

**Minutes of Meeting of Longford County Council
held in the Council Chamber and via Microsoft Teams on
Wednesday, 12 February at 4pm**

PRESIDING: Councillor Mark Casey

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Paul Ross, Niall Gannon, Garry Murtagh, Gerry Hagan, Padraig McNamara, Turlough McGovern, Martin Skelly, Seamus Butler, Uruemu Adejinmi, Mick Cahill, Pat O'Toole, Sean Mimmagh, David Cassidy, Kevin Hussey, Martin Monaghan, Peggy Nolan

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. Paddy Mahon, Chief Executive
Mr. Michael Nevin, A/Director of Services
Mr. John Brannigan, Director of Services
Ms. Barbara Heslin, Director of Services
Ms. Samantha Healy, Director of Services

APOLOGIES: Mr. John McKeon, Director of Services

MEETINGS

ADMINISTRATOR: Ms. Lorraine McKee

On the proposal of Councillor Paul Ross and seconded by Councillor Seamus Butler, the meeting was adjourned for fifteen minutes as a mark of respect on the recent passing of Mick Prunty RIP and Kevin Dempsey RIP. May they rest in peace. The members extended their deepest sympathies to all their families and friends on their sad untimely loss.

1. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- (i) On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler seconded by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi the Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Longford County Council held on 15 January 2025, as circulated, were confirmed, and adopted.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

None

4. MANAGEMENT REPORT

Noted

The Chief Executive, Paddy Mahon and the Elected Members complimented the work carried out by all those involved in Storm Éowyn. Barbara Heslin, Director of Services gave a detailed review of work involved by the Local Co-ordinator Group (Storm Éowyn).

5. (i) TO NOTE ADOPTED MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP MEETING HELD ON 09 DECEMBER 2024

Noted

6. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

(i) TO NOTE PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

Noted

(ii) NOTICE OF MOTIONS

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by the Fianna Fail Councillors and seconded by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi

We call on the Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Services, Reform and Digitisation to take action in response to the inadequate efforts of Uisce Éireann Management to restore supplies to consumers following recent storms as well as ongoing deficiencies and instruct Uisce Éireann to report directly to each Local Authority on all network outages, including water and sewage treatment plants, and work collaboratively with Local Authorities, taking their guidance on operations within their Municipal Districts to ensure a more efficient and responsive service for communities.

Response:

Longford County Council will write to the Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Services, Reform and Digitisation regarding the concerns of Elected Members as outlined in the Notice of Motion.

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Martin Skelly and seconded by Councillor Paul Ross

That generators be commissioned to back up our water reservoirs and a power system installed to operate these generators where none exists within our county. We must ensure that we have our water resources working when there is a power outage in the future.

Response:

Longford County Council will write to Uisce Éireann regarding the concerns of the Elected Members as outlined in the Notice of Motion.

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Paul Ross and seconded by Councillor Gerry Hagan

I call on Longford County Council to request ESB Networks to review their policy on trees in proximity to ESB power lines as most of the outages in the county were due to trees falling on power lines.

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Paul Ross and seconded by Councillor Gerry Hagan

I call on Longford County Council to notify all landowners of their legal responsibilities in relation to management of trees and hedgerows and issue legal proceedings to those who do not comply.

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Paul Ross and seconded by Councillor Gerry Hagan

That Longford County Council request the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Martin Heydon to introduce a grant scheme for farmers to remove dangerous trees especially Ash from road sides or near power cables.

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor David Cassidy and seconded by Councillor Martin Monaghan

I call upon Longford County Council to introduce and implement a program for the felling of trees under or in close proximity to overhead power cables throughout the county and to write to the Minister of Agriculture, Martin Heydon and the Junior Minister for Agriculture with responsibility for Forestry, Michael Healy-Rae to call on them to act upon and take action on the serious issue of existing forestry alongside or in close proximity to overhead power cables.

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Sean Mimmagh and seconded by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi

I call on Longford County Council to engage with farmers, landowners, and the Minister for Agriculture to develop and introduce a grant scheme aimed at

addressing the issues of trees along our road networks, especially those in poor condition due to ash dieback disease.

