

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON
ON MONDAY, 22ND MARCH, 2021 AT 2.15 PM.**

PRESENT: Councillor Laurence Fallon, Cathaoirleach **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: Cllr P. Fitzmaurice, Cllr D. Kilduff, Cllr T. Crosby, Cllr M. McDermott, 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.

OFFICIALS: Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive
Martin Lydon, Director of Services
Shane Tiernan, Director of Services
Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator
Michelle Carney, Staff Officer
Pat Murtagh, A/Director of Services
Fiona Ni Chuinn, Senior Executive Officer
Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator

Apologies: Cllr A. Waldron

12.21 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby
SECONDED by Cllr. Cummins
It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 22.02.2021

13.21 MATTERS ARISING

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice
SECONDED by Cllr. Cummins
It was **AGREED** to limit speaking time to two minutes for the duration of the meeting.

Cllr. Connaughton asked if his proposal that was seconded at the February meeting in relation to the facilitation of a meeting to discuss pumping solutions for Lough Funshinagh meeting was passed.

The Cathaoirleach replied that technically it was not passed due to an intervention by the Chief Executive that a S140 would be required but that the matter could be discussed today.

The Chief Executive restated the position that there is no pumping solution and he will not be organising such a meeting. Furthermore, if such a meeting is organised by Cllr. Connaughton there will be no official of Roscommon County Council present.

Cllr. Connaughton stated that such a meeting would also include other areas in the county that are subject to flooding. He also stated that his proposal was not one to which S140 could be applied as it would not require the Councillors to make a decision and he will organise a meeting that all councillors can attend and other committees throughout the county that have an interest. He also stated that he is not getting enough information on the meetings with the NPWS and the CE assertion that money is not an obstacle raised questions as to why this meeting cannot go ahead and that there is an unwillingness of the executive to interact on his proposal.

Cllr. Dineen stated that he had seconded Cllr. Connaughton's proposal and cannot understand why the Chief Executive is not open to the proposed meeting and there is no cost to the Council in hosting it.

The Cathaoirleach stated that councillors can attend any meeting they wish.

Cllr. Connaughton replied that councillors were told last September there was no solution and suddenly there is Ministerial direction to proceed with a long term solution. He is bringing forward a short term solution, a viable option that needs to be explored. Not to explore this option is not right as he is mandated by his elected to represent the people and he intends to get answers as to whether this solution is either viable or not.

Cllr. Ward stated that there has been a lot of discussion on this matter for the past five years and still nothing has been done – there is only one solution - an overflow pipe through Ardmullan and out to Kiltoom. Pumping to Ballyglass will not resolve the situation as it will not pump enough water we cannot give the people false hope.

The Cathaoirleach stated that Cllr. Connaughton has two options – move a S140 for the next meeting or organise the meeting himself as he has stated.

He then invited Mr. Shane Tiernan to provide an update on Lough Funshinagh.

13.21a CHIEF EXECUTIVES BUSINESS - UPDATE ON LOUGH FUNSHINAGH

Mr. Shane Tiernan, Director of Services updated the members on the Lough Funshinagh situation:

- From a Hydraulic perspective in terms of sheet lift and distance, environmental and other concerns, pumping is not a solution.
- We have our own internal expertise here working with consultants and that's the position. We are concentrating on a long term solution that will deliver a long term that will yield a result of the people and communities around Lough Funshinagh.
- We are focused on collaboration with the various state agencies, thanks to the intervention of the Chief Executive, to get a Part 10 application completed and this is where the resources are concentrated.
- The Council will continue to support the people affected in Lough Funshinagh in controlling the flood waters and will continue to provide large resources into these preventative measures.

Cllr. Connaughton stated that he would not put Councillors in a position to pass a S140 motion and he will organize a meeting with regard to pumping. He further stated that there was misinformation given to councilors and he will have a proposal at the next meeting to deal with Part 10 planning for areas such as Correal, Bushfield and Castleplunkett and any areas prone to flooding.

Cllr. Kilduff stated it would be useful if it could be established what is the major impediment is to a pumping solution. There is no doubt a technical solution is possible to take away water and pump it elsewhere. Is the major impediment an environmental issue and impact the impact of the water being pumped elsewhere.

Mr. Tiernan replied that when the Council received the report from Malachy Walsh and Partners, and received the response of the NPW to that report, it was presented to a Special meeting of the Athlone Municipal District. There is no point in creating false hope and resources will be put into a long term solution that will have to contend with very difficult environmental challenges that will have to be addressed in the Part 10 application that will be dealt with as expeditiously as possible.

