

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON
ON Monday, 26th September, 2022 AT 2.15 pm.**

PRESENT: Councillor Tom Crosby **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: Cllr L. Fallon, Cllr E. Kelly, Cllr P. Fitzmaurice, Cllr D. Kilduff, Cllr M. McDermott, Cllr A. Waldron, Cllr O. Leyden, Cllr T. Ward, Cllr N. Dineen, 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
Majella Hunt, Director of Services
Shane Tieman, Chief Executive
Caitlín Conneely, A/Director of Services
Sean Mullarkey, Acting Head of Finance
Fiona Ni Chuinn, A/Director of Services
Claudette Collins, Asst. Staff Officer
Darragh Kelly, Communications Officer, Communications Officer

Apologies: Cllr V. Byrne

123.22 DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST (SECTION 177 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 AS AMENDED)

There were no conflicts of interest declared by the Members.

124.22 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh

SECONDED by Cllr. Cummins

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 27.07.2022

125.22 ENTENTE FLORALE 2022 SUCCESS - KEADUE GOLD MEDAL

The Cathaoirleach congratulated the village of Keadue on winning a gold medal at the Entente Florale competition ceremony for Tidy Towns that was held in Hungary and he attended to represent Roscommon County Council.

The Cathaoirleach said Keadue's victory was their second in the competition, having won a silver medal in 2003 and was a great honour for the village and county.

Cllr. Crosby also commended Roscommon County Council staff - Director of Services, Majella Hunt; Breata Coyle, Community and Enterprise and Sarah Scott, Environment for their work with Keadue in relation to the competition.

The Members congratulated Keadue on their success and endorsed the Cathaoirleach's comments.

126.22 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

127.22 MANAGEMENT REPORT

- Management Reports for July and August noted.

Cllr. Shanagher acknowledged the work of everyone involved with both National Heritage Week and Culture Night in the county, which was an outstanding success.

128.22 DISPOSAL OF LANDS - HOUSING

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Councillor Shanagher

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 8.68 square Meters at Clooneybeirne Td., Ballintober South ,Co. Roscommon

The person(s) from whom the land was acquired: John Ward

The person(s) to whom the land is to be disposed of: ESB, 27 Lr. Fitzwilliam St., Dublin 2

The consideration proposed in respect of the disposal: €1.00

129.22 LEASE OF LANDS - ASSETS

The property is to be leased to Roscommon Strikers Cricket club as a recreational sports facility.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Shanagher

SECONDED by Councillor Waldron

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 3.125hA (7.722a) at "The Lough, St Comans Park, Roscommon

The person(s) to whom the property is to be leased: Roscommon Strikers, 47 The Courtyard, Oldwood, Roscommon

The consideration proposed in respect of the lease: €10.00 per annum

Term of Lease: 3 years

130.22 LEASE OF LANDS - ASSETS

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Waldron

SECONDED by Councillor Leyden

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 folio RN19044F at Glebe Townland, Athleague, Co Roscommon

The person(s) to whom the property is to be leased: Roscommon Womens Network, Unit 6, The Old Mall, Main St., Castlerea, Co Roscommon

The consideration proposed in respect of the lease: €100.00 per annum

Term of Lease: 6 years

131.22 LEASE OF LANDS - ASSETS

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Keogh

SECONDED by Councillor Naughten

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: Lands contained in folios RN6319N/1DK35N (0.9363hA) & RN6319N/1/811 (0.4378hA) at Monksland Townland, Co. Roscommon

The person(s) to whom the property is to be leased: Greener Ideas Ltd., 1 Warrington Place, Dublin 2, Ireland

The consideration proposed in respect of the lease: €23,200 per annum

Term of Lease: 3 years

132.22 PRESENTATION ON RATHCROGHAN ANCIENT SITE

A presentation was given on the ancient Royal site of Rathcroghan by Dr. Daniel Curley, Manager of the Rathcroghan Visitor Centre. The complex is currently on a tentative list for consideration as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

- The royal complex comprised 240 monuments, of which 60 were registered as national monuments over a 6.5 km radius between Tulsk and Ballinagare.
- A detailed review of outstanding universal value and attributes had already been carried out on the royal site. Of the nominees on the tentative list, the Rathcroghan application was leading the way, thanks to the support of the local authority and its heritage office and the Farming Rathcroghan EIP initiative.
- He outlined the main features of the Farming Rathcroghan project and the challenges of managing it for the benefit of local landowners. He said the EIP project was a locally driven project with an initial 30 participants.
- He referred to the growth of the Rathcroghan Visitor Centre in Tulsk which interprets the royal landscape. From two staff in 2018, the centre now has a total of twelve employees with six college graduates.
- There has been an increase in service users at the Centre, increasing from 7,507 in 2014 to 18,090 in 2022 to date. There were 1,600 tour visits in 2014 which had increased to 3,083 visits for this year (2022) to date.
- A major objective was to create awareness building of both the Royal site and the centre itself. To this effect, Rathcroghan featured on the National Geographic magazine and in the Washington Post last year. The Centre and complex have also featured on many national publications as well as radio and TV broadcasts.
- Future plans for the Rathcroghan site include the development of a local Archaeological Walking Trail, a Roscommon Place Partnership, based on a UK landscape programme and an Active Travel Initiative, featuring green travel opportunities.

