**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BIRR HELD ON MONDAY 9th SEPTEMBER, 2024 IN BIRR CIVIC OFFICES, WILMER ROAD, BIRR AT 4.30 P.M.**

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| **MEMBERS PRESENT:** | **Cllrs P Ormond, J Clendennen, J Leahy, A Hennessy – Kennedy, H Egan, S Maher** |
| **IN ATTENDANCE:** | **Ms A Dillon, DOS, Mr J Mitchell SEE, Ms A. Pedlow, Heritage Officer OCC, Ms D Molloy, Meetings Administrator** |

1. **Adoption of Minutes of Meeting in Committee held on 8th July, 2024**

On the proposal of Cllr Leahy and seconded by Cllr Hennessy-Kennedy the Minutes of the Meeting in Committee of Birr MD held on the 8th July, 2024 were adopted.

1. **Adoption of Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 8th July, 2024**

On the proposal of Cllr Maher and seconded by Cllr Clendennen the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Birr MD held on the 8th July, 2024 were adopted.

1. **Matters arising from July meeting.**

There are no matters arising from the July meeting.

1. **Heritage Projects in the MD – Amanda Pedlow, Heritage Officer, OCC**

Ms Amanda Pedlow, Heritage Officer OCC gave a presentation to the Members in relation to the Offaly Heritage Plan 2023-2027 and the projects that are being carried out in the Birr MD area. The Members thanked Amanda for her informative presentation, congratulated her on the great work being carried out and raised the following:

* The Members congratulated the team on a very successful Heritage week and the great events that were organised during it, and in particular the event in Bully’s Acre in Birr which was very well attended despite inclement weather.
* The Members enquired about the cost of consultant’s fees involved in the projects and it appears that the fees are increasing with every project, they were advised that there is a shortage of consultants available to carry out the work.
* The Members enquired about the Kilcormac Pieta and if there are any plans or further funding available for preservation works, they were advised that a conservation report had been completed and that there were no concerns at present.
* The Members enquired about work to be carried out at Ballyboy Cemetery and if there was any further funding schemes that could be made available to the group, Ms Pedlow advised that she had met with the group and advised them that funding may be available to them when they are ready to carry out the work, and she had advised the group to make contact with her when that time came.
* The Members noted that the timeframe for the Built Heritage Investment Scheme had changed and applications are now open from September 27th, and successful applicants will be notified in January 2025. The Members felt that the change of dates needed to be promoted more and were advised that OCC would be informing interested parties. Ms Pedlow also advised that the Community Groups are welcome to contact the Heritage Office for advice in relation to navigating the funding schemes available.
1. **District Engineers Update**

Mr John Mitchell, SEE gave a presentation to the Members in relation to works being carried out in the MD and also future projects that are in the pipeline. The Members thanked Mr Mitchell and his staff for the great work carried out to date throughout the MD and raised the following:

* The Members noted the great work that was carried out on footpaths in Mountrath St, Kilcormac, this has really helped with the parking issues at the school and safety of the public. Also noted that residents in Cloghan are very happy with the works that are commencing in the village and the excellent safety measure works that were carried out at Boora. Welcomed the works carried out in Kinnitty and Shannonbridge. The Members welcomed the Shinrone Active Travel Scheme. The Members also commended the great works being carried out by MD staff on bridges
* The Members highlighted the growing concerns in relation to the level of speed in the county, some measures need to be introduced to counteract this and speed ramps would seem to be the most effective measure. Mr Mitchell advised that all areas are different and different approaches are needed. Assessments and traffic and speed counts are carried out to see what measure is most suitable to an area. The members also outlined the need for provision of pedestrian crossings on the N52 in Birr town north of Emmet Square.
* The Members raised issues in relation to Greenways and cars using them as a bye pass, also fencing at the Glynn Bridge to Judges Bridge site, Mr Mitchell advised that he would relay concerns raised to the Engineer in charge in the Roads Section of OCC. The Members also requested that they would be updated in relation to what works are left to be completed on Greenways in the area.
* The Members welcomed the funding secured through the Community Recognition Fund for works at Banagher and Birr playground as these works had been sought by previous Members of the MD. The Members enquired if the work in the playgrounds could be carried out by the Councils own staff instead of Contractors as this would reduce the labour cost and allow more funds for purchase of equipment, and highlighted the serious need for equipment for children with additional needs to be included.
* The members welcomed the proposed new Distributor Roads and enquired if consultation had been carried out with the large haulage companies in relation to same. Enquired when the Northern Distributor Road was likely to be completed. The Members also raised the issue of a bye-pass being needed for the town to try and manage the traffic problems that are being encountered. Mr Mitchell advised that the Northern Distributor Rd hoped to commence later in the year and the Southern Distributor Road has secured funding for the assessment of route options. He also advised that transport and haulage services have been consulted.
* The Members raised the issue of signage in the MD and the need for it be repaired, replaced or cleaned, Mr Mitchell advised that the team would prioritise and progress this work with existing budgets.
* The Members acknowledged that communication in relation to road closures and works had improved but could still be better and enquired if a timeframe for works could be advised to the local communities in advance of works commencing.
* The Members raised the issue of speeding at the Centra shop and school in Ferbane, Mr Mitchell advised that the Senior Engineer was consulting with the TII safety team for input in relation to same and he would report back once this had been received.
1. **Any Other Business**
2. The Members asked if a review of the Disability parking spaces in the centre of Birr Town could be carried out and highlighted the need for spaces to be provided on the Main Street in the town. The matter of the paid parking machines in the town was also raised and it was asked if they could up upgraded to allow people to pay for parking by card instead of just cash.
3. The meeting was advised that Minister Heather Humphries would be visiting the county on the following Thursday and once definite arrangements were confirmed the Members would be notified.

The Meeting then concluded.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**CATHAOIRLEACH MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR**

**DATE:**