Cllr. Naughten criticized the initial efforts of the OPW on the matter and confirmed he will attend any meeting organized by Cllr. Connaughton. He acknowledged the difficulties that will be faced in dealing with

the Special Area of Conservation.

In response to a suggestion from Cllr. Mulligan for a borehole in the center of the lake, the Cathaoirleach advised that consultants had rejected this option due to probable effects on groundwater.

Cllr. Keogh agreed with Cllr. Naughten and Cllr Kilduff's contribution and that any option for a borehole could not be considered if it affected ground water supplies.

In reply Mr. Tiernan stated that any works in an SAC or Natura 2000 site have to be carefully looked at and a borehole would setback any long term solution.

14.21 MANAGEMENT REPORT

- Management Report for February 2021 noted.

15.21 PRESENTATION ON CIVIL DEFENCE

Mr. Fergal Conroy, Civil Defence Officer gave a presentation to the Elected Members on the recent activities:

- Covid-19 Preparedness & Response including Vaccine rollout
 - Main support to PRA - HSE Ambulance Support Nationally
 - 32 Covid -19 tasking's 277 volunteer hours.
 - 30 community events were completed
 - Fortnightly CDO Conference calls, Officer Management meetings and Essential training and recertification
 - IBST Clinics in Roscommon – Castlerea
 - Vaccination Centre – Post Vaccine Area -Crowd Control
- Civil Defence Volunteer Age Profile
- Roscommon CD Team Welfare
 - Newsletter, Monthly Email Updates, Online Training and VC meetings with Snr. Management Team
- Missing Persons Search (MPS) Training & Equipment
 - 10 Specialist Team Search events, 5 Indoor Training Sessions, 5 Outdoor Training Exercises and 244 Volunteer hours
 - Purchase of new Drone with high resolution camera, thermal imaging, mapping, and wifi capability to provide live footage.
 - Search and Emergency Response Assets include jeep fitout for new drone to avail of live broadcast of footage for situational awareness
- Recent MPS Op in Athlone involved RN CD Boat Crew, Mayo CD Boat Crew with Sonar, RN Field Search Team, RN Drone Unit, Athlone Sub-Aqua Unit and An Garda Síochána Water Unit and a successful conclusion to recovery of body.
- Funding Projects & Equipment:
 - Clár funded 9-Seater Transport Vehicle to Support Community and Hospice
 - 2 new Ford Ranger 4x4 crew cabs, conversion of intermediate care vehicle, replacement and upgrade of equipment including medical equipment, upgrade of radio communications, new drone at cost of €105,200

Mr. Shane Tiernan Director of Services advised the members that plans are advanced for the construction of new Civil Defence HQ which will include offices, training facilities and vehicle storage. The Part 8 application will be presented to the Roscommon MD members for consideration in the coming months.

The members welcomed the presentation and discussed as follows:

- They thanked the Civil Defence Officer and volunteers for the work they undertake for the citizens of County Roscommon
- They welcomed the funding received to date for the upgrade of vehicles and equipment which is vital to operations.
- Welcome the update on the new building in Roscommon

16.21 DISPOSAL OF LANDS - NRRO

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Shanagher

SECONDED by Councillor Dineen

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: Site comprising 0.331 hA at Ballydooley Td., Dunamon, Co. Roscommon

The person(s) from whom the land was acquired: James Lawless, Ballydooley, Dunamon, Co Roscommon

The person(s) to whom the land is to be disposed of: Ann & Joseph Shaughnessy, Dunamon, Co. Roscommon

The consideration proposed in respect of the disposal: €1

17.21 LEASE OF LANDS - ASSETS

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fallon

SECONDED by Councillor Keogh

It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the lease 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 lease 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 lease:

The Property: Site comprising 0.1385 hA at Glebe Td., Athleague, Co. Roscommon

The person(s) to whom the land is to be leased to: Athleague Tidy Towns, Athleague Co. Roscommon

The consideration proposed in respect of the lease: €1.00

Term of Lease: 12 Months from 27th January 2021

18.21 AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Martin Lydon Director of Services presented the Review of the Audit Committee Charter 2021 and the Audit Committee Annual Report 2020 to the members for consideration:

The Audit Committee Charter has to be presented to the members for consideration annually and it sets out the governance requirements of the Audit committee.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne

SECONDED by Cllr. Cummins

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Audit Committee Charter 2021

Mr. Lydon gave an overview of the activities of the Audit Committee as detailed in the Annual Report of 2000:

- Membership of the Audit Committee
- The Audit committee held four meetings in 2020 as is required

- The report details the agenda items dealt with and audits undertaken in 2020
- Briefings to the Audit committee from Management included the Risk Register, Annual Financial Statement and Digital Transformation.
- The Local Government Auditor met with the Committee to discuss 2019 AFS
- The five functions to be delivered on in 2020 as follows:
 - To review financial and budgetary reporting practices and procedures – 2021 Budget process
 - To foster the development of best practice in the performance of the internal audit function – SICAP Audit
 - To review the Audited Financial statement and Auditors Report – done on 16th December 2020
 - To assess and promote efficiency and Value for Money – Digital Transformation projects.
 - Review systems for Management of Risk – Risk Register.

