

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL  
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON  
ON MONDAY, 23RD NOVEMBER, 2020 AT 2.15 PM.**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Councillor Laurence Fallon, Cathaoirleach	<b>PRESIDED</b>
<b>MEMBERS:</b>	Cllr P. Fitzmaurice, Cllr D. Kilduff, Cllr T. Crosby, Cllr M. McDermott, Cllr A. Waldron, Cllr O. Leyden, Cllr T. Ward, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr V. Byrne, Cllr I. Connaughton, Cllr J. Cummins, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr M. Mulligan, Cllr J. Murphy, Cllr J. Naughten, Cllr K. Shanagher and Cllr L. Callaghan.	
<b>OFFICIALS:</b>	Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive Majella Hunt, Director of Services Martin Lydon, Director of Services Shane Tiernan, Director of Services Liam Bergin, Director of Services Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator Michelle Carney, Staff Officer Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator	

**Apologies:**

**120.20 ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cummins

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Shanagher

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 19.10.2020

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Callaghan

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Special Meeting of 16.11.2020

**121.20 MATTERS ARISING**

Cllr. Kilduff raised the failure over the past five years to do anything tangible about the situation at Lough Funshinagh is an example of bureaucracy threatening democracy where the democratic will of the people is often subverted by the rules and systems introduced to serve the people in the first place and asked his colleagues for support on the matter

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kilduff

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Fallon

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council write to the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht together with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to carry out a review of the SAC status at Lough Funshinagh assessing the impact the ongoing flood is having on the biodiversity and natural heritage at this special area and the consequential impact on its SAC designation.

The Cathaoirleach stated that the NPWS Regional manager visited the site and the CE & DOS are in ongoing talks with NPWS. He also recorded his appreciation for the CE and Director of Services who have agreed that they will do everything in their power that the most vulnerable house will be protected.

Cllr. Ward stated that he will be putting forward a motion with regard to loss of income for 45 families.

It was proposed by Cllr. Ward that Roscommon County Council would make a request to in writing to the

Department OPW in relation to carrying out a survey to ascertain what it would cost to put in an overflow pipe at Lough Funshinagh.

The cost would be no more than €600 or €700k but all houses must be protected and compensation provided to all families affected. Concern that water will flow back up the open drains.

Cllr. Naughten questioned the cost benefit analysis provided by OPW in relation to land values and supported the work behind the scenes in the matter.

Cllr. Keogh also queried the cost benefit analysis provided and confirmed that Senator Eugene Murphy had raised this in the Seanad and called on all Oireachtas members to work together to find a solution in a matter that has caused much stress to those directly affected.

#### **122.20 MANAGEMENT REPORT**

- Management Report for October 2020 noted.

#### **123.20 AMENDMENT OF STANDING ORDERS**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Fallon

It was **AGREED** that members speaking time for this and subsequent meeting be reduced to two minutes in light of the two hour time limit for meetings due to Covid-19 restrictions.

#### **124.20 DISPOSAL OF LANDS - HOUSING**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughton

**SECONDED** by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the disposal of property pursuant to the provisions of Article 206 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 of particulars of property which it is proposed to dispose of at the location in County Roscommon and to the persons set out in the schedule hereunder. Particulars of the property which the County Council proposes to dispose:

**The Property:** Rural House at Thomastown Demesne, Athlone South, Co. Roscommon

**The person(s) from whom the land was acquired:** Patrick Ruane

**The person(s) to whom the land is to be disposed of:** Michael Joseph Cawley

**The consideration proposed in respect of the disposal:** €92,000

#### **125.20 DISPOSAL OF LANDS -HOUSING**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Callaghan

**SECONDED** by Councillor Mulligan

It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the disposal of property pursuant to the provisions of Article 206 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 of particulars of property which it is proposed to dispose of at the location in County Roscommon and to the persons set out in the schedule hereunder. Particulars of the property which the County Council proposes to dispose:

