

**Minutes of Meeting of Longford County Council**

**held in the Council Chamber and via Microsoft Teams on**

**Wednesday, 8 March 2023 at 4pm**

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

**MEMBERS PRESENT**: Councillors –John Browne, Gerry Warnock, Seamus Butler, Mick Cahill, Colin Dalton, Mark Casey, Gerry Hagan, Paul Ross, Pat O’Toole, Colm Murray, Garry Murtagh, Peggy Nolan, Gerard Farrell, Uruemu Adejinmi, Martin Monaghan 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

Councillor PJ Reilly

**MEETINGS**

**ADMINISTRATOR**: Ms. Claire McNabola

1. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the proposal of Councillor Peggy Nolan, seconded by Councillor Pat O’Toole, the Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 8 February 2023, as circulated, were confirmed and adopted.

1. **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

None.

1. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

None.

1. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

Noted.

Councillor Peggy Nolan proposed that Longford County Council consider purchasing the Market Square Building with a view to it accommodating a New Library in the centre of town. John Brannigan replied to say Longford County Council are in discussion with agencies in relation to the Market Square Project.

Councillor Gerry Warnock sought an update on the Canal Gateway Project for which John Brannigan responded by saying that Longford County Council are perusing funding schemes, and that Longford County Council are committed to this project.

1. **MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP MEETING HELD ON THE 7th February 2023 – AS CIRCULATED**

The adopted Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on the 7th February2023, as circulated, were noted.

1. **ENTERPRISE AND UKRAINIAN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**
2. **Longford Tourism Strategy 2023-2027**

Michael Nevin provided the Members with a detailed overview of the Draft Tourism Strategy 2023 -2027.

Michael answered any question raised by the Members. Councillor Seamus Butler highlighted some concerns in relation to accommodation around Co. Longford and the Corlea Bog Walk.

Councillor Garry Murtagh commented on the Knights of Conquest Centre.

Michael Nevin welcomed the commented and will the necessary amendments to the Draft document.

1. **Notice of Motions, submitted by Councillors, as listed hereunder**

**The following notice of motion was proposed by Councillor Garry Murtagh and seconded by Pairic Brady**

1. Calling on the members of Longford CoCo to write to the Minister for Enterprise to review the rate of Tax PAYE Construction workers are subject too. We are currently experiencing a housing crisis and a shortage of experienced and skilled workers. This would financially incentivise PAYE construction workers to avail of overtime without been penalised for attaining the same.

**Response**

While it might be difficult to influence changes to global fiscal instruments, there could be merit in suggesting ways to build up capacity towards a sustainable workforce in the construction industry such as;

* + extra incentives for apprenticeships and for employers taking-on apprenticeships,
  + more education modules focussed on careers in construction
  + reduction of barriers that impact the attraction of female and under-represented minority students to pathways into the construction industry

**The following notice of motion was proposed by Councillor Garry Murtagh and seconded by Councillor Colin Dalton**

1. Calling on the members of Longford CoCo to write to the Minister for Rural & Community Development, Minister of Finance and the Minister for Enterprise. To promote a pilot scheme in rural Ireland that actually supports a shop local incentive. That would increase footfall and reward loyalty for customers that support one of rural business and small villages, such as shops, pubs, filling stations. These businesses cannot compete with multi-national companies that offer a wide range of special offers, discounts and incentives, including an extensive delivery service that is literally wrenching the heart out of rural Ireland.

**Response**

The Local Enterprise Office continues to support local enterprise and in December last ran a high-profile and successful Shop Local Campaign, predominantly by means of social media. The campaign in its third year was well received by local retailers and consumers.

Local Enterprises are also supported in their efforts to build up their ebusiness capabilities, to reduce their carbon footprint, to introduce digital processes and to become more efficient operations in their own right.

In addition, over the recent past local retailers have received support under the Shopfront Scheme and the Streetscape Scheme in applicable towns.

1. **HOUSING, PLANNING, REGENERATION AND CAPITAL PROJECTS**
2. **To note Planning Applications received since last meeting of the Council**

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

1. **COMMUNITY, LIBRARY AND CULTURAL SERVICES, CORPORATE AND HUMAN RESOURCES**
2. **Consideration of representative to the Midland Regional Drug Action Task Force Committee MRDATF to replace Councillor Colm Murray**

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler and seconded by Councillor Colm Murray it was agreed to nominate Councillor Mick Cahill to replace Councillor Colm Murray on the MRDATF Committee.

1. **INFRASTRUCTURE, CLIMATE ACTION AND INNOVATION**
2. **Consideration of representative to the** **Longford Westmeath and Roscommon Rural Transport Committee to replace Councillor Pairic Brady**

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray and seconded by Councillor Peggy Nolan it was agreed to nominate Councillor Colin Dalton to replace Councillor Pairic Brady on the Longford Westmeath and Roscommon Rural Transport Committee.

1. **TII Deputation**

On the Proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler, seconded by Councillor Colm Murray the proposed date of Friday 24 March was agreed to meet with the TII.

