

Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Offaly County Council

Held on 20 November 2023 at 3.30pm, in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road,
Tullamore and via Zoom

The Meetings Administrator carried out a roll call to confirm attendance.

Present

Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick, Cathaoirleach

Cllr. John Carroll	Cllr. Declan Harvey
Cllr. Clare Claffey	Cllr. John Leahy
Cllr. John Clendennen	Cllr. T. McCormack
Cllr. Noel Cribbin	Cllr. R. McDermott
Cllr. Eamon Dooley	Cllr. F. Moran
Cllr. S. Feehan Smollen	Cllr. Peter Ormond
Cllr. J. Foley	Cllr. Danny Owens
Cllr. Mark Hackett	Cllr. L. Quinn

Apologies

Cllrs. N. Feighery and S. O'Brien

Officials in Attendance

Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive; Mr. T. Shanahan, D.O.S.; Ms. S. Kennedy, D.O.S.; Ms. A. Dillon, D.O.S.; Mr. T. Mawe, A/H.O.F.; Mr. E. Fennell, S.E.O.; Mr. G. Bruton, Meetings Administrator and Ms. L. Carbery, C.O.

Votes of Sympathy

Votes of sympathy were unanimously extended to the following:

Mr. Joe Coughlan, 252 Arden View, Tullamore on the death of his wife Frances Coughlan;

Mrs. Teresa Hogan and family, Knockowen Road, Tullamore, on death of her husband Michael;

Mrs. Margaret Carroll and family, Beladd, Portlaoise, on the death of her husband Des;

Mrs. Pat Cooney and family, Coralstown, Kinnegad, on the death of her husband Dermot.

The Chief Executive, on her own behalf and on behalf of the staff of Offaly County Council, joined with the members in these votes of sympathy.

1. Confirmation of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. L. Quinn seconded by Cllr. E. Dooley, the members resolved to adopt the Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Offaly County Council held on Monday 16 October 2023.

2. Minutes for Noting

The members noted the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 11 September 2023.

3. Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001

On the proposal of Cllr. T. McCormack, seconded by Cllr. D. Harvey, the members resolved to adopt Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, to dispose of 9m² (for sub station) at Dargan Drive, Chancery Lane, Tullamore to ESB Networks Ltd, Zone A, Lynn Industrial Estate, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, free of charge.

4. Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Leahy, seconded by Cllr. J. Carroll, the members resolved to adopt Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, to sell rural cottage at Ballykealy, Fivealley, Birr, to Krzysztof Radon, 2 Bridge Road, Portumna, Co. Galway for €146,000

5. To consider the draft Casual Trading bye-laws prior to commencing statutory consultation process

Ms. S. Kennedy noted the members will be aware from recent briefings at the Municipal Districts that it is necessary to draft new Casual Trading Bye-Laws for the control, designation, regulation, supervision and administration of Casual Trading to ensure compliance with the provisions of Section 6 of the Casual Trading Act, 1995 and to reflect current arrangements within the County.

In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, it is proposed that the Municipal Districts of Tullamore, Edenderry and Birr will make one set of Bye-Laws to cover the administrative areas within the County at Tullamore, Edenderry, Birr and Kilcormac. The proposed bye-laws shall be cited as the Offaly County Council Casual Trading Bye-Laws 2024. The designated casual trading areas to which the proposed bye-laws will apply are listed in the First Schedule to the Bye-Laws and defined in the accompanying maps. These bye-laws will replace all previous Offaly Casual Trading Bye-Laws.

Having secured the approval of Members at Municipal District level, it is proposed to advertise these draft bye-laws and to make copies of the draft available for viewing or inspection during normal public opening hours for a period of one month. The draft bye-laws will also be available for inspection on the Council's website: www.offalycoco.ie. Submissions in relation to the draft bye-laws may be made in writing to the Head of Finance and Director of Corporate and Human Resources, Aras an Chontae,

Charleville Road, Tullamore, County Offaly. Offaly County Council will accept and consider any such submissions or observations received within 2 weeks after the end of the display period.

Specification of the various designated areas in Tullamore, Edenderry, Kilcormac and Birr are outlined;

- Trading hours – 9.00 to 18.00 Monday to Sunday;
- Licence Fees - €200 per bay per year. €50 per special events;
- Licensing requirements and restrictions;
- Application process and documentation requirements;
- Provisions in relation to event trading;
- Certain statutory exemptions;
- Bay operation, maintenance and health and safety requirements;
- Authorised officers role and responsibilities and enforcement arrangements.

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Leahy, seconded by Cllr. N. Cribbin, the members resolved to advertise the draft bye-laws for public display.

6. Chief Executives Two-Year Progress Report on the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Ms. A Dillon advised the members on the requirement to carry out a two-year Progress Report on the implementation of a Development Plan is set out in Section 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, where it states that the Chief Executive (CE) is required to 'give a report to the members of the authority on the progress achieved in securing the objectives' not more than two years after making the development plan.

