

**Minutes of Meeting of Longford County Council**

**held via Microsoft Teams on**

**Wednesday, 11 May 2022 at 3pm**

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**PRESIDING**: Councillor Peggy Nolan, Cathaoirleach

**MEMBERS PRESENT**: Councillors –John Browne, Seamus Butler, Mick Cahill, Colin Dalton, PJ Reilly, Gerard Hagan, Martin Monaghan, Paul Ross, Pat O’Toole, Colm Murray, Garry Murtagh, Mark Casey, Turlough Mc Govern, Gerard Farrell, Uruemu Adejinmi Paraic Brady and Gerry Warnock.

**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

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

**MEETINGS**

**ADMINISTRATOR**: Ann Marie Mc Keon

**SKATER’S COMMITTEE PRESENTATION**

Cathaoirleach Councillor Peggy Nolan welcomed Sarah Jane Mc Naboe, Mark Noble and Daniel and Lauren to the meeting.

Lauren and Daniel introduced themselves and explained that they represented the skateboarding community in Longford Town. They are both Longford natives with twenty years of skateboarding experience between them.

The closest parks to Longford are Athlone, Mullingar and Cavan which provide for a safe, comfortable place to skate. We share the same sentiment as many people do in our community; why does Longford Town not have our own skatepark?

The skaters in this town have struggled to find a place where they are accepted, skating on the path or streets can be dangerous to them and pedestrians.

Benefits of skateboarding

* Skating is a great form of athleticism and has now been a resent addition to the Olympics as of 2021.
* Like any sport skating is great for mental health and teaches you to grow and overcome challenges
* Skating provides a sense of community for those who feel left out by having no interest in such sports as GAA and soccer. It is both a sport you can practice by yourself as well find fun with friends.
* Skateboarding is no longer a fringe sport and like many sports offer an opportunity to make a career skating can offer that to. I believe the young people of Longford town should have the space to pursue that if that is their goal, the youth must be nurtured.

County Longford Youth Service have assisted us to date, and we held the first meeting of Longford Town Skate Park Committee in the youth room in the Longford Community Resources Centre.

We are here today to ask Longford County Council to support us in securing a site for the skate-boarding community and to ensure that we have an input into the decisions/plans for the development.

The members unanimously supported the project and Lauren and Daniel responded to the questions raised.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the proposal of Councillor Paraic Brady seconded by Councillor Gerry Hagan the Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 13 April 2022, as circulated, were confirmed and adopted.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

None.

**DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

None.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

Noted.

**MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP MEETING HELD ON THE 8 MARCH 2022 - CIRCULATED**

The adopted Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on the 8 March 2022, as circulated, were noted.

**PLANNING AND PROJECT DELIVERY**

**Planning Applications**

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

**To note adopted Minutes of meeting of Climate Action and Planning Strategic Policy**

**Committee held on the 21 January – as circulated were noted.**

**COMMUNITY, CORPORATE AND ENTERPRISE**

**To note adopted Minutes of meeting of Placemaking Strategic Policy Committee held on the 31 January 2022 – as circulated were noted.**

**Confirmation of dates for Annual General Meeting**

 Longford County Council 29 June 2022

 Granard Municipal District 28 June 2022

 Longford Municipal District 22 June 2022

Ballymahon Municipal District 23 June 2022

On the proposal of Councillor Paul Ross, seconded by Councillor Colm Murray the dates for the Annual General Meeting were agreed with the exception of Ballymahon Municipal District whose Annual General Meeting will be held on the 29 June 2022 in the Council Chamber

**Corporate Plan Update - NOAC Report**

Director of Services, Barbara Heslin informed the elected members of the positive feed back in the NOAC Report in relation to the Corporate Plan

* Very good with respect to the delivery of the corporate plan, and the importance of ensuring that work programmes for each department include references to the priorities in the Plan
* Tools and principles of implementation, monitoring and review were very good
* Was one of the few Plans that mentioned the delivery of the corporate plan was part of each employee’s personal annual service plan, and their work activities
* Good at recognising the role of citizens and the community in holding the local authority to account, through strategic policy committees and local community development committees

Barbara presented the three recommendations

* Consultation
* Links to wider policy context – Measurement and Review- Human Rights Duty –Vision and Mission
* Budgets and Risk

On the proposal of Councillor Mick Cahill, seconded by Councillor John Browne, the members unanimously accepted the three recommendations as presented.