The Audit Committee is satisfied it has carried out all its functions and obligations as required.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cummins

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Audit Committee Annual Report 2020.

19.21 LAUNCH OF LOCAL AUTHORITY CUSTOMER APP

Ms. Una Ni Chuinn, Digital Transformation Officer gave a brief presentation to the members on the new Local Authority Customer App for Roscommon County Council.

- The app will facilitate Roscommon County Council customers to view their accounts and make transactions
- 570 customers have registered to date and 2,000 people have logged onto the app.

The members welcomed this new innovative product as Roscommon County Council continues to move forward with Digital Transformation to the benefit of customers. They also made the point that any customer not familiar with the technology be provided assistance with the app.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Fallon officially launched the Local Authority Customer Application.

20.21 SECTION 106 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001 - HOUSE PURCHASE AND IMPROVEMENT LOANS

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** in accordance with Section 106 of the Local Government Act 2001 to approve the raising of a loan in the sum of €1,500,000 in respect of House Purchase and Improvement Loans.

21.21 DRAFT CEMETERY BYE LAWS 2020

Cllr. Nigel Dineen, Chairperson of the Roads, Transportation and Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee updated the members on the Draft Byelaws. In 2020 it was proposed to review and update the Bye-Laws (previously adopted in 2009) to reflect changes in society, the need to conserve space in cemeteries and alleviate the costs associated with extending cemeteries. Agreement was reached at the SPC meeting held on 23rd July 2020 to make a number of amendments and to proceed with the draft Bye-Laws as presented at that meeting. The Draft Bye-Laws were subject to a public consultation process for

the period from Friday 4th December 2020 to Friday 15th January 2021. Submissions or observations were accepted up to and including Monday 25th January 2021.

Four submissions were received and at a meeting of the SPC on 24th February 2021 these were considered and amendments/additions were agreed and incorporated into the Draft Cemetery Bye-Laws 2020.

The SPC is recommending the Draft Bye Laws for approval.

The members raised a number of issues in relation to the Bye Laws:

- When the Bye Laws are adopted, will a section in a cemetery be dedicated to a lawn cemetery and will people have a choice with regard to being buried there?
- There are a number of old graveyards no longer in use and have fallen into disrepair – is there any funding available to cut back trees etc.
- Thanks to an Garda Síochána, local media, Roscommon County Council and general public for their assistance in recovering the stolen gates recently in Rathmoyle cemetery.
- Is planning required with regard to erection of headstones?
- The Cemetery grants are a great example of benefits to community groups. The amount allocated increased at one point to €150,000 and this level of funding needs to be restored.
- With regard to family grave spaces, applications are not accepted for additional space alongside a family plot until the person who required it is deceased and this can cause severe upset and grief for the family concerned.
- There should be controls in place to regulate size of headstones.
- There should be awards for voluntary groups for best kept cemeteries.
- Thanks to CE scheme for the work they carry out to keep graveyards maintained.

The Director of Services, Mr. Shane Tiernan replied to the questions:

- A certificate of permission is required to be submitted to Roads Section to ensure works are carried out in compliance with the Bye Laws
- With regard to purchase of burial plots, the Council has to ensure this is managed in the best possible way. The selling of plots is proportional to needs but extenuating circumstances are provided for in the Bye-Laws.
- Cemeteries are risk assessed for maintenance works including trees to be cut where necessary and works carried out subject to available resources.
- There are awards for upkeep of cemeteries in conjunction with the Environment Section and will work in partnership with them and Heritage in this matter.

At the request of the Cathaoirleach, the Director outlined details of a proposal that some of the funding carried forward from the General Municipal Allocation be allocated to cemetery committees in 2021 due to the extenuating circumstances of Covid preventing them from normal fund raising activities

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fallon

SECONDED by Cllr. Dineen

It was **AGREED** that an extra allocation of €12,500 for each Municipal District would be awarded to the Cemetery Grants for 2021 to double the existing allocation.

