

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON, ON WEDNESDAY, 6<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2016 AT 2.15P.M.**

<b>PRESENT</b>	Councillor Paddy Kilduff, Cathaoirleach			<b>PRESIDED</b>
<b>MEMBERS:</b>	Cllr. V. Byrne	Cllr. I. Connaughton	Cllr. D. Connolly	Cllr. N. Dineen
	Cllr. R. Doherty	Cllr. L. Fallon	Cllr. P. Fitzmaurice	Cllr. M. Hopkins
	Cllr. J. Cummins	Cllr. J. Keogh	Cllr. M. Mulligan	Cllr. E. Murphy
	Cllr. J. Naughten	Cllr. K. Shanagher	Cllr. T. Ward	Cllr. O. Leyden
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	Cllr. M. Creaton			
<b>OFFICIALS:</b>	Mr. Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive Ms. Majella Hunt, Director of Services Mr. Martin Lydon, Head of Finance & Planning Mr. Pat Murtagh, A/Director of Services Mr. John O'Rourke, A/ Director of Services Mr. Eugene Dwyer, Senior Engineer, Roads			

Cathaoirleach Paddy Kilduff welcomed the Elected Members and public to the first meeting being held in the Council Chamber in Áras an Chontae. He thanked Councillor Ward for requesting the special meeting regarding such an important issue that will affect the entire county of Roscommon not just South Roscommon. He acknowledged the unfortunate reason for this meeting due to the attempted 'land grab' by Westmeath County Council. He stressed how important it is for the Elected Members of Roscommon County Council to ensure that this does not happen. He confirmed that the loss of the South Roscommon area would result in a loss of revenue of €2.5million for Co. Roscommon. He called on the people of Roscommon not to co-operate with the changes introduced by An Post whereby people must include Co. Westmeath in their postal address.

**Boundary Review**

The members raised the following issues:

- Welcome representatives from 'Save Roscommon' group
- Population of 7,000 in South Roscommon area
- Youngest people of Co. Roscommon live in Monksland area
- Ask Jack Keyes to consider reverting the boundary of Co. Roscommon back to Athlone Bridge
- Many State Bodies moved from West to East Athlone
- 'Putting People Last' is the aim of the Boundary Committee
- There will be a predominantly rural area left in Co. Roscommon if the changes occur
- Proposed to seek a meeting with Minister Alan Kelly, TD
- Savage removal of part of Co. Roscommon
- Appears to be a rushed decision with vague Terms of Reference
- Query who will have net gain from the process – Co. Westmeath or Co. Roscommon
- Roscommon County Council have invested significant amounts of funding in infrastructure, roads and industry in the Monksland area
- Monksland is the jewel in the crown for Co. Roscommon
- Loss of South Roscommon will have a significant negative impact on all policies in place by Roscommon County Council such as the County Development Plan, LCDC, LECP and the structure of the Municipal Districts