**The Property:** Rural House at Carrowgarve Td, Frenchpark, Co. Roscommon

**The person(s) from whom the land was acquired:** Eamon Drury

**The person(s) to whom the land is to be disposed of:** Conor McGowan

**The consideration proposed in respect of the disposal:** €42,250

## 126.20 DISPOSAL OF LANDS - HOUSING

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Callaghan

**SECONDED** by Councillor Mulligan

It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the disposal of property pursuant to the provisions of Article 206 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 of particulars of property which it is proposed to dispose of at the location in County Roscommon and to the persons set out in the schedule hereunder. Particulars of the property which the County Council proposes to dispose:

**The Property:** Rural House at Cloghan Td., Athlone North, Co. Roscommon

**The person(s) from whom the land was acquired:** William Gately

**The person(s) to whom the land is to be disposed of:** William Fitzgerald

**The consideration proposed in respect of the disposal:** €43,000

## 127.20 2020 FINANCIAL REVIEW

Mr. Martin Lydon, Director of Services gave a financial update of 2020 to date to the members:

- In May 2020 an update to members on the possible financial impact of Covid 19 based on the information that was available at that time reported a potential loss of rates income of €5.9m, the reduction in planning income of €50,000, the introduction of 3 month waiver for rate payments with a commitment from Government to cover this shortfall.
- It was agreed at this time that amenity and graveyard grants would be maintained, suspension of the Municipal District Fund of €255,000 and it be a reduction in the town team funding to €8,000.
- In September 2020 it was reported to members that the rates waiver was increased to 6 months and this brought a lot more clarity to the situation. An enhanced Restart Grant was introduced but it was still an uncertain period in making financial decisions and more quality information was not available due to uncertainty about businesses reopening.
- Overview of Government supports:
  - 9 Month Waiver of Commercial Rates:
    - 100% waiver for the period 27 March to 27 December
    - 1354 customers (out of a total 2156) received a waiver
    - €3.9m claimed in Roscommon
    - 779 accounts with arrears of €1.53m
    - 575 accounts in credit totalling €1.13m
  - ReStart Grant:
    - ReStart Grant 581 applications totalling €1.8m
    - ReStart Plus Grant 866 applications totalling €4.4m
    - ReStart Appeals to be paid €0.8m
    - ReStart Top-ups to be paid €1.2m
    - Total paid to businesses €8.2m (funding now received to make payments)
    - 456 potential applicants did not apply
  - Costs associated with Pandemic:
    - Acute Financial Matters Reports prepared on behalf of CCMA: – Impact on Goods & Service Income, Analysis of Emergency Costs associated with Covid-19
    - AFM Report 33 :Published in July , Estimated loss of income of €121k, Lowest figure in the country due to no paid parking
    - AFM Report 34: Published in September, Estimated additional expenditure of €462k, €289k relates to staff costs not coded to Road Grants and therefore not budgeted, PPE Equipment and Remote Working Costs
    - All Costs to be verified before submitting claim to DHLGH

- The Ministers letter to the Elected Members on 11<sup>th</sup> November outlined the following:
  - €900m allocated for nine month rates waiver underspent
  - Underspend allows for reallocation of funding to “meet costs and income losses that have arisen as a direct consequence of the pandemic”
  - With regard to 2021 “it is not possible for the Government to make open ended commitments in respect of commercial rates or other income pressures”
  - If supports are required in 2021, they will be more targeted than was the case in 2020
  - Ministers are aware that commercial rates are the “backbone” of local authority income and ratepayers should contribute, where they can do so
  - Critical services are delivered to the citizens and confidence is maintained in the local government system
- The 2021 budget will be presented to the Elected Members on 26<sup>th</sup> November
- The Elected Members in partnership with the Executive have maintained services
- Maintaining LPT has allowed match funding of €255k to be allocated to maximise external funding opportunities
- Street cleaning and grants to local groups at 2020 levels
- With regard to the final projects outturn in 2020, the members should note:
  - Central Government have and will provide substantial funding
  - Services have been maintained
  - Rates: €4.2m still to be collected as at October 2020; compared to €3.1m in October 2019. Difficult to know how many businesses will reopen as 456 ratepayers have not claimed ReStart Grant and Ratepayers will be chased for outstanding rates
  - Rent collection is holding up due in part to the PUP still in place
  - Circa €300k provided to meet expenditure associated with Housing voids
  - Costs incurred during pandemic was not budgeted
  - €255k GMA is available as part of the 2020 budget (once-off funding) and will roll into 2021 if not spent in 2020
  - The 2020 Budget will be balanced
  - Claim will be made for income lost and additional costs due to pandemic
  - No reduction to frontline services such as Roads and Housing during 2020