This was welcomed by the members.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Dineen

SECONDED by Cllr. Byrne

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Draft Cemetery Bye-Laws 2020.

Cllr. Crosby proposed an amendment that where there is a grave space alongside a family plot it should be

made available to the family by the Council.

There was no seconder for the motion.

22.21 APPOINTMENT OF ELECTED MEMBER TO JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Leyden

SECONDED by Cllr. Crosby

It was **AGREED** to approve the of Cllr. Marty McDermott to the Joint Policing Committee to replace Cllr. Orla Leyden.

23.21 APPOINTMENT OF SECTORAL MEMBER TO LCDC

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh

SECONDED by Cllr. Naughten

It was **AGREED** to approve the nomination from the Public Participation Network of Ms. Faye Hayden from the Roscommon Young Carers Project to the Local Community Development Committee.

24.21 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

24.21a GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS TO BUSINESSES - RATES WAIVER SCHEME AND SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE SCHEME

Mr. Martin Lydon briefed the members on Government Support to Businesses due to the ongoing pandemic.

Rates Waiver Scheme:

- The Government has extended the rates waiver scheme for a further three months until June 2021
- 50% waiver to eligible businesses will be applied as a credit to rates account (25% already applied this week in the sum of €875k)
- 869 businesses in Roscommon will qualify as eligible businesses and 623 are in the excluded categories.
- Excluded businesses can appeal but must provide evidence of losses of greater than 75% when compared to Jan-Mar 2019. Closing date for appeals is 26th March.

Small Business Assistance Scheme for Covid (SBASC):

- Applications opened 11th March, closing date is 25th April and funding available is €60m
- Eligible businesses will receive €4k in Q1 and €4k in Q2
- Business must satisfy the following criteria to be eligible – employ less than 250 people, Turnover between €50k and €25m, not be eligible for other specified grants, pay rates to Council, be tax compliant, turnover reduced by 75% on Jan-Mar 2019 and intend to resume trading in full when restrictions allow.
- This is a National Scheme administered on behalf of the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment to give grants to businesses who are not eligible for the Government's COVID Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS), the Fáilte Ireland Business Continuity grant or other direct sectoral grant schemes. This scheme aims to help businesses with their fixed costs, for example, rent, utility bills, security.

The Members welcomed the update and noted that they expect a small uptake on the SBASC due to the thresholds and qualifying criteria.

Cllr. Cummins requested information be forwarded regarding the % ratepayers currently paying rates in Q1

2021 and the Director agreed to do so.

24.21b DRAFT ECONOMIC AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR LANESBOROUGH-BALLYLEAGUE

Ms. Fiona Ni Chuin, A/Director of Services updated the meeting on the Draft Strategy:

- KPMG Future Analytics has been appointed by Longford and Roscommon County Councils to prepare an Economic and Enterprise Development Strategy for Lanesborough - Ballyleague. This strategy is currently at draft stage and is under a second review by both Local Authorities and is nearing finality
- The Vision is that by 2040 Lanesborough-Ballyleague will be a better place to live, visit, work and study; a place with a high quality of life and a range of employment opportunities where people chose to locate and visit. A thriving integrated and attractive town at the heart of the economy and a hub for the mid Shannon area.
- The objective of the strategy is to develop and deliver an effective short, medium, and long-term path to enterprise and job creation in the area, building on existing and planned investment and innovation initiatives while unlocking the economic growth potential of Lanesborough-Ballyleague and providing a sustainable employment opportunity in the context of Just Transition.
- The Core focus must be the identification of economically and environmentally sustainable projects that have the potential to transform the economic landscape of Lanesborough-Ballyleague
- Four key enabling pillars are identified for capital projects, focussing on making the town a more desirable place to choose to live, visit, work and study, and to raise awareness of the town's offering targeting investors, those seeking to re-locate, and visitors. Ten themes have been identified under the pillars and it is envisaged that a number of transformational projects will flow from the themes.
- Roscommon County Council has secured funding under Just Transition for two feasibility studies - Lough Ree Board Walk and Clontuskert Visitor Centre and Organic Farm. Both projects sit under the pillar "a better place to visit"
- **The Lough Ree Bay Boardwalk** (Roscommon shore segment) aims to create a stunning and quite unique access pathway to Lough Ree Bay, and shoreline. The boardwalk follows the shoreline along wetlands, then reaching a proposed glamping site and birdwatching huts, linking up to the Longford Shore leg. The provisional letter of offer issued in September 2020. The RFT to carry out the feasibility study is nearing completion and it is anticipated that it will be uploaded to ETenders next week.
- **Clontuskert Visitor Centre & Organic Farm:** The Bord Na Mona Machinery works, is a collection of industrial buildings on the edge of the bog which formed a machinery repair and storage depot. This project envisages creating an educational and interactive, audio visual, and virtual reality visitor experience which will bring tourists back in time to origins of monastic settlements, to the first trackways across the bogs, to the eventual industrial development of the bogs as Ireland's main energy natural resource. The provisional letter of offer issued in November 2020 and letter of support from Bord na Mona to carry out the study was received on the 2nd Feb 2021. The RFT to carry out the feasibility study is nearing completion and it is anticipated that it will be uploaded to ETenders next week.