- Monksland has been identified as a key area for job creation in the recent Regional Action Plan for Jobs
- Impact on community groups
- Encourage the public to attend the public meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> January in the Athlone Springs Hotel
- Service delivery to Monksland from Roscommon County Council is excellent
- Commend Roscommon County Council's proactive approach in the development of Monksland over the years
- What analysis has taken place to justify this action?
- Process of the boundary review commenced before any analysis and reports had taken place
- Monksland has seen a 310% increase in population since 1980's
- Query if any communication was received during the consultation process for the Local Area Plan for Monksland
- West bank of Athlone is deprived area
- Will Monksland have the same level of support from Westmeath County Council?
- The loss of Monksland area would equate to a loss of 39% of the industrial land base within the county
- If Monksland is successfully transferred to Co. Westmeath it will set a precedent for other neighbouring counties to change their boundaries to include Cortober, Ballaghaderreen and Ballinasloe
- A common theme of County Manager's in Co. Roscommon over the years has been to develop Monksland as a flagship area for the long-term benefit of the county
- People will have no say in where they live and no input in the consultation process
- Unwarranted attack on Co. Roscommon
- Cynical and politically motivated attack
- United approach required from the people of Co. Roscommon
- Query if the Chief Executive and the Executive of Roscommon County Council are on the side of the Councillors on the issue
- Financial gain for Westmeath Co. Co. by taking the Monksland area
- Beneficial for sporting, GAA Clubs and community groups to make a submission to the Boundary Review Committee
- No consultation with PPN
- Knock-on effects for Roscommon diaspora
- Rationale of Boundary Commission Review unclear
- Deadline for submission is 5pm on 27<sup>th</sup> January to Westmeath County Council
- Query the commitment from the General Election Candidates present in the Chamber
- Query why the Department would write in such glowing terms about the Monksland area while another agenda comes from the Minister
- If boundary changes go ahead, how will it affect the core strategy of the County Development Plan
- Clarity sought from HSE in relation to the Primary Care Centre in Monksland which currently serves the people of South Roscommon
- Need to ensure facility for submitting online submissions is user friendly
- Would LEADER and SICAP funding be lost to Co. Westmeath
- General Election Candidate, Councillor Murphy confirmed that he will definitely not stand for the loss of Monksland from Co. Roscommon and if elected, will not be supporting the new Government if Monksland is lost to Co. Westmeath
- General Election Candidate, Councillor Hopkins stated that she was not prepared to make a commitment but will continue to work very hard on the issue

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fallon

**SECONDED** by Councillor Keogh

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council write to all political parties and Independents requesting them to give a commitment that no decision will be made in relation to the boundary review until the new Government is in place.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Connaughton

**SECONDED** by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council write to General Election Candidates requesting them not to support the new incoming Government if the boundary of Co. Roscommon is changed.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughton

**SECONDED** by Councillor Kilduff

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council request the HSE to make a submission in relation to the boundary review

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughten

**SECONDED** by Councillor Connaughton

It was **AGREED** to invite An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny to meet with members to discuss the issue of the boundary review

Mr. Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive responded as follows:

- Confirmed that the Chief Executive and Management Team share the concerns of the Elected Members
- The loss of Monksland would have a negative impact on service investment and the ability to continue services in the county
- If amalgamation occurs, the county of Roscommon will not be in a position to compete economically
- Not only will there be a loss of income but also a loss of significant investment in roads, water and serviced lands
- Local Government Reform Act 2014 promotes the linking of Government Departments and maximising community participation through PPN and the establishment of the Municipal Districts – the proposed amalgamation contradicts this.
- The loss of the urban district of Monksland to Westmeath would destroy South Roscommon
- Inadequate consultation period and lack of analysis is a grave concern
- Would prove difficult for diasporas originally from Co. Roscommon to invest in Co. Westmeath
- If amalgamation goes ahead, the geography of the county will change
- Important to protect the interests of the people of Co. Roscommon
- Any decisions made by Roscommon County Council in terms of the County Development Plan are made based on responses and recommendations from statutory bodies – based on response read by the Head of Finance & Planning it is difficult to accept the basis for the proposed amalgamation
- The loss of 39% of industrial lands will have major implications from a planning perspective and leaving it more difficult to attract industry into Co. Roscommon resulting in additional investment in Co. Westmeath

Mr. Martin Lydon, Head of Finance & Planning read a response from the Department of the Environment in relation to the draft Monksland Local Area Plan, The response stated that the Local Area Plan was well thought out, comprehensive and the strategic framework was welcomed. He continued that all statutory bodies supported the draft Local Area Plan to ensure that Monksland and Bealnamullia continue to grow and develop.

Councillor Ward thanked the Chief Executive, Elected Members and staff of Roscommon County Council for their support on the matter

### **Flooding**

Cathaoirleach Paddy Kilduff informed the members that the issue of the recent flooding that effected many areas of Co. Roscommon would now be discussed.