**Polling Scheme Review**

Barbara Heslin informed the elected members that Longford County Council are undertaking a review of the polling scheme and a presentation will be given to the elected members at each municipal district meeting in May highlighting the proposed changes.

**Consideration to approve grants under the 2022 Intercultural Grants Scheme – as circulated**

On the proposal of Councillor PJ Reilly, seconded by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi the members unanimously approved the 2022 Intercultural Grant as circulated.

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

I welcome the online application for the Community Grant Support Scheme 2022 for community groups, however I am proposing that a hard copy option be made available to Community Groups whose members may not be computer literate, have access to the internet or a computer.

**Response**

The closing date for the Community Grant Support Scheme 2022 is 29 April 2022. The new online process delivers on objectives and actions in the Council’s Corporate Plan, LECP, Digital Strategy and Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

A blended option of hard copy and online applications will not be introduced. However, Longford County Council will continue to assist community groups apply for funding online. A number of short technical support videos are available for applicants on the Council’s website. This is the second grant scheme which has been provided using required online applications. A technical support information session was provided to the public in January 2022 and the majority of the queries related to the actual scheme itself rather than IT issues. The Community Activities Fund saw 130 applications successfully processed through the new online system.

In addition, applicants who may not have access to the internet or their own computer can be facilitated at any of the BCP’s or public libraries in the county.

The Community Development team are assisting applicants with their online applications and are proactively contacting any applicant who appears to be having difficulty submitting their application.

Longford County Council is also assisting groups and individuals in improving their digital skills.

* Basic Digital Skills training has been provided through our Creative Ireland programme.
* The Library Service is providing one to one basic digital skills training in our libraries.
* Longford Library has, on an ongoing basis, partnered with Longford ETB and Age and Opportunity Ireland in delivering basic training on internet, email, social media, apps, etc.
* The Council is currently working with the Community Education facilitator (LWETB) to roll out digital skills in the BCP network. The first of these classes has commenced in Mullinalaghta Community Centre.
* Vodafone Foundation/HiDigital has also agreed to run a free digital training course in Moydow Community Centre, dates to be confirmed.
* Age Friendly Ireland in partnership with Acorn have developed an Age Friendly Tablet dedicated to developing solutions which promote social inclusion, health, wellbeing and encourage digital citizenship for all ages. The tablet is preconfigured for all users and companion apps are provided to trainers who are assigned to support interaction with community Acorn users. Longford County Council has a number of these on loan to individuals and hopes to expand the scheme.

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Martin Monaghan and seconded by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi -**

**Playground Inclusion Boards**

“I call on Longford County Council to provide and install playground inclusion boards in all playgrounds around the county. They are wonderful tools for children with autism, Down Syndrome etc. These boards and communication portals are in common use in schools and this measure would be the next step in making our playgrounds more inclusive for all children.”

**Response**

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 playgrounds in 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.

**INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND INNOVATION**

**To note adopted Minutes of meeting of Strategic Infrastructure Strategic Policy**

**Committee held on the 3 February 2022 – as circulated were noted.**

**Item referred from Strategic Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held**

**on the 21 April 2022:**

**To approve Longford County Council’s updated General Information Handbook and Home Maintenance Handbook for Tenants - as circulated**

On the proposal of Councillor Pat O’Toole, seconded by Cathaoirleach Councillor Peggy

Nolan, the members unanimously agreed to adopt the updated general information handbook

and home maintenance handbook for tenants as circulated.