The members welcomed the presentation.

- Clondra/Tarmonbarry is also an area that should be considered for a similar scheme. It suffered a major loss of jobs over the years. The Just Transition fund has to be applied fairly across the area to counteract these job losses.
- Can the draft strategy be sent back to the Ballyleague Lanesboro Collaboration Group so they have a final input into the strategy? It is important that the group is informed as to what is happening. A

- meeting should be held with the group in the coming week to discuss the update.
- There is a large area from Rooskey to Tarmonbarry to Curraghroe that was also part of Bord na Mona and are they entitled to funding/projects from Just Transition.
 - Hope that funding will be spread out over time but we need the IDA to focus on job creation in this area.
 - Is there an update on Just Transition and securing maximum funding from the fund as a result of the closure of Shannonbridge and the consequent job losses in South Roscommon?
 - This funding will need to provide real sustainable jobs
 - There is an opportunity with the Greenway to provide more tourism facilities in the area.

The Chief Executive stated that in relation to issues raised about Shannonbridge, other Local Authorities are looking at the impact of this and he will be in discussions with them. He also confirmed he will be meeting with the IDA next week.

Fiona Ni Chuin replied that with regard to the wider catchment area referred to by the Councillors, it would be anticipated that there should be some spinoff from the projects approved. The IDA are a key stakeholder in the Strategy. She will refer the proposal to circulate the strategy to the Collaborative Group and the suggestion of another meeting with them to the regeneration team in Longford County Council.

25.21 NOTICES OF MOTION

25.21a 01.21 INNOVATION, ENTERPRISE AND REMOTE WORKING CENTRE - CLLR. LEYDEN

“That Roscommon County Council would apply for funding at the first opportunity possible in 2021 to provide an Innovation, Enterprise and Remote Working Centre in Roscommon Town to support and stimulate job creation and that consideration would be given to the provision of this Innovation, Enterprise and Remote Working Centre at the former Motor Tax building on Abbey Street, a historical building in a prime town centre location”

The Motion was proposed by Cllr Leyden and Seconded by Cllr. Shanagher.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

There is currently no funding stream available to Roscommon County Council for such a facility. Should a funding stream become available for the provision of an Innovation, Enterprise and Remote Working Centre in Roscommon Town, Roscommon County Council will examine its feasibility and assess the need based on existing providers in the town.

Cllr. Leyden stated that the proposal was put forward to remind everyone that this is included in our Innovation Strategy and the Roscommon LECP and the need now to create remote spaces and to be proactive in seeking enterprise funding for the county town while continuing with Regeneration Projects. This would be enabling infrastructure to support provision of a core centre and to encourage businesses to start up and existing businesses to expand. This may be the former motor tax building or another suitable site that could become available. The Council needs to proactively seek Enterprise Ireland funding at every opportunity. This is needed in the county town and can be achieved with all working together.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Leyden

SECONDED by Cllr. Shanagher

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council would apply for funding at the first opportunity possible in 2021 to provide an Innovation, Enterprise and Remote Working Centre in Roscommon Town to support and stimulate job creation and that consideration would be given to the provision of this Innovation, Enterprise

and Remote Working Centre at the former Motor Tax building on Abbey Street, a historical building in a prime town centre location

25.21b 02.21 ROADS WINTER GRITTING PROGRAMME - CLLR. FITZMAURICE

“That I am calling on Roscommon County Council to salt roads during severe weather that are omitted from the winter gritting program, which connects Villages and Towns. I am calling on Roscommon County Council to initiate a secondary gritting program during severe weather using the existing gritting fleet (at times the lorries are lying idle) and utilise relief drivers to carry out this work. I am also requesting a detailed breakdown of the cost per km to grit existing roads”

The motion was proposed by Cllr. Fitzmaurice and seconded by Cllr. McDermott.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

Salting Lorries are mobilised across the county in line with the Winter Service Plan for Roscommon. This Winter Service Plan is Roscommon County Council’s commitment to maintain a certain level of service on specified roads throughout the county. Level of service is maintained by responding to disruptive winter weather conditions causing frost, ice formation or snow accumulation on public roads in a prescribed manner. The plan applies to a continuous six-month period, referred to as the ‘Winter Period,’ from mid-October to mid-April. Within the plan Roscommon County Council has identified two levels of priority routes for treatment.

