

**Minutes of Meeting of Longford County Council**

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

**Wednesday, 11 October 2023 at 4pm**

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**PRESIDING**: Councillor Colm Murray, Cathaoirleach

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

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

Ms. Barbara Heslin, Director of Services

Ms. Samantha Healy, Director of Services

Mr. Paul Newell, A/Director of Services

Mr. Michael Nevin, A/Director of Services

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

**APOLOGIES:** None

**MEETINGS**

**ADMINISTRATOR**: Ms. Claire McNabola

1. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**
2. On the proposal of Councillor Mick Cahill seconded by Councillor John Browne the Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 13 October 2023, as circulated, were confirmed and adopted.
3. **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

Cllr Gerry Warnock raised the matter of bins and overgrowth on the Royal Canal Longford Spur. Michael Nevin replied that he was in contact with Waterways Ireland and understood that works had commenced. Samantha Healy said that she would follow up in relation to the bins.

1. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

None.

1. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

The Chief Executive Report for September 2023 was noted.

Cllr John Browne complimented Longford County Council on the new housing development at Congress Terrace, the project is a credit to all involved.

Cllr Browne also raised a question in relation to the CPO of 6 properties by Longford County Council and he welcomed the news. The Chief Executive agreed to provide details to the Elected Members.

Cllr Peggy Nolan raised the matter of the impact of the budget on service delivery by the HSE and the impact it is having. Cllr Nolan stressed the frustration this is having among employees and patients. Once again Cllr Nolan proposed that a representative from the HSE meet with the Members of Longford County Council on a quarterly basis and keep them informed, this was supported by Cllr Paul Ross and it was agreed to write to the HSE requesting an in person meeting. The Cathaoirleach indicated that he will follow up directly with the HSE if there is no response from the HSE before the next Council meeting.

Cllr Colm Murray paid tribute to all the hard work and time that went to the planning and successful events that were hosted this month by Longford County Council, namely ‘Community Safety & Wellbeing Expo’, LEO ‘Connecting our Business Community’ event and the Age Friendly ‘Wise and Well’ Information Day. All events were a huge success and a credit to all involved.

Cllr Colm Murray also congratulated Longford County Council IT Section on their recent award nominations.

The members congratulated all nominations and winners of Tidy Town Awards last weekend. They paid tribute to Longford Town, Abbeyshrule and Newtowncashel for their great success and to all Tidy Town’s groups across the County.

1. **MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY GROUP MEETING HELD ON THE 11 JULY 2023 – AS CIRCULATED**

The adopted Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on the 11 July 2023, as circulated, were noted.

1. **FINANCE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**
2. **Consideration of disposal of land of boundary between** **Teagasc and Longford Public Library, in accordance with the terms of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 issued on the 27 September – as circulated**

On the proposal of Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi, seconded by Councillor Garry Murtagh, the disposal of land boundary between Teagasc and Longford Public Library, in accordance with the terms of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved.

1. **Consideration of Overdraft Accommodation of €15m for year ending 31 December 2024**

On the proposal of Councillor Mick Cahill and seconded by Councillor Paul Ross, an application would be submitted on behalf of Longford County Council.

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. **Consideration of** **disposal of Property at 3 St Patrick’s Terrace, Longford, Co Longford, in accordance with the terms of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 issued on the 18 September 2023 – as circulated**

On the proposal of Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi seconded by Councillor Peggy Nolan, the disposal of Property at 3 St Patrick’s Terrace, Longford, Co Longford, in accordance with the terms of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, was approved.

1. **Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027: 2 Year Review prepared under Section 15 (2) and 95(3)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as Amended) – as circulated**

The 2 year review of the County Development Plan 2021-2027, as circulated, was noted.

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

**Notice of Motion proposed by Councillors Peggy Nolan and Paul Ross and seconded by all Members present**

That Longford County Council write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Darragh O’Brien to seek to establish a Housing applications appeals board to allow a family’s personal circumstances and not just income to be considered when applying for social housing and social housing supports.

**Response**

The Elected Members noted the detailed response provided by the Housing Section in advance of the Meeting. The response outlined the legislative framework currently in place which must be implemented by the Council.

The Members unanimously agreed that a letter be sent to the Minister outlining the concerns of the Members.

1. **COMMUNITY, LIBRARY AND CULTURAL SERVICES, CORPORATE AND HUMAN RESOURCES**
2. **To note adopted Minutes of meeting of Placemaking Strategic Policy Committee held on the 10 July 2023 – as circulated**

The adopted Minutes of the Placemaking Strategic Policy Committee held on 10 July 2023, were noted.

1. **Consideration of Draft Elected Members Training and Development Policy – as circulated**

On the proposal of Councillor Mick Cahill, seconded by Councillor Turlough McGovern the members unanimously agreed to adopt the Draft Elected Members Training and Development Policy, as circulated.