**To approve Longford County Council’s Strategic Plan for Disabled People 2022-2027 and to report on progress in Q1 2022 – as circulated.**

On the proposal of Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi, seconded by Councillor Pat O’Toole,

the members unanimously agreed to adopt Longford County Council’s Strategic Plan for

Disabled People 2022 -2027 as circulated and noted the progress report on quarter one 2022

as circulated.

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Garry Murtagh and seconded by Councillor Martin Monaghan -**

**Housing Adaptation Grant**

I welcome the recent increase to the budget for Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability however, these increases do not go far enough. I am calling on the support of the elected members in writing to Darragh O'Brien Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Peter Burke Minister of State for the serious consideration and the increase to the amount allocated to each available Grant. Due to the spiralling costs and inflation of materials and labour, these Grants are no longer adequate in supporting the completion of works. In the majority of cases the applicant simply, cannot afford to carry out the necessary adaptions and repairs to their homes, these grants were understandable reduced by approximately 25 % in 2008 due to the downturn in the economy and have not been increased, leaving the most vulnerable in our society even further behind.

The members unanimously agreed to write a letter to Darragh O’Brien Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Peter Burke Minister of State.

**FINANCE**

**To note adopted Minutes of meeting of Governance Strategic Policy Committee held on the 2 February 2022 – as circulated were noted.**

**Item referred from Governance Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on the 26 April 2022 – Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy – as circulated.**

On the proposal of Councillor Garry Murtagh, seconded by Councillor PJ Reilly,

the members unanimously agreed to adopt the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy as

circulated.

**Consideration of Annual Financial Statement for Year ended 31 December 2021 –**

**- as circulated**

A/Head of Finance, Fema Flanagan brief the elected members on the Draft Annual Financial Statement 2021 and replied to queries raised by the members.

On the proposal of Councillor John Browne, seconded by Councillor Mick Cahill the Annual Financial Statement 2021 as circulated, was adopted by the members. subject to audit by the Local Government Auditor.

**Consideration of Approval of Additional Expenditure under S104(7) of the Local**

**Government Act 2001.**

On the proposal of Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi, seconded by Councillor PJ Reilly,

it was unanimously agreed to approve additional expenditure under S104(7) of the

Local Government Act 2001, as circulated to the members.

**To note 2021 Audit Committee Annual Report – as circulated were noted.**

**To note Circular LG 03/2022 Re: Attendance requirements for Elected Members – as circulated were noted.**

**GENERAL**

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Paul Ross and seconded by Councillor Martin Monaghan -**

That Longford County Council call on the Minister for Finance Paschal Donohoe to remove VAT on AED Defibrillator Devices.

The members unanimously agreed to write to Minister for Finance Paschal Donohoe.

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Padraic Brady and seconded by Councillor PJ Reilly -**

“I call on Longford County Council to write to Minister for Agriculture to look at

exporting our pigs live to China as there is a huge shortage of pigs due to swine flu”.

The members unanimously agreed to write to Minister for Agriculture C**harlie McConalogue**

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Garry Murtagh and seconded by Councillor PJ Reilly -**

I am calling on Longford County Council. to write to the Minister of Business, Employment & Retail, Damien English for the consideration of a 3 tier Vat rate. The propose of this is to save small and rural business that have been family run institutions for generations, that are no longer financially viable to operate let alone for anyone to invest in or take over the running off. There needs to be serious investment/ incentives for these businesses such as pubs, shops etc. in small villages and rural areas in order to save these invaluable services that are the very fabric of rural Ireland.

The members unanimously agreed to write to the Minister of Business, Employment and Retail, Damien English.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Guidance regarding media interaction with state provided services for people arriving from Ukraine – as circulated were noted.

**TRAINING**

Report from the CPG on training was noted.

**SYMPATHY**

Votes of sympathy to be emailed 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 8 June 2022.**

 **Peggy Nolan**

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

 **Cathaoirleach.**

