

Minutes of April Meeting of the Municipal District of Piltown

Venue: Area Offices, Ferrybank

Meeting Date: 6th April, 2016 at 10.00am

Cathaoirleach: Cllr. Pat Dunphy

Present: Cllrs. Melissa O'Neill, Eamonn Aylward, Tomas Breathnach, Ger Frisby, and Fidelis Doherty.

In Attendance: Marie Melia, Director of Services, Margaret Newport, Senior Social Worker, Joe Scully, Executive Engineer, Kevin Hanley, Meetings Administrator, Ian Gardner, Area Engineer and Laura Murphy, A/Staff Officer

Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of meeting held 2nd March 2016, proposed by Cllr. Aylward, seconded by Cllr. Breathnach and agreed.

Matters Arising

Road at Shanbough off N25 - Cllr. Doherty expressed concern that road at Shanbough is being used as a filter lane by a large volume of traffic coming off the N25 before New Ross. There is also speeding issues on this road despite speed limit restrictions being in place.

Emergency Funding re Flooding – Cllr. Aylward asked if the allocation of funding for PMD was known.

Traffic Lights at Abbey Road Junction – Cllr. O'Neill said that the public are unhappy with the operation of traffic lights at Abbey Road junction with some drivers using alternative routes to avoid the traffic lights. Cllr. O'Neill asked if a review of this junction could be carried out by the traffic core.

Signage at Rhu Glenn – Cllr. Frisby asked if there is any update regarding signage for the Rhu Glenn.

Footpath at Slieverue Roundabout – Cllr. Frisby asked if there is any progress regarding footpath at Slieverue Roundabout. K Hanley advised that Simon Walton, A/Director Services is meeting with the TII this week and is expected to have information for discussion at the next meeting.

Presentation from Housing Section re Homeless & Traveller Accommodation

Cllr. Dunphy welcomed Margaret Newport, Senior Social Worker and Joe Scully, Executive Engineer from the Housing Section to the meeting. J Scully advised members that he manages housing maintenance operations while his colleague, Eimear Cody, Executive Engineer deals with housing capital and new builds. M Melia advised members that contact details for all Housing staff will be circulated today.

Homeless - M Newport informed members on the current homeless situation in Kilkenny. The Council are part of, and lead, an inter-agency team made up of statutory and voluntary bodies that have responsibility for the homelessness. They manage people and individuals who present themselves as homeless or potentially homeless and provide assistance in securing accommodation. There has been an increase of 140% in homeless presentations over the last 4 years; more recently the number of families presenting as homeless/potentially homeless has increased. M Newport told members that since the start of year to end March there has been 85 presentations – 43 presentations have been placed in emergency accommodation i.e. hotels/B&Bs, Women's Refuge, Good Shepherd Centre and Lodge. 14 presentations have been assisted through the provision of social housing, Housing Assistance Payments (HAP), Rent Supplement and under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS). It was noted that Community Welfare Officer has an association with dealing with homeless and looks at instances on a case by case basis. Local authorities can also make arrangements with neighbouring councils to provide accommodation.

A discussion followed the presentation, with a number of matters raised:-

- Cllr. Aylward asked with reference to funding available for new builds, how quickly are houses coming on stream. He further noted in relation to the HAP scheme that more cooperation is needed between neighbouring local authorities to assist persons in securing accommodation. Cllr. Aylward suggested that an emergency fund be put in place to help people with deposits and first months' rent as a lot of people have difficulty securing monies for this. M Newport replied that once an individual(s) is on the housing list, there should not be any difficulty accessing the scheme through the relevant local authority in which the property is located. Persons can seek support to pay deposits through the Department of Social Protection – KCC's Housing Section is available to assist individuals with this. M Melia advised that a joint housing forum is in place between Kilkenny and Waterford.
- Cllr. O'Neill complimented M Newport and the Housing Action Team on the very informative housing meeting that was held recently in County Hall. She suggested that the members should alert the Council to any

properties that are coming on the market and that the Council should be attentive to securing appropriate housing for larger families. Cllr. O'Neill further suggested that the Council should identify more B&Bs willing to providing emergency accommodation.

- Cllr. Doherty asked if a person/family can apply to more than one local authority. M. Newport replied that an individual (s) can be approved on one housing list only but that they can access all local authorities that operate the HAP scheme.
- Cllr. Breathnach asked if a homeless profile for each area was available and if statistical details and nature of each homeless case can be specified. He noted that some emergency accommodation solutions may not be appropriate to some homeless cases and an alternative accommodation type may be required, if available. Cllr. Breathnach further queried if there was any progress on the Living Villages Initiative as this initiative could be useful to addressing the shortage of housing in the long term and facilitate local persons in residing within their locality.
- Cllr. O'Neill asked if the Council will be taking over the processing of deposits from the Department of Social Protection in the future. M Newport advised she would have to clarify the position.
- Cllr. Dunphy acknowledged the good points made and noted that some regulations can slow down progress, which he felt should be challenged. Cllr. Dunphy complimented everyone in Housing for the work and thanked members for their comments.

