**Minutes of Meeting of Longford County Council**

**held in Longford Rugby Club and via Microsoft Teams on**

**Wednesday, 14th July 2021 at 3.00pm**

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**PRESIDING**: Councillor Peggy Nolan, Cathaoirleach.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**: Councillors – Paraic Brady, John Browne, Seamus Butler, Mick Cahill, Mark Casey, Colin Dalton,

Gerard Hagan, Martin Monaghan, Garry Murtagh, Paul Ross,

Pat O’Toole, P.J. Reilly, Uruemu Adejinmi, Gerard Farrell, Colm Murray and Gerry Warnock.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**  Mr. Paddy Mahon, Chief Executive.

Mr. John McKeon, Head of Finance/Director of Services.

Mr. John Brannigan, Director of Services.

Ms. Barbara Heslin, Director of Services.

Ms. Nora O’Farrell, Senior Executive Officer.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Turlough McGovern.

**MEETINGS**

**ADMINISTRATOR**: Ann Marie Mc Keon

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting of the Council was adjourned for fifteen minutes as a mark of respect on the death of a former member of Longford Town Council and County Council, Peter Clarke.

**PROTOCOLS FOR MEETINGS OF LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL HELD DURING COVID-19**

The Cathaoirleach reminded the members of the protocols in place for the meeting and the COVID-19 safety measures which must be complied with before, during and after the meeting.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray, seconded by Councillor Seamus Butler, the Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 9th June 2021, as circulated, were confirmed and adopted.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

Councillor Seamus Butler asked if a response to his Notice of Motion was received from the Department of Justice. Barbara Heslin confirmed that a comprehensive response was received, and it would be included on the agenda for the September meeting of the Council. It was agreed at the meeting to circulate the response to the Elected Members.

**DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

None.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

The Chief Executive Report, as circulated, was noted.

Councillor Gerry Warnock highlighted the need for funding to be ringfenced for the upkeep and maintenance of the Royal Canal Green Longford town spur. Paddy Mahon confirmed that this would be discussed with Waterways Ireland and consideration to funding be considered as part of the 2022 budget process.

**MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP MEETING HELD ON THE 11TH MAY 2021 - CIRCULATED**

The adopted Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on the 11th May 2021, as circulated, were noted.

**FINANCE & REGENERATION**

**To consider the Local Property Tax Variation in accordance with the provisions of**

**Section 20 of the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act 2012 (as amended)**

John Mc Keon gave a very high-level report to the members and responded to the queries raised –

* 95% of Longford LPT Payers pay less than €5 week.
* 66% of these pay less than €2 week.
* Nearly 10,700 LPT payers pay €103.50 per annum.
* This amounts to a Return on Investment of 518% to those Longford LPT payers.
* No proposed change for 2022**.**

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray, seconded by Councillor Seamus Butler the Local Property Tax Variation in accordance with the provisions of Section 20 of the Finance (Local Property Tax Act 2021 as amended was unanimously adopted by the members.

**STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Planning Applications**

The list of Planning Applications received since last meeting of the Council were noted.

**Disposal of Property at Soran, Ballinalee, County Longford.**

On the proposal of Councillor Colin Dalton seconded by Councillor Colm Murray, it was unanimously agreed to dispose of property at Soran, Ballinalee, Longford in accordance with the terms of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 issued on the 9th June 2021, as circulated.

**Disposal of Freehold Interest at 134 Teffia Park, Longford.**

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler seconded by Councillor John Browne, it was unanimously agreed to dispose of the freehold Interest at 134 Teffia Park, Longford in accordance with the terms of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 issued on the 5th May 2021, as circulated.

**Disposal of Freehold Interest at 8 Demesne, Lisbrack Road, Longford.**

On the proposal of Councillor Peggy Nolan seconded by Councillor Seamus Butler, it was

unanimously agreed to dispose of the freehold interest at 8 Demesne, Lisbrack Road,

Longford in accordance with the terms of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001

issued on the 17th May 2021

**Notices of Motions, submitted by Councillors, as listed hereunder -**

**Ash Dieback**

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Martin Monaghan and seconded by Councillor Colm Murray -

Ash dieback has become a major blight countrywide and I am calling on Longford County Council with the help of all relevant stakeholders to conduct a survey on all our roadsides in county Longford,  before the winter season and high winds commence, to assess the damage that has been caused to our ash tree population and to remove any infected and dangerous trees. I understand that this is a major undertaking but with landowners and Coillte’s expertise I believe that this is possible. This may prevent serious hazards to all our road users during the winter.

