

**Minutes of Meeting of Longford County Council**

**held in Granard Library, Granard on**

**Wednesday, 14 December 2022 at 4pm**

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**PRESIDING**: Councillor Turlough Mc Govern, Cathaoirleach

**MEMBERS PRESENT**: Councillors –John Browne, PJ Reilly, Gerry Warnock, Seamus Butler, Mick Cahill, Colin Dalton, Mark Casey, Gerry Hagan, Paul Ross, Pat O’Toole, Colm Murray, Garry Murtagh, Peggy Nolan and Paraic Brady

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

Ms. Barbara Heslin, Director of Services

Mr. John Brannigan, Director of Services

Ms. Samantha Healy, Director of Services

Ms. Fema Farrell, A/ Head of Finance/Director of Services

Mr. Michael Nevin, A/Director of Services

**APOLOGIES:** Mr. John McKeon, Head of Finance/Director of Services

Councillors Uruemu Adejinmi, Martin Monaghan and Gerard

Farrell

**MEETINGS**

**ADMINISTRATOR**: Ann Marie Mc Keon

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray seconded by Councillor Mick Cahill the Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 9 November 2022, as circulated, were confirmed and adopted.

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray seconded by Councillor Mick Cahill the Minutes of Committee Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 24 October 2022, as circulated, were confirmed and adopted.

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray seconded by Councillor Mick Cahill the Minutes of Finance Committee Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 14 November 2022, as circulated, were confirmed and adopted.

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray seconded by Councillor Mick Cahill the Minutes of Budget Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 21 November 2022, as circulated, were confirmed and adopted.

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray seconded by Councillor Mick Cahill the Minutes of Adjourned Budget Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 25 November 2022, as circulated, were confirmed and adopted.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

Councillor John Browne sought an update on the railings at the premises on Main Street, Longford close to the post office, Director of Services, John Brannigan replied that the Council is in talks with the owner of the building.

**DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

None.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

Noted. Councillor Garry Murtagh requested that the road from Aughnacliffe to Aughadowry, and from Aughadowry to Esker cross be included in the Winter Service Plan. Director of Services, Samantha Healy confirmed that these roads would be included when the review of the existing plan takes place.

Councillor Gerry Hagan sought an update on the Ballinalee Road and enquired when works would be completed. Councillor Hagan asked that the road would be opened fully to the public from next week. Samantha Healy confirmed that due to the drop in temperatures the final surface dressing works could not be completed and they are working daily with the contractor to finish the works and to remove the traffic management. Councillor Seamus Butler asked that this would be a priority to remove the traffic management.

Councillor Gerry Warnock acknowledged the work of the Director of Services and employees of housing in their assistance with the proposed Affordable Housing Scheme for Longford town.

**MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP MEETING HELD ON THE 11 OCTOBER 2022 - CIRCULATED**

The adopted Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on the 11 October 2022, as circulated, were noted.

**FINANCE AND IT**

**NOAC Local Authority Performance Indicator Report 2021 – as circulated**

The NOAC Local Authority Performance Indicator Report 2021 was noted.

**COMMUNITY, CORPORATE AND ENTERPRISE**

**ITEM REFERRED FROM PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE**

**MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2022 AND PLACEMAKING STRATEGIC**

**POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2022:**

**Consideration of draft Commemorative Plaques and Monuments Policy – as circulated**

On the proposal of Councillor Peggy Nolan, seconded by Councillor Pat O’Toole the members unanimously adopted the Commemorative Plaques and Monuments Policy as circulated.

**ITEM REFERRED FROM PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE**

**MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2022:**

**Consideration of Terms of Reference for Protocols and Procedure Committee – as circulated**

On the proposal of Councillor Paul Ross, seconded by Councillor Gerry Warnock the members unanimously adopted the Terms of Reference for Protocols and Procedure Committee as circulated.

**ITEM REFERRED FROM PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2022:**

**Consideration of Terms of Reference for Place Naming Committee – as circulated**

On the proposal of Councillor Paul Ross, seconded by Councillor Gerry Warnock the members unanimously adopted the Terms of Reference for Place Naming Committee as circulated.