Cllr. Frisby highlighted the “End Homeless – One Campaign for Change” drive launched by Abbey Community College Justice Group on 5th April 2016. Seven other schools are involved in this programme so far and the students intend to approach other justice groups in schools countrywide to raise awareness about homelessness. They have set up a website for this purpose: onecampaignforchange.weebly.com and Cllr. Frisby asked that all members support and promote their campaign.

M Melia advised members that a Housing Needs Assessment will be carried out this year. The Council is watchful of housing needs and the provision of accommodation for urgent cases. M Melia further confirmed that the Living Villages Initiative is on the Council's agenda. The Council is awaiting the announcement of further funding and are putting plans in place to apportion same between capital spending and funding for housing maintenance and voids.

Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014- 2018 - M Newport told members that this programme will be reviewed this year. The last review carried out in 2013 identified 65 families in need of accommodation, with 19 families in the PMD area. To date, the council has achieved its target of offering accommodation to 13 families each year. Of the 19 families identified in the PMD area, 5 families have been accommodated in the last two years.

Following the above presentations, Cllr. Dunphy asked for a brief summary of the recent Differential Rent Scheme review. M. Melia advised that the scheme in place is the same as the scheme agreed in 2010 – there has been no change. Rent is assessed on information supplied by tenants i.e. net household income; thus if household income increases, rent will increase accordingly and likewise if household income lessens, the rent charged is reduced in line with same. The scheme includes a hardship clause and all appeals are considered and looked at sympathetically. M Melia also confirmed that rent increases are not back-dated.

Roadworks Programme Update

I Gardner circulated a summary detailing current works in progress and updated members on each scheme. He noted in particular that outdoor staff have dedicated a lot of time to filling potholes and drainage maintenance in recent weeks.

Cllr. Doherty highlighted the level of litter on the N25 and the negative impact it has on the area. She asked that this matter be looked at and a policy formulated to deal with litter. I Gardner advised that consideration is being given to employ contractors to carry out litter picking and grass cutting. A discussion followed regarding litter and promotion of litter prevention. Cllr. Dunphy said people should be encouraged to dispose of their own litter properly. Cllr. Breathnach acknowledged the efforts that people make and the community spirit involved to clean up areas. Cllr. O'Neill asked that a member of staff from the Environment Section be invited to a meeting to discuss littering.

Flood Relief Works

I Gardner advised members that €645k was allocated to PMD following the application for emergency funding. This represents 78% of amount requested for non-national road schemes. A scheme of works will need to be prioritized. I Gardner advised members that a further application will be made for emergency funding by end April. Cllr. Aylward welcomed €645k allocation and expressed his concern with regard to having enough staff to carry out the work. Cllrs. Doherty and Dunphy also concurred with these remarks. Cllr. Aylward asked when the application for minor works projects at Dungooley & Fanningstown will be made to the OPW. I Gardner replied this application will be ready for submission shortly; funding from the OPW will be based on a cost benefit analysis.

Waterford Boundary Committee Update

K Hanley advised members that the Executive Committee met the Waterford Boundary Committee on 11th March last. The Boundary Committee indicated that they may not complete its report by the March 31st deadline, primarily due to the number of queries received. K Hanley told members he will keep them informed of any updates. Cllr. Breathnach expressed his appreciation and acknowledged all the work done by staff. All members agreed and wished to be associated with Cllr. Breathnach's remarks.

Any Other Business

O'Connor's Lane – I Gardner advised that the lane was inspected and circulated a map to members. Cllr. Frisby proposed to officially proceed with taking in charge of O'Connor's Lane, seconded by Cllr. O'Neill and agreed by all.

Speeding in Fiddown – Cllr. Dunphy asked if the Council can carryout measures to address speeding in Fiddown, as a lot of traffic passes through this area and this is an on-gong issue. I Gardner advised members that they could consider the provision of footpaths and speed signage under next Roadworks Programme; however speed limit enforcement is a matter for the Gardaí. Some discussion followed. I Gardner agreed to put Fiddown on the list for a traffic survey.

Greenway – Cllr. O'Neill asked for update. M Melia advised that the area is currently being surveyed.

Ferrybank Playground – Cllr. O'Neill asked for update. M Melia confirmed that the local area plan is under review and that progress is being made.

Geological Survey – K Hanley informed members that Geological Survey of Ireland are carrying out a survey in south Kilkenny which will involve a low flying airplane circulating the area.

Next Meeting

The next monthly meeting will be held on Wednesday, 4th May, 2016 at 1:30pm in the meeting room of Ferrybank Library.

Joint meeting with Tramore & Waterford City West Area on Wednesday 4th May, 2016 at 3:30pm in the meeting room of Ferrybank Library.

Possible meeting with Carrick-on-Suir Municipal District on Wednesday morning 4th May 2016 – K Hanley to confirm.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Dated: _____