The Chief Executive stated that the final update for 2020 is positive. The Government approach and level of commitment to the Local Authority Sector is to be commended in particular in relation to the financial commitment. He is satisfied that the Council has maintained its services throughout 2020 and we can approach 2021 in a positive light. He thanked the community for their positive approach during the year.

The Cathaoirleach thanked the Director for the update. He welcomed the Restart Grant(s) that have made a significant impact and welcomed the reinstatement of the GMA. He thanked the staff for their commitment during the year to keep services provided to the county.

The members welcomed the report in advance of the Budget meeting on Thursday as it gives a clear understanding of the financial situation as we plan for 2021.

The members discussed the report as follows:

- Businesses have had a difficult year and will take time to recover and Restart Grants were very welcome in this regard
- It is a concern that it is inevitable that a number of businesses will not reopen and also many businesses depend on Christmas trade for 50% of their annual turnover.
- Welcome the return of the General Municipal Allocation
- A newsletter should be circulated to all ratepayers regarding obligation to pay first 3 months rates for 2020.
- Welcome support of Central Government funding

- Everyone must support local businesses particularly in the lead into Christmas and never was the need to shop local more important than this year
- Welcome the maintenance of services throughout 2020 despite difficulties and the presentation of a balanced budget for the year.
- Thanks to the work of the Local Enterprise Office during 2020 with small businesses.
- Reminder that a number of local businesses now have an online presence for those that do not want to physically visits shops due to the current situation
- There are some good news stories of new businesses opening due to changing demands
- Welcome the continuation of matched funding to support projects that will hopefully transform out county and a balanced budget is necessary to facilitate this.
- There is a need to highlight the free parking in the towns and villages throughout the county and the Main Streets should be kept free to allow shoppers to “Click and Collect”

It was PROPOSED by Cllr. Leyden

SECONDED by Cllr. Shanagher

That an SPC proposal for one stop shop online portal be progressed to bring all shops into a single portal.

The Chief Executive thanked the local shops that have kept the county in business with part time workers, paying rates and many shops have invested in online selling and deserve everyone’s support. He announced that a media campaign will be launched shortly to promote shop local throughout the county.

Mr. Lydon confirmed that the Restart Grant application process was closed on 31<sup>st</sup> October and a newsletter will be issued to ratepayers in the next week.

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## **128.20 APPOINTMENT OF PPN SECTORAL NOMINEE TO HOUSING, ICT AND RURAL WATER SPC**

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Cummins

SECONDED by Cllr. Murphy

It was AGREED to approve the nomination from the Public Participation Network of Ms. Margaret Mulligan to the Housing, ICT and Rural Water Strategic Policy committee.

## **129.20 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS**

There was no business for the meeting.

## **130.20 CORRESPONDENCE**

### **Acknowledgments to Resolutions from Roscommon County Council:**

- **6<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2020** - Acknowledgement from Maurice Buckley, Chairman of the OPW regarding the allocation of funding to survey the cost of the works to alleviate flooding at Lough Fuinshinagh.
- **11<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2020** - Acknowledgement from Michael Nolan, CEO of TII regarding
  - Oct 2020 - Notice of Motion - inquiring as to when funding for the realignment of the N61 road, north of Tulsk will be approved.
  - Oct 2020 - Notice of Motion requesting installation of turning lanes at major junctions on the N61 from Ganleys roundabout to St Brigid’s GAA junction.
- Acknowledgement Minister Ryan regarding ref 102.20b - Notice of Motion - Request for meeting with RCC & Minister for Communications, Climate Action & Environment to discuss grave impact in Roscommon of job losses in Bord na Mona & ESB as a result of decarbonisation