**ITEM REFERRED FROM PLACEMAKING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE**

**MEETING HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2022:**

**Consideration of draft Twinning Policy – as circulated**

Paul Ross, Cathaoirleach of the Placemaking SPC informed the members that Longford County Council recognised the need for a policy to manage twinning arrangements to ensure the legislative requirements are met. The purpose of this document and policy is to

* Outline the legislative requirements for twinning arrangements
* Develop criteria on which twinning applications can be assessed
* Put in place a process to review existing arrangements
* Provide general information and guidance for all Members, Management Team, Community Groups and employees

On the proposal of Councillor Paul Ross, seconded by Councillor Turlough Mc Govern the members unanimously adopted the Twinning Policy as circulated.

**ITEM REFERRED FROM THE PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE**

**MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2022:**

**Consideration of amendments to Civic Protocols (updated October 2022) – as circulated**

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray, seconded by Councillor Paul Ross the members unanimously adopted the amendments to Civic Protocols as circulated.

**PROTOCOL FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS MADE AGAINST ELECTED MEMBERS OF LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL – AS CIRCULATED**

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler, seconded by Councillor Colm Murray the members unanimously adopted the protocol for dealing with complaints made against elected members of Longford County Council as circulated.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CORPORATE PLAN**

Chief Executive Paddy Mahon gave the Members a high-level overview of the achievements for 2021 in relation to the implementation of the Corporate Plan. He explained that the Corporate Plan informs the Service Deliver Plans for the organisations which in turn guide the Team Plans and ultimate Individual Performance Development Plans.

A summary was provided to the Elected Members and a comprehensive report is available on request. The report recognised the contribution of employees and Elected Members in delivering on the strategic objectives of the Corporate Plan.

**POLITICAL DONATIONS - LOCAL ELECTIONS (DISCLOSURE OF DONATIONS**

**AND EXPENDITURE) ACT 1999, AS AMENDED - MEMBERS OF LOCAL**

**AUTHORITIES. (DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES AND FORMS FOR**

**COMPLETION WILL BE CIRCULATED)**

A summary was provided to the Elected Members and the importance of adhering to the deadlines was emphasised by Barbara Heslin.

**POLITICAL DONATIONS - LOCAL ELECTIONS (DISCLOSURE OF DONATION**

**AND EXPENDITURE) ACT 1999, AS AMENDED - THIRD PARTIES.**

**(DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES AND FORMS FOR COMPLETION WILL BE**

**CIRCULATED)**

A summary was provided to the Elected Members and the importance of adhering to the deadlines was emphasised by Barbara Heslin.

**DATE OF JANUARY 2023 COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 18 JANUARY 2023**

On the proposal of Councillor Paul Ross, seconded by Councillor Pat O’Toole the members unanimously agreed to hold the January 2023 meeting of Longford County Council on 18 January 2023.

As per Standing Orders, Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi in her absence requested that Councillor Pat O’Toole move this motion on her behalf.

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Pat O’Toole and seconded by Councillor Seamus Butler**

Calling on Longford County Council to seek funding from the Department of Disability to provide inclusive playground equipment in all recreational areas so that children of all ages and abilities can enjoy playing together.

**Response**

Longford County Council avails of a number of different funding opportunities to increase the level of participation of people with disabilities taking part in sport and physical activity in their communities. These include:

[**Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth**](https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-children-equality-disability-integration-and-youth/) (**DCEDIY)**

Longford County Council can apply to DCEDIY, under the annual Capital Grant Scheme for Play and Recreation, for one project, with funding being capped at €18,000 for each Local Authority. The Department maximum grant of €18,000 is targeted mainly at upgrades and the Council can only apply for 1 playground. The awarding of this funding is contingent on the Local Authority co-funding each successful project.

Funding can cover:

* Inclusive basket swing seat
* Wheelchair accessible swing
* Sensory Equipment
* Natural Play Areas
* Accessibility/Biodiversity Playground upgrade(s)
* Learn to cycle track
* Inclusive carousel

The Council seeks to also include accessible equipment as far as possible when replacing equipment or acquiring new equipment for playgrounds.