The recent storm highlighted the critical risks posed by these trees, which caused widespread damage to electricity lines and broadband infrastructure across the county. This disruption cannot be allowed to continue. I'm urging Longford County Council to advocate for this support at a national level.

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Martin Monaghan and seconded by Councillor Mick Cahill

I call on Longford County Council, in light of the recent severe storm where 90 percent of the electric faults were caused by falling trees and branches, to call in the relevant service providers and farmers to compile a plan of action to cut back and remove where necessary trees etc, that may contribute to future damage to the network. State bodies should be contacted to provide the necessary supports to farmers as required.

Response to Notice of Motion from Cllr Paul Ross, Cllr David Cassidy, Cllr Sean Mimnagh and Cllr Martin Monaghan

That Longford County Council will write to ESB Networks regarding the concerns of the Elected Members as outlined in the Notice of Motion. The Council will also request ESB Networks to review their policy on trees in proximity to power lines.

That Longford County Council will also write to the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Junior Minister for Forestry regarding the concerns of the Elected Members as outlined in the Notice of Motion.

Longford County Council publishes public notices bi-annually (in February and September) advising all landowners of their responsibility regarding trees on their land under Section 70 of the Roads Act 1993. There is a Statutory Obligation on landowners and occupiers to ensure that roadside trees do not present a danger to road users.

Longford County Council is not in a position to implement a programme of felling trees as requested in Councillor Cassidy's Notice of Motion. The Council does not have the resources, including financial, human or expertise, to do so. The Council would also not have authority to access private lands to carry out these works.

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor David Cassidy and seconded by Councillor Martin Monaghan

I call upon Longford County Council to write to and liaise with ASD Ireland to identify and allocate Autism Friendly Parking Spaces throughout our towns in Co. Longford

Response:

Longford County Council will write to ASD Ireland regarding the proposal of the Elected Members as outlined in the Notice of Motion.

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Martin Monaghan and seconded by Councillor Mick Cahill

I call on Longford County Council to explore the options of exchanging some if not all of the street lighting in our towns, villages and junctions where lighting is in place, to solar powered lighting thus ensuring that during outages we have lighting to facilitate the safety of residents, road users and people using the town.

Response:

Longford County Council has considered this Notice of Motion and consulted with our Public Lighting Contractor regarding the viability of the request.

The main issue with Solar Powered lighting for use as public lighting for the main streets/national roads etc is the amount of power required to operate a lantern over the extended winter nights, and the long winter season that we have. In theory this is possible, but it requires a large solar array to capture the sunlight and considerable batteries to store the light. To hold this in place specifically designed lighting columns are required. It is not a matter of adapting our current public lighting but completely removing the existing system and replacing it with an entirely new system.

In addition, the ongoing maintenance cost of solar powered lighting is considerably higher than traditional lighting. Issues with batteries are commonplace and battery lifespan is limited. Poor weather over the winter reduces the capture of solar power. In colder temperatures battery capacity reduces drastically.

The majority of funding for Public Lighting comes from Longford County Council own resources and over the last fifteen years we have invested heavily in upgrading our lighting stock to LEDs with more than 80% of lights now upgraded.

Switching to solar lighting would not be considered an option for the reasons outlined.

7. GENERAL

Cathaoirleach Mark Casey welcomed the two new Senators, Senator Joe Flaherty & Senator Paraic Brady to County Longford. He wishes them both the very best of luck in their new positions. The Elected Members extended their congratulations to both Senator Joe Flaherty & Senator Paraic Brady.

8. TRAINING FOR APPROVAL

Noted

9. CORRESPONDENCE

Noted

10. VOTES OF SYMPATHY

The Elected Members extended their sympathies on the recent passing of Mike Prunty RIP & Kevin Dempsey RIP. May they rest in peace.

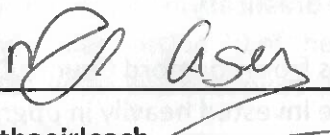
11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Longford County Council will take place on Wednesday, 12 March 2025 at 4pm in the Council Chamber.

Signed: Lorraine McKee

Lorraine McKee
Meetings Administrator

Confirmed and adopted at Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 12 March 2025.

Signed: 
Cathaoirleach