

**MINUTES OF JANUARY MONTHLY MEETING OF MUNICIPAL
DISTRICT OF BIRR HELD REMOTELY ON MONDAY 14TH FEBRUARY,
2022 IN BIRR CIVIC OFFICES, WILMER ROAD, BIRR AT 3.00 P.M.**

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MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs E Dooley, P Ormond, J Carroll
J Clendennen, C Claffey and J Leahy

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Stephane Duclot, DOS, Mr John Mitchell,
Senior Executive Engineer, Birr MD, Ms Lisa
Smyth Hogan, A/ Meetings Administrator, Ms
Amanda Pedlow, Heritage Officer, Joe Ruane,
Head of Primary Care Services, HSE.

**Adoption of Minutes of Meeting in Committee held on 18th January,
2022.**

On the proposal of Cllr Carroll and seconded by Cllr Clendennen the Minutes of the Meeting in Committee of Birr MD held on 18th January, 2022 were adopted.

Adoption of Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 18th January, 2022.

On the proposal of Cllr Leahy and seconded by Cllr Claffey the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Birr MD held on 18th January, 2022 were adopted.

Matters Arising from the Minutes of the January 2022 meeting:

There were not matters arising from the January meeting

Heritage Plan Process for Birr Municipal District

Ms Amanda Pedlow presented a Review of the Heritage Plan 2017 – 2021 to the Councillors as preparation has commenced on the Heritage Plan 2023 – 2027. Ms Pedlow encouraged the Councillors engage with the community to make submission for inclusion in the next Heritage Plan.

Cllrs thanked Ms Amanda Pedlow for her presentation and the following points were raised:

Cllr Dooley commended the works by the County Archivist and looking forward he would like to see the inclusion of industrial heritage of Bord na Mona that history won't be forgotten. Cllr Dooley is very thankful for works completed at the Gallen monastic site. Cllr Dooley wondered if there were any plans for the Ballylin Board walk.

Cllr Claffey thanked Ms Pedlow for the work done with the Tidy Towns in Banagher. Banagher Town has a lot of Heritage site and wondered if there could be greater linkage of these site included in the new Heritage Plan.

Cllr Clendennen recognised the great success of Killaun Bog and wondered if there could be greater connection to Birr Town and connect to the infrastructure. Also if there could be a greater level of engagement with schools and youth as this generation seem to have greater interest. Cllr Clendennen wondered if there were a list of

structures like Ballyboy Church, Etta Church and the Kinnitty Pyramid to name a few that are in need of great repair.

Cllr Carroll wondered if groups who are interested in Heritage could be given direction on how or where we should be going with the Heritage Plan. A 98% reduction was fantastic with regards to the invasive himalyan balsam growing along the bank of the Camcor and Little Brosna and complimented the great work done on the walks and bogs in the area.

Cllr Leahy wondered if it was possible to create a link between the Hidden Gems and the Heritage within the County.

Cllr Ormond acknowledged the works done with Kilcomin and Kilmurry-ely graveyard and encourage groups to have an input in the plan.

Ms Pedlow advised the councillors with regards to Bord na Mona that they are working with the workers recording peoples work in the plant and that all the interviews will be hosted on the local history section in Offaly Library. The Board Walk at Ballylin, Ferbane is part of the LIFE project just concluding and should be open shortly. It is walking distance from the Mary Ward Centre.

Banagher Development Group and Waterways Ireland have done much work at Fort Eliza and the Napoleonic Trail is being worked on.

OCC staff and Birr 2020 reps recently walked the route from Elmgrove to Springfield and a link to Killaun is being looked at.

With regards to Ballyboy Church, Ettagh Church a lot of work needs to be done. Ballyboy church is in the Council's ownership and a plan was drawn up to conserve it which can be revisited in light of recent funding programmes.

All groups are welcome to get in touch with the Heritage Office to discuss project ideas and planning of same and to input into the next Heritage Plan.

HSE Briefing for Birr Municipal District.

Head of Birr Primary Care Centre, Joe Ruane gave a comprehensive and in-depth overview with regards to the Primary Care Centre following on from questions / concerns received from the Elected Members.

The Elected Members were very gratefull to Joe Ruane and Staff for the report. Thank you to all the Frontline staff for their hard work and commitment during the pandemic. The Elected Members thanked Joe Ruane for his honest presentation based on the questions raised by the members.

Cllr Claffey wondered was the timeframe from design and construction to opening if the was very long and was there any way that this could be reduced. It will be fantastic that Diagnostic facilities will be available and wondered how many of these services would be in place on opening the facilities and if there would be any further diagnostic procedures in the future. Cllr Claffey questioned if the HSE will be closing or

relocating services when new facility opens in Birr. Cllr Claffey wondered that should MIDOC return to Birr would there be any rooms available.

Cllr Carroll queried how many vacant properties was there not being used? Cllr Carroll was delighted to see the Daycare centre back operating. With regards to the recruitment process for staff was there a process for applications. With regards to Dental Care for medical card patients there was only 1 Dentist treating patients and is at capacity. The addition of a new GP will be very welcome.

In response to questions raised Mr Joe Ruane outline that the HSE were trying to be realistic with a conservative plan based on past experience of other similar projects. There will be consultation with GPs based on their feedback will determine what diagnostic facilities will be catered for in the Primary Care Centre. There will be a bookable rooms function where all rooms will be multifunctional use and fit for purpose available for all services. With regards to future use of buildings, Mr Ruane confirmed that groups may come forward from within the community that may have interest in their use.

Cllr Leahy wondered as there was a Housing Crisis would any of the facilities be suitable to use as stepdown facilities for older people as there are currently 65% of people looking for 1 or 2 bed units. Cllr Leahy was disappointed that the Primary Care facility was not located in the town centre as it would potentially take services out of the town with a reduction of footfall.

Cllr Clendennen questioned what was currently happening in the old MIDOC facility. Given the timeline Cllr Clendennen would not like to see HSE process a foregone conclusion that this is the most suitable site and that it should be closer to the town.

Cllr Ormond wondered if OT Physio is in the Primary Care Unity that this would not impact the service at Birr Community Nursing Unit. Cllr Ormond raised concern that Palliative Care, Rehab and Respite beds are vital for the area where the needs arise and he would like to see a restoration of the beds, also Homecare packages for people to be looked after at home if there could be any improvements. Cllr Ormond asked if it would be possible to build relationships with colleges to recruit staff on receipt of their qualifications. Cllr Ormond asked that the Elected Members be kept informed throughout the process with the Primary Care Unit.

Mr Joe Ruane concluded with the following points, he wanted to clarify Birr Community Unit is not closing. The Primary Care Centre opening will not affect Birr Community Nursing Unit and future services will be maintained. All working buildings will have bookable rooms for clinical works saving money and maintain efficient use. There are no plans for MIDOC to return to Birr and there would be focus to existing services. With regards to the location of the Primary Care Unit, Mr Ruane accepts that there are different priorities the Elected Members have and that the location of the primary care unity in Birr is no different to any other location and the HSE are happy with the location. He acknowledges that there could be improvements with the homecare packages.

Stephane Duclot thanked Mr Joe Ruane and the HSE for the progress report for the Primary Care Health Centre and encouraged the HSE to contact Offaly County Council when they wanted to progress further on their planning process.

Any Other Business

The Meeting then concluded.

SIGNED: _____

CATHAOIRLEACH

MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR

DATE: