

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE UÍBH FHAILÍ

**MINUTES OF DECEMBER MONTHLY MEETING
OF OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, CHARLEVILLE ROAD, TULLAMORE
ON MONDAY, 21ST DECEMBER 2020 AT 2.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:	Cllr. J. Carroll, Cathaoirleach, Cllrs. C. Claffey (R), J. Clendennen, N. Cribbin (R), E. Dooley, N. Feighery, E. Fitzpatrick (R), M. Hackett, D. Harvey, J. Leahy, T. McCormack (R), R. McDermott, F. Moran (R), S. O'Brien (R), P. Ormond, D. Owens, L. Quinn and K. Smollen (R).
APOLOGIES	Cllr. J. Foley,
IN ATTENDANCE:	Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive; Mr. T. Shanahan, D.O.S. (R); Ms. S. Kennedy, D.O.S. (R); Mr. M. Connolly, H.O.F. (R); Ms. A. Dillon, A/D.O.S.; Mr. G. Bruton, A/ Meetings Administrator; Mr. R. Bell, H.I.S. and Ms. L. Carbery, C.O. (R) <i>(R) Empower Eco - Neil Rowan, AIT, Orla Casey, Momentum Consulting, Michael Brougham, Enterprise Ireland</i> <i>[(R) denotes remote access]</i>
VOTES OF SYMPATHY:	Votes of sympathy were unanimously extended to the following: The members joined with Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick in extending their sympathies to Cllr. Robert McDermott on the death of his Uncle Noel McDermott in the United States of America. The members joined Cllr. Sean O'Brien in extending their sympathy to the family of John Joe O'Meara, Killurin, Killeigh, former Offaly County Council employee. 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.
VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS	Cllr. J. Leahy joined with the members in congratulating the Offaly hurling minors in their semi-final win in the Leinster Championship and they looked forward to seeing them play Kilkenny in the final.
CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">On the proposal of Cllr. J. Leahy, seconded by Cllr. N. Feighery, the members resolved to adopt the Minutes of the Special Meeting of Offaly County Council held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly on Monday 2nd November 2020;On the proposal of Cllr. P. Ormond, seconded by Cllr. R. McDermott, the members resolved to adopt the minutes of

	<p>the Ordinary Meeting of Offaly County Council held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly on Monday 16th November 2020;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the proposal of Cllr. E. Dooley, seconded by Cllr. D. Harvey the members resolved to adopt the minutes of the In-Committee Meeting of Offaly County Council held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly on Wednesday 18th November 2020; • On the proposal of Cllr. N. Feighery, seconded by Cllr. J. Leahy the members resolved to adopt the minutes of the Statutory Budget Meeting of Offaly County Council held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly on Monday 23rd November 2020; • On the proposal of Cllr. E. Dooley, seconded by Cllr. P. Ormond the members resolved to adopt the minutes of Special Meeting of Offaly County Council on Pre -Draft Offaly County Development Plan 2021 -2027 held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore on Tuesday, 30th June 2020; • On the proposal of Cllr. D. Harvey seconded by Cllr. R. McDermott the members resolved to adopt the minutes of Special Meeting of Offaly County Council on Pre -Draft Offaly County Development Plan 2021 -2027 held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore on Monday 6th July 2020; • On the proposal of Cllr. P. Ormond, seconded by Cllr. E. Dooley the members resolved to adopt the minutes of Special Meeting of Offaly County Council on Pre -Draft Offaly County Development Plan 2021 -2027 held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore on Monday, 13th July 2020.
<p>MINUTES FOR NOTING:</p>	<p>The members noted the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly on Friday 16th October 2020; • Minutes of the Community, Cultural and Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore on Friday 11th September 2020; • Minutes of the Housing Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore on Thursday 17th September 2020.
<p>SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001, OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL PROPOSES TO SELL PART OF INDUSTRIAL SITE NUMBER 19, FERBANE BUSINESS PARK TO BRENDAN WYNNE, FITWELL</p>	<p>Ms. A. Dillon A/D.O.S. advised the members that Fitwell currently employs 7 staff and have plans to employ a further 2 staff.</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr, E. Dooley, seconded by Cllr. J. Leahy the members resolved to adopt Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, to sell part of Industrial Site Number 19, Ferbane Business Park to Brendan Wynne, Fitwell Doors, Ferbane in the amount of €25,000.</p>