**Healthy Ireland Programme**

A Communication Board is a type of augmentative and alternative communication providing ready access to core and fringe words. The boards are primarily a communications support, with particular benefit to children and adults who are either pre-verbal or non-verbal and/or have communication difficulties. Communication Boards which include picture representations of day-to-day words relevant to the setting, help bridge the communication gap and serve to connect people. They also act as a symbol of inclusion for children and their families and benefit everyone involved in the communication transaction.

A playground embraces play, imagination, creativity, nature and a sense of community and is a prime location to engage elements that are at the core of any child’s development. The playground Communication Boards are designed to assist children in this setting to communicate together with their peers, offering a means to share thoughts, express needs and emotions, to negotiate, to take turns and ask for help.

Longford County Council has already installed playground communication boards in several playgrounds including Newtownforbes and Albert Reynolds Peace Park. The Council has ordered additional boards for the remaining playgrounds. These will be funded through the Healthy Ireland programme.

**Sports Inclusion Disability Plan (SIDP) Capital Supports – Dormant Account Funding through Sport Ireland**

This initiative provides capital support to the implementation of the SIDP. The fund aims to reduce the barriers to sports participation for people with a disability through the provision of equipment and minor infrastructure. The fund can be used to purchase a range of disability sports equipment and enabling infrastructure including hoists, handrails, fittings, mats, wheelchairs etc.

The fund is a competitive bid process in which applications by Local Sports Partnerships are required to identify equipment or infrastructure works which will increase participation in sport or physical activity for people with a disability in their county and must demonstrate a match fund to a level of minimum of 25%, of either monetary and / or benefit in kind to ensure partnership working. Local Sports Partnerships are also required to demonstrate links to their existing activity, programmes and initiatives, in the development of opportunities for people with a disability to engage in sport and physical activity.

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Mark Casey and seconded by Councillor Gerry Warnock**

Following my proposal that was seconded at the budget meeting that Longford County Council use the €55k euro that was allocated for new playgrounds in the budget to provide a new playground in Ardagh.

**Response**

Subject to this notice of motion being agreed by the Elected Members Longford County Council will engage with the relevant stakeholders in Ardagh with a view to planning and developing a new playground in Ardagh.

Longford County Council and community groups avail of a number of different funding opportunities to provide, refurbish, upgrade and maintain playgrounds in communities.

Longford County Council can assist the community in making an application for CLÁR funding or, alternatively, the Council can make an application for funding to DCEDIY in 2023 for a new playground in Ardagh. Matched funding from the Council’s capital account will be required for both options.

A summary of the funding alternatives is outlined below, with information of the grant funding available and the requirement for matched funding.

**CLÁR**

CLÁR funding is available for the development of community facilities and amenities. It provides funding for projects which contribute to the enhancement of existing, and/or the development of new, accessible Community Recreation Facilities. This includes playgrounds.

Up to 90% funding is available from the DRCD – the minimum grant is €5,000 and a maximum grant available of €50,000. Longford County Council will provide 5% matched funding with the community providing the remaining 5%.

All newly developed community facilities and amenities funded under the CLÁR programme must be disability friendly.

The local community in Ardagh could explore 2023 CLÁR funding to develop a second playground in Ardagh as a community project. Longford Council will provide matched funding of 5% and advice to the community around the development of an application, selection of equipment and names of suppliers, etc.

[**Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth**](https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-children-equality-disability-integration-and-youth/)

Under the annual Capital Grant Scheme for Play and Recreation, Longford County Council can apply to DCEDIY for one project, with funding being capped at €18,000 for each Local Authority. The awarding of this funding is contingent on the Local Authority co-funding each successful project.