### **Replies to Resolutions from Roscommon County Council:**

- **30<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2020** - Reply letter from Minister for Justice and Equality Ms. Helen McEntee T.D in relation to parental alienation ref 53.20 - 3.20 (May 2020) - Notice of Motion - Reform of the Family Law System - Parental Alienation.
- **18<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2020** - Reply letter from Minister Ryan regarding ref 102.20b - Notice of Motion - Request for meeting with RCC & Minister for Communications, Climate Action & Environment to discuss grave impact in Roscommon of job losses in Bord na Mona & ESB as a result of decarbonisation

#### **Resolutions from other Local Authorities:**

- **6<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2020 - Resolution from Sligo County Council**  
That Sligo County Council write to the Taoiseach asking him to implement the recommendations of the Grant Thornton report on the future of the post office network.
- **10<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2020 - Resolution from Kerry County Council**  
Members requested that a letter issue to the Road Safety Authority requesting that the "Safe Cross Code" would once again be aired on television and radio in an effort to educate pedestrians of their responsibilities when using the road.

#### **Other Correspondence:**

- **16<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2020** - Notification of Roscommon LPT allocation for 2021.
- **23<sup>rd</sup> Oct, 2020** - Information from the Department regarding the continuation of planning functions until 1st December 2020.
- **11<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2020** - Notification of three upcoming online meetings to be held by the Local Authority Waters Programme Office (LAWPRO) in relation to Island Priority Area for Action and the Suck Priority Area for Action which are both located within Co. Galway and Co. Roscommon and the Tulsk Priority Area for Action located in Co. Roscommon.

### **131.20 NOTICES OF MOTION**

There were four Notice of Motion on the Agenda for discussion:

#### **131.20a 16.20 AWARD OF JADOTVILLE MEDALS - CLLR. CROSBY**

##### **The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:**

This motion requires a resolution of the Council

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby,  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Keogh

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council write to the Minister of Defence, the Chief of staff of the Defence Forces and President of Ireland to support the awarding of the recommended Military Medals for Gallantry, and Distinguished Service Medals for the Irish Soldiers of A Company 35th Infantry Battalion fought in Jadotville, the Congo in 1961. Although they were recognised in 2017 by the Irish Government with the awarding of a block Jadotville Medal, the Gallantry and Distinguished Service Medals awards recommended by their Commanding Officer have not been awarded and only eight soldiers survive today"

#### **131.20b 17.20 TUS AND CE SOCIAL EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES - CLLR. NAUGHTEN**

"That Roscommon County Council to write to the relevant Ministers to address the issue of extending the timescale and conditions of employment of Tus and CE participants on various employment schemes. These participants are greatly contributing to their local communities and helping out in so many ways, and are also benefiting socially from these schemes. However, after a certain period of time they must leave the scheme and cannot avail of it again until another period of time has passed. This is unsatisfactory for

many participants and also for the sponsor groups in the communities where they work”

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion required a resolution of the Council.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Naughten

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Byrne

It was **AGREED** to write to the relevant Ministers to address the issue of extending the timescale and conditions of employment of Tus and CE participants on various employment schemes. It was further agreed that a review of the scheme should be requested. These participants are greatly contributing to their local communities and helping out in so many ways, and are also benefiting socially from these schemes. However, after a certain period of time they must leave the scheme and cannot avail of it again until another period of time has passed. This is unsatisfactory for many participants and also for the sponsor groups in the communities where they work. It was agreed that this motion should be circulated to all Local Authorities for their support.

