-Healy denied making any unfounded allegations.

The Mayor said that the allegations being made are very regrettable, particularly given that, outside of Dublin, Kildare is the flagship county in their itinerary of events for the Decade of Commemoration. He stated that the work of this committee was a good news story.

Resolved That the report be noted and the process for assessing and recommending grants under the Decade of Commemorations programme be examined.

25/1115

Emergency Accommodation

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

In the light of the recent decision by the council to ensure that money is available to provide emergency accommodation for people who present to the Council as homeless, and the declarations by the Minister for the Environment that funds to provide emergency accommodation are available, the council resolves to end the practice of telling some people who present as homeless that they should stay with friends or relatives while they search for private rented accommodation. Instead, the council will provide for emergency accommodation as necessary, in B&B or other transitional accommodation for people who present as homeless to the Homelessness Section of the Housing Department.

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

A report from the Housing Department stated that Kildare County Council operates a comprehensive homelessness service with the housing team complimented by resources provided in conjunction with services providers. In many cases, the provision of emergency accommodation is not always the most appropriate course of action. The housing team is in a position to ensure that landlords have complied with the legislation in respect of appropriate notice periods and assist in some cases by liaising with external agencies and service providers. The provision of emergency accommodation can often lead to increased difficulties for families due to constraints with cooking, storage, laundry facilities and additional costs that can be incurred. The limited supply of emergency accommodation available can also result in families being accommodated a significant distance from where children are attending school or other services are provided. As a consequence, in some instances, it may be more appropriate for persons to use a family support network which will reduce the cost for families and give supports which are not readily available in emergency accommodation.

Councillor Young thanked the Director for the report, but he had a difficulty with it. He queried if funding was the real issue – it should not be as the Government had given a commitment that adequate funding would be available. Councillor Young said that he felt that extended families would more readily provide the supports mentioned if the families were staying elsewhere.

The members contributed to a discussion around the limited supply of affordable units to rent, the lack of emergency beds for women and children in Kildare, the criteria for determining who actually gets emergency accommodation and the difficult choices that the staff in this area have to make.

Mr McDonnell, Director of Services, said that the additional funding that was sought for 2015 will come through. However, the Budget for 2016 was adopted last week and he must now manage the service within the confines of that budget. He said that he was satisfied that the service had improved significantly.

Councillor Young responded that there was a motion passed to transfer money within the Housing budget to ensure that no one was left without support.

Mr McDonnell stated that this was in relation to the 2015 budget and that he now has a commitment from the Department for additional funding to supplement the 2015 budget. With regard to funding going forward into 2016, that Budget was passed last week. The Chief Executive intervened to state that this Council has been very proactive in the area of homelessness and that it is not possible to facilitate emergency accommodation for every person who presents as homeless. Each case is assessed and the service providers who are expert in this area are now assisting in these assessments.

Resolved That the report be noted.

The Mayor reminded the member that the December meeting will be held on Friday 18 December 2015 at 2pm.

The meeting concluded.