**Response**

In raising awareness of the need to maintain roadside trees and hedges, Longford County Council remind landowners that they are obliged, under the Roads Act of 1993, to take all reasonable care to ensure that trees, ditches, hedges and other vegetation growing on their land do not pose a danger to people using or working on a public road or public footpath.  Landowners are also reminded that liability for damage, or injury resulting from such hazards, will rest with them.

Uncut hedges and trees are a serious road safety hazard and can cause substantial damage to vehicles, particularly heavy goods vehicles. Examples of hazards include dead or dying trees, ditches or hedges interfering with traffic, blocking footpaths, obscuring road signs, public lighting, or road users’ visibility.

Landowners/occupiers are required to fell, cut, log, trim or remove such trees, ditches and hedges. Particular attention should be given to damaged or weakened trees or limbs and stumps of felled trees as a result of storms and to ensure that all necessary work should be carried out while hedges are dormant from the beginning of September to the end of February.

Landowners who have concerns regarding ash dieback should contact the Forestry Division of the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine for further advice.

**COMMUNITY, CORPORATE AND ENTERPRISE**

**Electoral Reform – Update on Electoral Register Modernisation Project**

Nora O’Farrell gave a comprehensive presentation on the Electoral Form and responded to

the questions raised by the members –

* Establishment of an independent Electoral commission
* Modernisation of the Electoral Register
* Provide framework for regulation of online political advertising
* Measures to facilitate the holding of elections in COVID pandemic situations
* Particular electoral provisions to address societal matters of homelessness, and situations of domestic abuse
* Abolition of edited register
* Introduction of a rolling or continually updating Register
* More simplified and convenient for electors as they can register or update their details at any time – through online or manual registration – will encourage voter participation
* Individual Registration with Forms will be available online and electors will provide PPSN, Eircode and DOB
* Removal of all references to qualifying dates
* New provision to allow 16- and 17-years olds to Pre-Register to vote
* Single National Electoral Register Database
* Local Authorities remain responsible for updating Register on basis of applications that come in at any time
* A date will be carefully chosen to commence this section
* Register and supplement in force on that date will become the rolling register

signalled that is expected in 2022Anonymous registration

* Council will prepare and publish Draft Register for 2022/2023
* Work on same due to commence shortly
* Complete any required Data Cleansing in advance of implementation of revised legislation & system

Nora responded to the queries raised by the Elected Members including:

* Migration to the new system and the data cleansing exercise
* Removing individuals from the register
* Information required for registration
* Legislative requirements
* Location of polling stations

**Approval to the appointment of Ms. Aine Bohan, nominee of the Department of**

**Employment Affairs and Social Protection, to replace Ms Grainne O’Donnell as a**

**member of Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)**

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler and Seconded by Councillor Colm Murray, Aine Bohan was appointed to the Longford Local Community Development Committee.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Meeting of the Council was adjourned for ten minutes to allow the members discuss the nominations to the Longford Community Safety Partnership.

**Appointment of seven Elected Members to Longford Community Safety Partnership**

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray and seconded by Councillor Seamus Butler the following members were appointed to the Longford Community Safety Partnership – Councillors – Peggy Nolan, Seamus Butler, Paul Ross, Gerry Warnock, Colin Dalton, Uruemu Adejinmi and PJ Reilly.

Councillor Brady acknowledged Councillor Garry Murtagh for standing aside to allow Councillor Warnock to become a member of the committee.

**Notices of Motions, submitted by Councillors, as listed hereunder –**

**Ballymore Ladies**

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Colin Dalton and seconded by Councillor Turlough Mc Govern -

I am calling on Longford County Council to recognise the great Achievement of Ballymore Ladies footballers on winning the Leinster Junior Ladies Club Championship. It would be great if they were recognised at the 2021 sports awards, when restrictions are lifted.