The members raised the following:

- Acknowledge the work of Roscommon County Council staff during the flooding crisis
- Ongoing problems with flooding
- Funding announced recently not adequate
- Lack of representation from flood affected areas on National Co-ordination Group
- Plan needs to be put in place to prevent future flooding
- Local knowledge not taken into consideration in CFRAM Study
- CFRAM Study not effective
- Commend the hard work of the local communities
- Silt levels in River Shannon causing many flooding problems
- Compliment the work and interaction between agencies in Co. Roscommon to assist the people affected by recent flooding
- Issue with flooding in Greatmeadow, Boyle
- Request Roscommon County Council to carry out a survey of flooding in the Boyle area
- Why can Roscommon County Council not be given an allocation to deal with road repairs as a result of flooding without having to submit costings in advance
- Many farms effected and livestock cut off due to flooding
- Important to make the public aware of assistance available through Teagasc Offices for provision of fodder
- Issue with Carricknaughton Road
- Need to have one body looking after the River Shannon
- Problem with flooding of turloughs and low lying areas
- Huge problems with flooding in Castleplunkett and Castlerea areas
- Many Ministers using the issue of flooding for publicity and photograph opportunities
- Query how much Roscommon County Council has received in funding to alleviate flooding issues
- Request to rise the R377 and R367 to improve flooding problems for some people
- May be more beneficial to put temporary roads in place rather than continuously rising roads
- Proposal made to create a national insurance agency to deal with people affected by flooding but have no insurance
- Emergency funding required immediately to address the problems
- Query what funding was received to deal with the aftermath of Storm Desmond
- Query when will channel maintenance commence
- Disappointed at absence of Minister to inspect the flooding in North Roscommon
- Loads of maintenance required to alleviate some problems for people
- Money being wasted on Consultants reports – local knowledge is more important and more useful
- CFRAM submission deadline should be extended

- Compliment the work of Councillor Connaughton in saving Athleague village from flooding
- Poor planning decisions over the years has resulted in many flooding issues today
- Public should be made aware of rodent infestation due to flooding and take preventative measures immediately
- People stranded in Clooneen area due to flooding
- Can Roscommon County Council apply for funding from the OPW for the River Jiggy
- Disappointed with lack of response from the Department
- Interactive flood map would be useful
- Thank Chief Fire Officer, John Kean and the staff of the Fire Services and Civil Defence

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Murphy  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister of Environment to give an allocation of funds to the Local Authority immediately to address problems associated with recent flooding

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Connaughton  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Leyden

It was **AGREED** to write to Simon Harris TD and the OPW requesting how the local people of Athleague can make a submission on the CFRAM study when the deadline is closed.

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Cummins  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Leyden

That Roscommon County Council request the Department to release funding without proposals being submitted

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Leyden  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Cummins

That Roscommon County Council request funding from the OPW for works to the River Jiggy

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Leyden  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Shanagher

That Roscommon County Council request for funding to be accelerated for Roscommon Town through CFRAM similar to that for Athleague

Mr. Pat Murtagh, A/Director of Services responded as follows:

- Roscommon County Council submitted a request for €285,000 in funding before Christmas and has requested an additional €127,000 in the last number of weeks
- It is estimated that post-flooding works will cost approximately €4.1million

Mr. Eugene Dwyer, Senior Engineer: responded to the issues raised as follows:

- Thanked the Councillors for their comments
- Drainage programme required
- Raising roads programme needs to be put in place
- Necessary to prepare and manage works in a proactive fashion and not on a cost benefit basis
- Need to investigate drainage issue in Greatmeadow area of Boyle
- Carricknaughton Road – issue with varying depth of soft material
- Clooneen – possible to investigate an alternative access route
- Jiggy River – IS Jacobs to look at the possibility of improving drainage – did not reach cost benefit analysis
- Roads have been raised before in the Castleplunkett area

- Roscommon Town is included in the CFRAM Study and the OPW will not release funds
- Interactive Flood Map is ready to upload

Mr. Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive thanked the Roscommon County Council outdoor staff for their hard work and unselfish approach over the Christmas period in dealing with the flooding issues. He commended Mr. Eugene Dwyer, Senior Engineer for his decisiveness and attention to detail. He thanked the Elected Members for their support and assistance.

**This concluded the business of the meeting.**

The foregoing Minutes are  
Confirmed and Signed:

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Meetings Administrator

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Cathaoirleach

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Countersigned