- Priority 1: To be treated during all-weather events. Motorways, national primary roads, national secondary roads, regional and local roads of national strategic importance, regional and local roads providing access to essential services.
- Priority 2: To be treated as part of normal Winter Service but may have interruptions to treatment in certain severe weather events. Sections of regional and local roads of regional strategic importance.

The Winter Service Plan represents an optimum use of resources and raw materials and any changes to a route in any one area will affect our ability to treat Priority routes. The plan is financed using a combination of TII funding and DoT Discretionary Grants. This funding is also limited and any further changes to the plan will require careful consideration as an increase in winter maintenance coverage will decrease what can be spent on other areas such as local roads, verge trimming, drainage etc.

In relation to relief drivers, Roscommon County Council is bounded by the Working Time Act regarding to driving hours and we are unable to commit to carrying out a tertiary priority route after Priority 1 and 2 routes are complete.

The Council also each year has a limited emergency fund to assist clearing and gritting severely hit additional access roads during extreme weather events.

Within available resources Roscommon County Council provide an excellent winter maintenance service across all regional and national routes and some local roads appropriate to the road categories and traffic volumes. Any changes to the Winter Maintenance Plan would have to be considered across all of Roscommon’s extensive 3300km of local roads and the significant additional costs will have to be considered from within own resources local funding as part of the budgeting process.

It would not be an accurate indicator to present gritting cost per km of road as several factors are at play and can influence the cost such as variance in road widths, proximity to existing routes, isolated routes, driver rest periods, frequency of coverage subject to weather conditions and concentration rates of application. However, it currently averages €11,000 per night for 20g/m² application and €7,000 where an application of 10g/m² is deemed appropriate across the county.

This does not include cost of driver downtime which is mandatory to comply with working time EU Rules on Driver Hours. During extended periods of sub-zero temperatures, the Council may have to apply several runs in 24-hour period.

Cllr. Fitzmaurice thanked the Director of Services for the reply. He stated that the lack of gritting in certain

areas is a serious problem and there are assets idle during the day when the weather is most severe.

Other Members spoke on the matter :

- flexibility be incorporated in the demand for gritting, especially when one area of the county is more affected than another at any particular time – this can be facilitated by the MD CoOrdinators.
- Need to look again at a policy to allow community to grit locally where necessary and deal with insurance issues
- Extra funding should be sought for gritting from Department

The Chief Executive stated that the Director had provided a very comprehensive answer and it is not possible to do everything. The Winter Gritting Route is defined and it is a matter for the Members to provide more funding including from GMA resources. He confirmed that the manpower available and our resources are very tight but the Council will look at additional flexibility. The issue of local gritting by the volunteers in the community would be difficult to implement due to risk assessments required, training and in particular insurance implications for accidents.

The Director of Services Mr. Shane Tiernan stated that any additional funding would have to come from the Council resources. He stated that a very scientific approach is used to preparing the Winter Gritting Programme and as a public document is important that everyone is aware of roads that are gritted at any time. There is emergency funding for extreme conditions and in 2021 this had to be used for flooding at Lough Funshinagh.

Cllr. Fitzmaurice would welcome flexibility and further discussion at the Roads SPC and during the 2022 Budget discussions.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Ward

SECONDED by Cllr. Shanagher

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister of Transport to provide extra funding for winter maintenance to grit more roads in County Roscommon

25.21c 03.21 CAPITAL FUNDING FOR CEMETERIES - CLLR. KILDUFF

“That Roscommon County Council calls on the Taoiseach and Minister Heather Humphreys at the Department of Rural and Community Development to immediately establish an annual fund for necessary capital works projects at our nations cemeteries to specifically address the deterioration of pavements, boundary walls, overgrown trees and other similar capital works requirements in the interest of health and safety, stimulating local economies, pride of place at these sacred public spaces, but most importantly in deference to the memory of our deceased loved ones throughout the county.”

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a resolution of the Council

Cllr. Kilduff expressed his concern at the dilapidation of some cemeteries in the county as the Council have limited resources to address this issue. There is no National Fund in place to provide capital grants and this reflects badly on us a people. He requested that the motion be circulated to all Local Authorities.