<p>DOORS, FERBANE IN THE AMOUNT OF €25,000</p>	
<p>PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT, 2000 AS AMENDED, PART 8 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, 2001 AS AMENDED FOR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT SR. SENAN AVENUE, EDENDERRY CO. OFFALY</p>	<p>Ms. S. Kennedy informed the members of the proposal to develop 4 no. Older Persons Dwellings on a vacant site at Sr. Senan Avenue, Edenderry.</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. R. McDermott, seconded by Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick the members resolved to adopt the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as Amended, Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as Amended for proposed development at Sr. Senan Avenue, Edenderry Co. Offaly.</p>
<p>BRIEFING ON EMPOWER ECO PROJECT</p>	<p>Ms. A. Delaney introduced Prof. Neil Rowan, Dr. Michael Brougham and Orla Casey of Empower Eco. She acknowledged their engagement with the local community including Kilcormac Development Assoc., and Ferbane food campus and their partnership with Bord Na Mona in developing potential for education and training and noted that it is supported by the Just Transition fund.</p> <p>Prof. Neil Rowan informed the members that Empower Eco was established through a collaboration between Athlone Institute of Technology, Bord na Móna, Enterprise Ireland, Offaly County Council, LEO Offaly, Limerick Institute of Technology, Maynooth University, and Kilcormac Development Association. He advised the members that the aim is to establish the Midlands' first social enterprise business model that integrates natural resources, enterprise, biodiversity, community, and social innovation with lifelong learning. The company objective is to connect sustainable enterprise and entrepreneurship. In 2021, it will launch a Food for Good range from Ireland's peatlands to include a bell heather honey and the development of exotic gourmet mushrooms in agroforestry with more food products in the pipeline. He advised the members that it will create 97 jobs over two years through a series of innovative actions.</p> <p>Dr. Michael Brougham advised the members that the suite of buildings at Lough Boora will be developed to become an Enterprise Centre that can access broader EU project funding with 2 aims. Firstly, to work with new small and medium businesses to accelerate green projects and secondly working closely with LEO to develop established business and micro enterprise. He informed the members that number of feasibility studies will be carried out to maximise the use of the 60k square feet of buildings available at Lough Boora. He highlighted the involvement of the three universities and that Offaly County Council have been innovative in areas such as ILOFAR.</p> <p>Prof. Neil Rowan updated the members on the opportunities in areas that are being developed such as aquaculture, Edenderry biomass, agri-forestry, forestry, Bell Heather Honey (similar to Manuka), exotic mushrooms for both gourmet/medicinal purposes.</p>