Section 10.4 of the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2022 states 'The Chief Executive's report must specifically include information in relation to progress on, and the results of, monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Development Plan. This report must include the results of SEA monitoring for the Development Plan, as well as variations to the Plan and the effects of implementing Local Area Plans'.

Ms. A. Dillon advised the members that the progress report outlines the headline topics and no changes are proposed. All areas are progressing in line with the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Cllr. L. Quinn raised concerns with the lack of guidance for solar energy planning applications He called for the next plan to look at all renewable energy in one document. Cllr. M. Hackett welcomed the development of the Edenderry to Enfield rail spur, he raised concerns on the report from the EPA on the quality of water in Offaly and he queried if compulsory purchase orders for vacant properties are on target.

In response Ms. A. Dillon noted there has been a lot of work on renewable energy and she agreed that more guidance is needed on solar energy development. Review of the plan will begin in two years time and this can be incorporated in the new plan. She confirmed targets are for compulsory purchase orders are set to be met.

Mr. T. Shanana advised that the EPA report relates to 2022 when there was a shortage of resources, however with recent recruitment the 2023 targets for water quality will be met.

7. Monthly Management Report

Ms. A. Delaney brought the members attention to the October monthly management report. She congratulated Ballyboy Community Development on their runner up prize in the annual IPB Co-operation Ireland Pride of Place awards and the participation of Tullamore Tidy Towns and Bracknagh Community Association in the competition. She outlined the on-going work under Just Transition and the START programme and the Fáilte Ireland Investment Grant Aid Scheme. She updated the members on the progress with the Vacant property schemes and the various LEO supports.

She welcomed the result of the Hydrogen Feasibility Study which was commissioned by North Offaly Development Fund Ltd. and Offaly County Council and funded by the Gas Networks Ireland Gas Innovation Fund, as well as funding contributions from SSE Renewables and Bord na Móna. The main finding of this study earmarks Rhode Green Energy Park to be one of the first hydrogen demonstration hubs in the country.

She noted that Tourism hosted a second familiarisation trip and the newly appointed tourism activator will join the Tourism team soon. She informed the members the housing report is available for their information along with Community, Arts, Health and Sports. She welcomed €58,000 in grant funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development as part of the Libraries Capital Programme. She noted the draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 is out of public consultation and will be presented to members for adoption before 23rd February 2024.

8. Corporate Policy Group Report

Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick informed the members that at the CPG meeting on the previous Monday discussed the agenda for the budget and council meeting.

The Cathaoirleach noted that the members agreed, at the October Monthly meeting, to hold a Civic Reception for the Offaly Community Groups to mark their successes in the National Tidy Towns Competition. He advised that the Civic Reception would be held early in the New Year.

He proposed that the Council would host a Civic Recognition to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Offaly Community Games. He noted that he proposed to hold the event in December. This proposal was agreed by the Members.

9. Notices of Motion

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Hackett, seconded by Cllr. C. Claffey, the members resolved that Offaly County Council commits to supporting refuge development in County Offaly to address the needs of victims of domestic and gender based violence.

Ms. S. Kennedy advised the members that a Memorandum of Understanding is now in place between the relevant agencies and details are being worked out in regard to the safe houses. She agreed housing will continue to work with the Department following their Circular letter in this matter and the primary focus is to finalise the current arrangement and see what further support can be put in place.

Cllr. C. Claffey commended the work of Ann Clarke and the Offaly Domestic Violence Support Services and she welcomed the provision of three safe houses in the county.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Hackett, seconded by Cllr. F. Moran, the members resolved that Offaly County Council recognises the importance of supporting the LGBT+ community in the county and, in addition, writes to the Minister asking for funding support for services specific to the county.

Cllr. M. Hackett pointed out that Midlands LGBT+ have lost their allocations recently, they provide services that are vital in the rural community.

Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive agreed to write to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in relation to this matter.

10. Comhdhálacha /Conferences

On the proposal of Cllr. E. Dooley , seconded by Cllr. D. Harvey, the members approved the conferences and training.

11. Comhfhreagras / Correspondence

Correspondence that issued with the agenda was noted.

12. Any Other Business

The Cathaoirleach noted that this was Ms. Sharon Kennedy's, D.o.S., last meeting with Offaly County Council. He advised that she was shortly leaving the organization to take a role with Tipperary County Council.

The members paid tribute to Ms. S. Kennedy having served in the role of Director of Services for Housing, Community, Culture (including Libraries, Arts, Sports), Emergency Services and Edenderry Municipal District. Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick said Ms Kennedy had brought great knowledge to the council particularly on the issue of housing and he added that her expertise would be missed.

Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive acknowledged that Ms Kennedy had come to Offaly during what was a challenging time due to Covid-19. She thanked her for her work and dedication and she added that she would be missed by the executive and members of the council.

Ms. S. Kennedy extended her thanks to the council executive and members, and also to the Municipal District of Edenderry for their kindness and courtesy to her at all times and said she would be keeping a close eye on Offaly over the coming years from her new base in Tipperary.

MINUTES CONFIRMED

CATHAOIRLEACH

RUNAÍ

18 December 2023