Funding can cover:

* Inclusive basket swing seat
* Wheelchair accessible swing
* Sensory Equipment
* Natural Play Areas
* Accessibility/Biodiversity Playground upgrade(s)
* Learn to cycle track
* Inclusive carousel

**Longford County Council Revenue Budget**

The 2023 Revenue Budget covers the costs associated with

* Ensuring that playgrounds are maintained to a high standard
* Identifying opportunities to improve existing playgrounds and respond to the needs of children using our playgrounds
* Increasing accessibility of playgrounds for children with disabilities
* Maintenance, repair and upgrade of existing playground equipment
* Inspections and plan of works in individual Municipal Districts (in rotation – 2023: Ballymahon Municipal District)
* Matched funding for Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Programmes (DCEDIY)
* Including QR codes to improve accessibility of the Outdoor Gym Equipment (e.g., at the mall)
* Providing new communication boards in all playgrounds
* Providing quiet area for children with autism

**PLANNING AND PROJECT DELIVERY**

**Planning Applications**

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

**Consideration of Part VIII No 98 - Rose Cottage, Ballinalee, County Longford. Report**

**in accordance with Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) – as circulated**

On the proposal of Councillor Colin Dalton, seconded by Councillor Peggy Nolan, the members unanimously approved the Part VIII No 98 – Rose Cottage, Ballinalee, County Longford. Report in accordance with Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) as circulated.

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Gerry Warnock and seconded by Councillor Gerry Hagan**

I am calling on the Executive of Longford County Council to immediately withdraw its consent for the OPW to consider the former Longford Greyhound Stadium site as a potential location for modular housing. The site is an inappropriate location given the existing proliferation of housing in the south of Longford Town. The site was historically bequeathed to the "People of Longford for the enjoyment of the People of Longford" as a recreational amenity and we have protected it as such in every Town & County Development Plan. The site was never intended for housing of any kind and is a key Regeneration Site here in Longford Town and must be safeguarded for future generations to utilise as a recreational or sporting amenity. We have already suggested a suitable location for temporary accommodation within the Connolly Barrack complex by way of investing in the Barracks Building for apartment type accommodation to help with the humanitarian efforts.

**Response**

Under an EU directive, the Office of Public Works (OPW) has been tasked with delivering modular homes to assist the government in its response to the Ukrainian Crisis. Each local authority was asked by the OPW to identify sites owned by public bodies where a minimum of 40 modular homes could be erected on a site of minimum 1 hectare in size, preferably a site in or close to an urban centre.

The OPW identified three feasible sites in Longford Town for consideration and is currently undertaking site assessments on all three sites, part of its process for determining suitability.

A/Director of Services, Michael Nevin confirmed that Longford County Council would notify the OPW that it no longer wanted the Greyhound Stadium in Longford Town to be considered as a potential site for Modular Housing. No decision has been made in relation to the suitability of any of the sites in question.

**GENERAL**

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Peggy Nolan and seconded by Councillor Paul Ross**

I am requesting that this Council engage with the HSE and demand the provision of at least four palliative care beds in Longford Town. The fact that fourteen such beds are being placed in Tullamore to serve the needs of Longford is totally unacceptable as there is no transport links to Tullamore.

**Response**

The members unanimously agreed to write to the HSE to demand the provision of at least four palliative care beds in Longford Town and to invite them to a meeting with the elected members.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Correspondence dated 14 November 2022 received from the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage - Re Notice of Motion from Councillor Paul Ross on social housing income limits – as circulated was noted.

Correspondence dated 30 November 2022 received from the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine – Re Notice of Motion from Councillor Pauric Brady on the extension of the closing date for ACRES measure – as circulated was noted.

Correspondence – Extension of Tenure Period of Chief Executive as circulated was noted.

**TRAINING**

Report from the Corporate Policy Group on training was noted.

**SYMPATHY**

Councillor Colm Murray and the elected members extended their deepest sympathy to John Nolan and family on the death of Joan. May she rest in peace.

The Cathaoirleach wished the members and executive a very happy Christmas and he acknowledged the extensive work carried out by the employees and executive during 2022 and looked forward to working with everyone in 2023.

The members and executive wished Ann Marie well on her career break.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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

**Ann Marie Mc Keon**

**Meetings Administrator**

**Confirmed and adopted at Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 18 January 2023.**

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

**Cathaoirleach.**