1. **Update on Electoral Registration - CCMA related correspondence 27 September – as circulated**

Nora O’Farrell provided the members with a short presentation on Electoral Registration. The presentation covered the following:

* Activities been engaged with in recent times
* Raising awareness in relation to the registration process
* Local Community Campaigns
* As part of the Housing Rent Review, this will be an opportunity than can be leveraged off to update Electoral Register also.

As a result of all of the above, to date there have been:

* 1520 applications have been received – 931 new applications, 589 updates and 96 pending (16- & 17-Year-olds)
* 385 deletions (deaths, moves and duplications)

The Elected Members complimented the work being carried out by the team and the fieldwork and new initiatives introduced to check the accuracy of the register. Nora answered any questions raised by the Members and clarified the operation of the rolling register. Several suggestions were proposed by the Elected Members including roadshows, contact with large employers, visits to nursing homes, engagement with marginalised and new communities and visits to local marts. Nora agreed to take these suggestions on board.

It was unanimously agreed that an update be provided annually on Electoral Registration at the October meeting of the Council.

1. **Approval to the appointment of Mr Eamon Reilly, nominee of Ballymahon Traders as a member of Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC).**

On the proposal of Councillor Mick Cahill, seconded by Councillor Paul Ross, it was agreed to appoint Mr Eamon Reilly of Ballymahon Traders to the Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

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

**Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi and seconded by Councillor PJ Reilly**

I call on Longford County Council to develop and implement a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policy as a commitment to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environment, and mandate organisations, community groups and bodies to implement DEI policy as a condition for doing business and for accessing Longford County Council Grant funding.

**Response**

The Elected Members welcomed the detailed response which was circulated in advance of the meeting.

In line with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, Longford County Council is committed to promoting equality, preventing discrimination, and protecting the human rights of employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by the Council’s policies and plans. Diversity, equality and inclusion is embedded in everything we do in Longford County Council. It is reflected in the Council’s Corporate Plan, Customer Services Charter and PMDS.

In 2017 the Local Community Development Committee adopted an equality and human rights statement. In developing the community elements of the new Local Economic and Community Plan, the LCDC must ensure that regard is given to the need to promote and mainstream equality.

In relation to grant funding, the specific terms and conditions for the various grant schemes are set by the parent Department, for example CLR, Town and Village Renewal, etc. There is a specific requirement in the Council’s own Community Support Grant Scheme 2023, that applicants must confirm that the proposed activities or projects would make some contribution to one or more of the values and objectives in the Equality and Human Rights Statement of Longford LCDC.

The Council also provided for a budget of €20,000 for the inter-cultural fund in 2023 and secured grant funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs in conjunction with the Longford African Network to recognise Africa Day.

From an overall Public Procurement perspective Longford County Council is governed by the Directive 20014/18/EU which clearly states we are governed by the principles of the Treaty which are Equal Treatment, Non-Discrimination, Mutual Recognition, Proportionality and Transparency.

Longford County Council is an equal opportunities employer. During onboarding, new employees are advised of our process in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. In addition to a Dignity at Work Policy, Longford County Council will implement a Diversity, Equality and Inclusivity Policy. Longford County Council provided information to the National Disability Authority to comply with the Disability Act 2005. Disability Awareness training was completed in 2021 and 2022 for employees and elected members.

Longford County Council has an ‘Access Officer’ assigned to the Finance section.

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

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

That Longford County Council call on Waterways Ireland and Minister Malcolm Noonan to carry out a public consultation, in line with January 2019 Government guidance, before considering the introduction of the proposed new bye-laws for the Shannon catchment area.

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

The new bye-laws would reduce mooring times from five to three days, remove winter mooring, impose a tax on all business operating on the Shannon, all of which puts the upper Shannon region and its waterways at a disadvantage to attract boaters and visitors. These bye-laws will reduce both overnight stays and visitors and will have a detrimental effect on Lanesborough/Newtowncashel and its surrounding areas.

**Response**

The Members of Longford County Council welcomed the detailed response provided by Waterways Ireland in advance of the meeting. In relation to the proposed byelaws, some concerns which could impact on tourism in the region were outlined. The extension of the consultation period and opportunity to make submissions were noted and welcomed by all the Members.

The Members acknowledged the excellent projects and developments advanced in Longford in partnership with Waterways Ireland. They welcomed the offer from Operations Controller at Waterways Ireland - Éanna Rowes to attend a meeting of Longford County Council. The Members extended an invitation to attend the November Meeting.

**VOTES OF SYMPATHY**

None

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

**Claire McNabola**

**Meetings Administrator**

**Confirmed and adopted at Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 8 November 2023.**

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

**Cathaoirleach**