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray and seconded by Councillor Seamus Butler it was agreed that 2 members from each Municipal District and the Cathaoirleach would attend.

Councillor Mark Casey requested that the representation be politically balanced.

It was agreed that the names be submitted by Thursday 9th March and a premeeting be arranged for Tuesday 21st to discuss the agenda.

1. **Notice of Motions, submitted by Councillors, as listed hereunder**

**The following motion was proposed by Councillor Paul Ross and seconded by Mick Cahill**

I call on Longford County Council to orchestrate a campaign across all local media in relation to the responsibility of dog owners in relation to keeping dogs under control during lambing season as attacks on sheep flocks can have devastating consequences for farmers.

**Response**

Longford County Council carry out an annual Spring campaign on sheep worrying. The Spring 2023 media campaign will include a reminder to dog owners of responsible dog ownership in relation sheep worrying.

1. **GENERAL**
2. **Notice of Motions, submitted by Councillors, as listed hereunder**

**The following notice of motion was proposed by Councillors, Gerard Farrell, Colm Murray, Colin Dalton, Pauric Brady, Garry Murtagh, Gerry Hagan, Peggy Nolan, John Browne**

**Response**

Longford County Council, like all other Local Authorities in the East and Midlands Region, NUTS II, make a contribution to the budget of EMRA on a per capita basis. EMRA holds responsibility for the Irish Regions Office in Brussels. The Irish Regions European Office is based in Brussels and represents the three Regional Assemblies and 31 local authorities of Ireland, enabling local/regional engagement in EU policy and funding. The Irish Regions Office is also the National Coordinator for Irish Delegation to the Committee of the Regions Irish Delegation, and the representative from the Midlands (NUTS III) are Cllr Eamon Dooley, Offaly and Cllr Caroline Dwane Stanley, Laois.

The Committee of the Regions

The Irish delegation to the Committee of the Regions (CoR) represents local and regional government in the EU policy formation and decision-making processes. The Committee is an advisory body established in 1994 to ensure that the public authorities closest to the citizen, in Ireland, the local and regional authorities, are consulted on European Union policies of direct interest to them

The Programme Manager from the Regional Enterprise Development Office, who holds responsibility for managing the implementation of the Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 advises the local authority and associated organisations of potential EU funding opportunities.

In recent years, Longford CoCo, like other regional LAs have concentrated on pursing funding opportunities presented through the National Development Plan and Project Ireland 2040, as these funds are managed within the state and generally do not present significant cash flow challenges, vis a vis an EU project, which may take some time to recoup expenditure.

For information, The Irish Regions European Office (IREO), in conjunction with the three Regional Assemblies of Ireland and the Irish Delegation to the EU Committee of the Regions invites you to join us at our event “Connecting, Communicating and Collaborating - Irish Regions Cooperating across the EU: How local authorities can engage in European Programmes” on Wednesday 19th April in the Radisson Blu Hotel in Athlone from 9.15 am to 4 pm.

The one-day national conference aims to communicate the opportunities for local government to participate in EU funding, particularly in the European Territorial Cooperation programmes, the Horizon Europe Missions and the LIFE programme.

**On the proposal Councillor Paul Ross and seconded by Councillor Pairic Brady**

That Longford County Council call on the Minister for Agriculture to put together a stimulus package for sheep farmers in light of the collapse in sheep prices.

**Response**

Longford County Council will write to the Minister for Agriculture

**On the proposal Councillor Paul Ross and seconded by Councillor Colm Murray**

That Longford Co Council call on the Minister For Justice to bring in a ‘One for All’ Garda vetting process instead of the current situation in which one individual has to be garda vetted multiple times when involved in different organisations or workplace.

**Response**

Longford County Council will write to Minister for Justice

1. **CORRESPONDENCE**
2. Correspondence dated 2 February 2023 received from the Minister for Transport re. Notice of Motion from Councillor Seamus Butler on the request to meet a representative deputation of Council members to highlight the N4 border improvement plan, was noted.

The Members agreed that a follow up letter be sent to The Minister of Transport to meet a representative deputation of Council members to highlight the N4 border improvement plan.

1. **TRAINING**

Noted

1. **VOTES OF SYMPATHY**

Councillor Colm Murray paid tribute to former Longford Councillor Michael Brennan who passed away recently RIP.

Councillor Mick Cahill requested a vote of sympathy for Rhona Rose McKiernan, daughter of Shelia Reilly and Ross McKiernan – May she rest in peace.

**OTHER MATTERS**

Councillor Turlough McGovern paid tribute to the Arts Office, and all involved in the spectacular Longford Lights Exhibition.

Councillor McGovern also paid tribute to all involved in the successful Car Rally which took place around Longford last weekend.

Councillor McGovern wished all the ladies present a Happy International Women’s Day and complimented the success of the Inverted Council Meeting held on Monday 6 March to mark International Women’s Day in Longford.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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

**Claire McNabola**

**Meetings Administrator**

**Confirmed and adopted at Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 12 April 2023.**

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

**Cathaoirleach.**