#### **131.20c 18.20 MEANS ASSESSMENT OF CARERS ALLOWANCE - CLLR. WARD**

I am calling on the Government, the Minister for Finance, Mr. Paschal Donohoe T.D. and the Minister for Community and Rural Development and Social Protection, Ms. Heather Humphreys T.D. to bring forward legislation in the Dáil which will exempt Carers Allowance from means assessment. I am also calling on the Government to allow the full carers allowance payment to persons that are in receipt of another social welfare payment.

**The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:**

This motion requires a resolution of the Council

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Ward

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Naughten

It was **AGREED** to write to the the Minister for Finance, Mr. Paschal Donohoe T.D. and the Minister for Community and Rural Development and Social Protection, Ms. Heather Humphreys T.D. to bring forward legislation in the Dáil which will exempt Carers Allowance from means assessment and to allow the full carers allowance payment to persons that are in receipt of another social welfare payment.

#### **131.20d 19.20 MEDICAL CARDS - CLLR. CALLAGHAN**

That Roscommon County Council call on the Minister of Health and the HSE to allow a patient diagnosed with a terminal illness be automatically entitled to a full medical Card

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a resolution of the Council

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Callaghan

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Naughten

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister of Health and the HSE to allow a patient diagnosed with a terminal illness be automatically entitled to a full medical card.

#### **132.20 QUESTIONS**

***Question 3.20 – Councillor Callaghan:***

## **FSAI and Veterinary Inspections**

What is the current situation in relation to a recent dispute between Local Authorities and Food Safety Authority of Ireland over the continued veterinary inspection of Abattoirs and local Butchers that may impact on the future of these local services?

### **The Meetings Administrator circulated the following reply:**

The CCMA, on behalf of the Local Government Sector, have engaged with the FSAI in a dialogue seeking to resolve the issues surrounding the transition of FSAI service delivery to a new operating model.

The FSAI have secured additional funding for 2021 to allow this transition to begin, according and subject to a timeframe and project plan to be agreed with the Department before the end of 2020.

It is envisaged that the proposed broad parameters of a new service model would need to be drawn up by mid-2021, including timelines for implementation.

### **133.20 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENTS/ATTENDANCE**

The Meetings Administrator notified the members of two training sessions that will be conducted on line in the coming weeks as follows;

AILG	Implementation of the Development Plan and the Development Management Process	Online – Webinar	27 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
AILG	Induction Training Webinar for Co-opted Elected Members	Online – Webinar	4 <sup>th</sup> December 2020

A decision was made at the CPG not to attend Conferences in Clonakilty in December due to Covid.

Cllr. Cummins stated that it was proposed that the costs associated with these conferences be reallocated to community groups be spent Christmas lights in 2020 or other promotions in a manner to be decided.

### **134.20 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS AND SYMPATHY**

- Congratulations to John O’Gorman, Chief Technician in the Laboratory who recently retired after 38 years service.
- Congratulations to Cllr. Shanagher’s brother who was involved in the Tipperary backroom team who won a historic Munster Football title on Sunday

### **135.20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **135.20a ISSUE OF ANIMAL PRESCRIPTIONS CLLR. CALLAGHAN**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Callaghan  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Naughten

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council request the Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine accept an EU clause that allows a professional person issue a veterinary prescription for all animal medicines classified as Licenced Merchant (LM) in our local co-ops, pharmacies and local agricultural stores.

#### **135.20b PRIDE OF PLACE AWARDS**



Cllr. Kathleen Shanagher congratulated Roscommon Gaels Stars and Kiltievan Tidy Towns on securing runner up places in the national Pride of Place Awards announced on Saturday . Roscommon was also represented by the Ballaghaderreen Mens Shed project.

#### **135.20c NEW TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY**

Cllr. Shanagher welcomed the recent announcement of the forthcoming amalgamation of Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) and Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) to establish a single Technological University for the mid-west and Midlands with an expected completion date of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.

#### ***NEXT MEETING***

**The next meeting will be on Monday, 21st December, 2020.**

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are  
Confirmed and Signed:

Petrizio Bohan

Meetings Administrator

Liam J. Lally

Cathaoirleach

Petrizio Bohan

Countersigned