The Members welcomed the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kilduff

SECONDED by Cllr. Fallon

It was **AGREED** to write to the Taoiseach and Minister Heather Humphreys at the Department of Rural and Community Development to immediately establish an annual fund for necessary capital works projects at our nations cemeteries to specifically address the deterioration of pavements, boundary walls, overgrown

trees and other similar capital works requirements in the interest of health and safety, stimulating local economies, pride of place at these sacred public spaces, but most importantly in deference to the memory of our deceased loved ones throughout the county. It was further agreed to circulate the motion to all Local Authorities.

25.21d 04.01 FAIR DEAL SCHEME - CLLR. WARD

“I am calling on the Government, the Minister for Finance, Mr. Paschal Donohoe T.D. and the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly T.D. To make the necessary changes to the fair deal scheme. That would allow members of the farming community and the landowners into the fair deal scheme at rate of payment of six per cent a year towards the cost of payment to the Nursing Home based on value of their lands and capped at three years instead of the present system”.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a resolution of the Council

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Ward

SECONDED by Cllr. Keogh

It was **AGREED** write to the Minister for Finance, Mr. Paschal Donohoe T.D. and the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly T.D. To make the necessary changes to the fair deal scheme. That would allow members of the farming community, landowners and small businesses into the fair deal scheme at rate of payment of six per cent a year towards the cost of payment to the Nursing Home based on value of their lands and capped at three years instead of the present system.

25.21e 05.21 RECOGNITION OF 100 YEAR OLD COUNTY ROSCOMMON CITIZENS - CLLR. WALDRON

It was **PROPOSED** Cllr. Fallon

SECONDED by Cllr. Leyden

That that all citizens of County Roscommon who reach their 100th birthday have the event acknowledged by Roscommon County Council by way of a letter signed by the Cathaoirleach together with a small token and the marking of the occasion by Roscommon County Council would be an appropriate recognition of this milestone.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a resolution of the Council

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Connaughton

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

That a letter be sent to all citizens in the county now aged 100 years old.

The Chief Executive suggested that the matter raised data protection issues.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Fallon

SECONDED by Cllr. Leyden

It was **AGREED** that the matter be referred to the relevant Strategic Policy Committee.

25.21f 06.21 CLOSURE OF BANK BRANCHES - CLLRS. MURPHY AND BYRNE

That Roscommon County Council write to Bank of Ireland CEO of retail to rethink the closures of local branches in Strokestown and Elphin in Roscommon and other branches nationwide.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. Murphy and seconded by Cllr. Byrne.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a resolution of the Council.

The Members discussed the motion and criticised the decision to close bank branches in small towns around the country including Strokestown and Elphin in Roscommon. Community groups and Local Authorities are trying to build up these towns and this is a big blow to the community. This will also lead to reduction of ATM facilities and will hit older people who are unable to travel distances to bank. It should be demanded of the banks to have a presence in the affected places. It was also demanded that our Oireachtas Members should be fighting against this decision, particularly in view of the Government's 14% share in BOI. This decision also encourages older people to have an excess of cash in their homes. Finally it was suggested that the Central Bank should be assisting Credit Unions in areas with no banking available with their facilities.

On the **PROPOSAL** by Cllr. Murphy

SECONDED by Cllr. Byrne

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council write to Bank of Ireland CEO of retail to rethink the closures of local branches in Strokestown and Elphin in Roscommon and other branches nationwide.

26.21 CORRESPONDENCE

Resolutions from other Local Authorities:

- 25th Feb, 2021 – That Tipperary County Council calls on the Government to introduce a number of measures for the benefit of survivors of The Mother and Baby Homes.
- 25th Feb, 2021 – That Killarney MD would write to the Minister for Health requesting the immediate introduction of payment to student nurses, once they take up placement duties.
- 4th March, 2021 – Resolutions from Sligo County Council
 - o That Sligo County Council make a formal submission to the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage outlining their complete opposition to the proposed provisions of the Land Development Agency Bill 2021.
 - o That Sligo County Council engage with their relevant partners to address the urgent needs of the hundreds of community groups across County Sligo who are facing a funding crisis as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, write to the Taoiseach, Tánaiste, Leader of the Green Party and the Minister for Rural Affairs and Community Development to request a scheme be devised to address the Community and Voluntary Sectors funding needs.
 - o That Sligo County Council write to the Government and An Post asking them to give a 2 year extension to the current contract that most of the local Post Offices are engaged in due to impact of Covid-19.
 - o That Sligo County Council formally request the Minister for Agriculture to seek the appointment of 'an Independent Meat Regulator' with statutory powers.
- 5th Mar, 2021 – Notification of the launch of Cork City Council's new Women's Caucus.
- 10th Mar, 2021 - That Leitrim County Council write to Ministers Charlie McConalogue TD, Eamon Ryan TD, Senator Pippa Hackett and Malcolm Noonan TD to desist from using the pesticide cypermethrin in controlling the pine weevil and instead deploy mechanical measures on tree stumps to control this pest when felling Sitka Spruce industrial plantations.