	<p>Ms. Orla Casey highlighted the potential to develop food for good, and adding value to food.</p> <p>Cllr. J Carroll thanked them for their presentation and welcomed the possibilities for exciting sustainable projects.</p> <p>The members welcomed the investment and raised concerns about job creation, feasibility of using all buildings at Lough Boora and the viability of forestry on peatlands. They welcomed the potential for development of education and training.</p> <p>In response Prof. Neil Rowan agreed there is a sizeable amount of work and that the experience of Athlone and Limerick Institutes and Maynooth University will be very beneficial.</p> <p>Mr. Michael Brougham re-iterated that they will be working with companies to help them transition to more sustainable business which will lead to more jobs.</p> <p>Ms. A. Delaney welcomed the announcement of funding for the Empower Eco initiative and the emerging partnership between Bord na Móna and key stakeholders in STEM innovation. She said that with other partners, Offaly County Council shares an ambition to create new and sustainable opportunities that will positively impact those most affected by decarbonisation, their communities and the local economy.</p>
<p>JUST TRANSITION</p>	<p>Ms. A. Dillon brought the members attention to the Midlands Regional Transition Team report outlining the Working groups and work plan, listing all 47 successful projects, amounting to funding support in the amount of €28m. She updated the members on the 7 projects involving Offaly County Council as lead or in conjunction with subsidiary companies and partnered with Laois or other midland counties. She noted the challenges in finding match funding for the projects. She thanked the members of the North Offaly Development Fund Ltd for the provision of match funding for the Rhode Green Energy Project. She congratulated the community groups and private applicants that have been given provisional approval for funding</p> <p>Ms. A. Dillon also advised of the recent announcement of €108m for Bord na Móna’s large scale peatlands restoration under its Rehabilitation Scheme 2021 – 2025. She advised that the Dept. of Environment, Climate and Communications have been asked by the EU to prepare a Territorial Plan for Ireland where €77 million would be available to the Midland Region over 6 years, 2021 – 2027. The Midland Regional Transition Team is to be consulted on the Territorial Plan. The Scheme will help Ireland to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and is to involve Local Authorities and local communities.</p> <p>The members joined Cllr. J. Carroll in welcoming the funding, noting it is imperative to utilise the investment to bring projects to fruition. They agreed it will be important for the partners to work together as there is such a large volume of work involved.</p>

	<p>Ms. A. Delaney acknowledged the huge challenges and assured the members that the Offaly County Council projects would be delivered, through effective collaboration with relevant stakeholders, which is already underway.</p>
<p>MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT:</p>	<p>Ms. A. Delaney drew the member’s attention to the Monthly Management Report. She advised them that the tender process for the Tullamore Living River Project is now complete and LCDC have approved Leader funding in principle allowing the project to commence in Spring 2021. She congratulated the NWCPO for winning a procurement award under the “Office Best Green Procurement Project of the Year” category, the “Circular & Social Public Procurement Project” involving the outfitting of the NWCPO office with upcycled and second hand furniture. She noted that the role of the NWCPO is expanding under the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy. She also congratulated Music Generation as overall winners of a Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Award 2020, in the category of sustaining the arts in recognition of the organisation’s role as Lead Partner of Music Generation Offaly/Westmeath.</p> <p>Ms. A. Delaney advised the members that her report on the Draft County Development Plan is being finalised and will be presented to them in early January for adoption in March. She noted that the Road Programme 2020 is now complete, outdoor recreation applications have been submitted and flood relief works in Portarlington are complete.</p> <p>She updated the members on various on-going Tourism projects and advised that the Tourism Officer will bring a presentation to council in the 1st quarter of 2021. She noted that work is on-going with environmental complaints, littering and she urged people to be vigilant. She welcomed the Part 8 approvals during 2020 and advised that a housing report will be presented to the members in January. She acknowledged the work carried out to complete the Disabled Persons Grant considering the delay in inspections due to Covid 19. She further acknowledged the large volume of work undertaken by the Library Service in providing various streaming/virtual services.</p> <p>Ms. A. Delaney advised the members that the Community response line would operate over Christmas and welcomed the Keep Well/ Community Resilience Fund with an allocation of €67,225 for Offaly to be spent over the coming months on a variety of actions as outlined in the monthly report. She updated the members on the Local Enterprise initiatives for Brexit, Covid-19, online trading and their shop local campaign</p> <p>Cllr. J Carroll thanked the Chief Executive for her comprehensive report and he formally congratulated NWCPO and Music Generation on winning national awards.</p> <p>Cllr. D. Harvey commended the LCDC on a very successful year. Cllr. J. Clendennen requested a presentation on the funding provided by the Leader programme. Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick commended the works carried out on the Portarlington Flood Relief.</p>