**Response**

It was agreed by the Elected Members that, subject to public health advice permitting, consideration will be given to hosting a Sports Awards evening to celebrate the achievements of sporting individuals and teams.

**GENERAL**

**Notices of Motions, submitted by Councillors, as listed hereunder –**

**Centre of Excellence for Apprenticeships**

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Martin Monaghan and seconded by Councillor Peggy Nolan -

Following on from the recent announcements regarding the massive regeneration projects

planned for Longford town and County and the timely proposed extension of Centre Parcs,

that we as councillors, with the backing of Longford County Council, seek a Centre of

Excellence to be based in the county for apprenticeships as a matter of urgency to address the

demands and shortfalls in specific areas such as Plumbing, Electrical and general building

trades.

**Response**

It was agreed by the Elected Members that Longford County Council will write to the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris TD and Minister of State for Skills and Further Education, Niall Collins TD and LWETB requesting that consideration be given to the development of a Centre of Excellence for apprenticeships in County Longford.

**AED Locations**

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Martin Monaghan and seconded by Councillor Paraic Brady -

In light of recent sporting events, that Longford County Council engage with all relevant

stakeholders and complete a comprehensive map of all AED locations within the county and

make available on its website and the Map Alerter app. Also, to seek funding towards the

upgrading of maintenance and replacement of same and to assist all groups, as required, to

roll out mandatory training.

**Response**

It was agreed by the Elected Members that Longford County Council will write to the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin TD, Minister of State for Gaeltacht and Sport, Jack Chambers TD requesting that consideration be given to the development of a national app to register all Automated External Defibrillator and ask that funding towards the upgrading, maintenance and replacement of AEDs together with funding for mandatory training be made available to groups.

**School Transport System**

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Garry Murtagh and seconded by Councillor Paraic Brady -

I call on Longford County Council to write to the Minister  for Transport  Eamon Ryan to review the school transport system in rural counties such as Longford and in particular North Longford, where there is a very high concentration and complex roads network which  proves extremely difficult in the planning of bus routes.

The allocation of one additional bus in support of the service provided, crossing a number of routes would solve the problem of overcrowding and children been refused a ticket due to the lack of places available on the national school transport system.

**Response**

It was agreed by the Elected Members that Longford County Council will write to the Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan TD requesting a review of the school transport system in rural counties where there is a very high concentration and complex roads network which proves extremely difficult in the planning of bus routes.

**Workplace Internship**

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi and seconded by Councillor Colm Murray -

I call on Longford County Council to explore the options available to facilitate young people from Longford in participating in a workplace internship with their local authority to gain valuable experience in local government, local services and local policy development. This is an opportunity for young people to have meaningful, challenging work within the community and consider a career working in the Local Authority. They will also see the effects of the work the Council is doing in their community.

**Response**

The Local Authority Graduate Recruitment Programme, which is designed as an entry level recruitment process, currently facilitates graduates entering the Local Government Sector and is a programme that facilitates participants with gaining experience in the County Council. This is a programme that is in place nationally and provides employment over a 3-year period. Longford County Council participates in this programme.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Longford County Council did facilitate local initiatives through students on work experience, however this is currently paused as a result of the pandemic but is expected to resume when Public Health Guidelines allow.

**CORRESPONDENCE – as circulated**

Correspondence dated 14th June 2021 received from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage – Reply to Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Gerry Warnock and Martin Monaghan was noted.

Correspondence dated 14th June 2021 received from the Department of Transport –

Reply to Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Garry Murtagh was noted.

Correspondence dated 16th June 2021 received from the Department of Agriculture - Reply to

Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Paul Ross was noted.

**Votes of Sympathy**

To be forwarded to the Meetings Administrator

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**Ann Marie Mc Keon**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Ann Marie Mc Keon,**

**Meetings Administrator.**

**Confirmed and adopted at Meeting of Longford County Council held on the**

**8th September 2021.**

**Peggy Nolan**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Cathaoirleach.**