Other Correspondence:

- 28th Jan, 2021 – Acknowledgement of correspondence ref 4.21 to Charlie McConalogue T.D., Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine regarding a Farm Relocation Scheme.
- 12th Mar, 2021 - Letter received from Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage confirming a total of €9,198,484 has been provisionally allocated for Roscommon County Council's successful Call 2 project – Roscommon Town Centre - Putting the Spokes back into the Hub

27.21 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fallon

SECONDED by Cllr. McDermott

It was **AGREED** to adopt the list of payments for training and conferences as circulated.

28.21 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS AND SYMPATHY

- Condolences to the family of the late Pat Sharkey who served as a firefighter in Castlerea from 1965 to 1995.
- Congratulations to Fr. Norman Davitt from Donamon Castle who celebrates his 100th birthday this week.

29.21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

29.21a WATERWAYS IRELAND PRESENTATION TO APRIL PLENARY MEETING RE SHANNON TOURISM MASTERPLAN

The Cathaoirleach informed the meeting that it was agreed at the CPG meeting to facilitate the request from Waterways Ireland to make a presentation at the next Plenary meeting on the recently launched Shannon Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon Region.

29.21b FORMATION OF A WOMENS CAUCUS

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fallon

SECONDED by Cllr. Leyden

It was **AGREED** to work with neighbouring counties to participate in the Womens Caucus initiative as recommended by the Corporate Policy Group. The purpose of the initiative is to increase women's participation in local democracy.

29.21c SLIABH BAWN RECREATION AREA

Cllr. Dineen raised the issue of safety on Sliabh Bawn Recreation Area. He has received a number of reports in recent weeks from walkers about scrambler bikes and dogs off leashes and asked if Roscommon County Council have any information on what is permitted.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Dineen

SECONDED by Cllr. Shanagher

It was **AGREED** to send a letter to Coillte to erect appropriate signage regarding dogs on leashes and to inform Roscommon Council what is permitted with regard to scrambler bikes on Sliabh Bawn Recreation Area.

29.21d ATTENDANCE OF FIRE VEHICLE AT FUNERAL

Cllr. Dineen paid tribute to the late Pat Sharkey, former firefighter in Castlerea from 1965 to 1995, who passed away recently. He asked why there was a U-turn on a commitment given to provide a jeep at the

funeral and it showed disrespect to the family.

The Director of Services and Chief Executive expressed their sympathy to the family of the late Pat Sharkey and stated Roscommon County Council held him in the highest esteem. The reason a vehicle was not provided was solely due to Covid-19 restrictions.

29.21e COMMUNITY FACILITIES COVID GRANTS

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Ward

SECONDED by Cllr. Fitzmaurice

It was **AGREED** to write to the Ministers of Rural and Community Development Ms. Heather Humphreys TD and Mr. Joe O'Brien TD and the Government to provide funding for community groups nationwide which will enable them to pay for necessary overheads such as insurance, electricity etc. which they can no longer afford due to the loss of income as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was also **AGREED** to send the letter to the Minister for Tourism and Sport to support community sports facilities who also have no income during the closure due to Covid.

29.21f CHARGES FOR DISPOSAL OF AEROSOLS

Cllr. Ivan Connaughton raised the matter of charging for aerosols for deodorant cans disposal at the civic amenity sites similar to the charges for paint disposal. This is going to incentivise more illegal dumping and proposed this be removed from charges. No other Local Authority including Galway Co Co do not charge for this

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Keogh.

Cllr. Connaughton was advised by the Cathaoirleach that this should be raised as a question at the next meeting in order to receive a reply.

A/Director of Services, Mr. Pat Murtagh stated that RCC was charged over €80,000 for removal of 60 tonne hazardous waste and these aerosols are included and Roscommon County Council are the only Authority in the Region accepting such waste. He agreed to look into the matter and revert to Cllr. Connaughton.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Monday, 26th April, 2021.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:



Meetings Administrator

James Fallon
Cathaoirleach

Petrizis Bohon
Countersigned