- An application has been submitted under the LIS (Local Improvement Scheme) for improved access to a local route, known as 'the cave road'. Plans are also being developed for the renovation of existing laybys at the Royal site, the provision of car-parking at the Oweyngat site and the erection of an all-weather shelter for visitors.
- These measures would help to elevate the status of the Rathcroghan site complex. The Visitor Centre would collaborate with Failte Ireland for the proposed redesign of car-parking, which would require capital investment, the site of which is owned by the local authority.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Dr. Curley for his very informative presentation and said that Rathcroghan was one of the most ancient sites in the country and hoped the complex could be designated UNESCO World Heritage status.

Members complemented Dr Curley on his presentation and discussed as follows:

- There are challenges ahead for the Centre with the N5 bypass of Tulsk village. As a result, greater signage would be required from TII.
- Dr. Curley and his colleagues deserved great credit for putting Rathcroghan on the map. The proposed new walking trail would be a major asset and complemented the new Farming EIP scheme, a collaborative initiative between local landowners and the Centre, aimed at preserving the Royal site.
- the rise in visitor numbers to the Royal site was in no small measure due to Dr. Curley's work. The development and promotion of the site was being carried out in a sustainable manner.
- Dr Curley had come with solutions to potential issues, claiming both the tourism offering of the Centre and the Café facilities at the Visitor Centre were to be highly commended.
- the development and promotion of Rathcroghan was something big not just for Roscommon, but for the whole of the country.
- There has been incredible leadership in managing the Centre and site and Rathcroghan was already a world heritage asset. The members would be supportive of any future investment plans for the site.
- It is important to determine how best to successfully join up with other tourism projects as to how best the county can be promoted as a whole.
- it is important both Visitor Centre worked with state agencies in ensuring the delivery of UNESCO World Heritage Status.
- The Rathcroghan complex is a local amenity which people didn't appreciate enough- the complex was equal in archaeological importance to the pyramids of Egypt.
- the development of a shelter at the site of the complex for visitors and over the Rathcroghan mound itself would attract further visitors to the area.
- Rathcroghan is the jewel in the crown of local tourism and encouraged Roscommon County Council to support the development of the site in whatever way it could.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Cllr. Shanagher that the development of a new public art feature on the new N5 route would draw attention and visitors to the Rathcroghan complex.

The Chief Executive said Dr. Curley had previously met with himself and Director of Services Majella Hunt and it is important the local authority accelerate its own ideas and vision for Rathcroghan. Dr Curley has done extraordinary things to generate interest in the Rathcroghan site. It is important the local authority worked with Mr. Curley in progressing their UNESCO World Heritage application and assist in any future Part 8 planning application. Any plans to develop the Rathcroghan site needed to be conducted sensitively with respect to the landscape and landowners. He suggested the Council set aside €50,000 a year for ongoing works at the Royal complex. He also acknowledged the need for funding to finance parking and the expansion of the Visitor Centre. He said matched funding will be needed to support development projects which would be sympathetic to the heritage of the area. With the development of the N5, there was an

even greater need to support the Rathcroghan complex and visitor centre and the Chief Executive confirmed he would welcome the development of associated tourism led initiatives.

Following the conclusion of his presentation, Dr Curley, on behalf of the team at Rathcroghan Visitor Centre, presented the Chief Executive with a bespoke artistic print of a selection of the more prominent heritage sites and archaeological artefacts from county Roscommon, recently designed by Prints of Ireland in collaboration with Rathcroghan Visitor Centre.

133.22 LOCAL PROPERTY TAX VARIATION FOR 2023 - LOCAL ADJUSTMENT FACTOR

The Cathaoirleach requested a consensus from the Elected Members to adopt the Local Property Tax Variation at 15% for a two-year period.

The Chief Executive requested members to unanimously support the maintenance of the rate at last year's level, resulting in no increase on last year's rate.

He added this would allow for an efficient delivery of services and support the Council's ability to maintain their level of funding. He said maintaining funding at last year's level would illustrate the local authority's commitment to secure matching funding.

Cllr. Ward said a meeting of fellow non-aligned Independent members would not be opposing the retention of LPT at last year's rate. However he said he and his colleagues wished to see funding for verge trimming and footpath repairs be ring-fenced from the LPT on a yearly basis.

The Chief Executive replied that this would be a matter under the budgetary process, claiming the adoption of the LPT rate was not an adoption with conditions. He requested the debate would not become a budgetary debate.

Cllr J. Keogh said the Council's Corporate Policy Group (CPG) had meet to discuss the matter and agreed the funding was making a significant contribution to the Council's finances. He said he and the controlling alliance of the local authority agreed with the adoption of the LPT rate for the next two years which would result in no extra cost to householders in the county.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. John Keogh
SECONDED by Cllr J. Naughten

It was **AGREED** the Local Property Tax basic rate be increased by 15% for 2023 and 2024 (a two year period) as provided under Section 20 of the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act 2012 as amended by Section 5 of the Finance Act (Local Property Tax) Act 2013 and the Local Property Tax (Local Adjustment Factor) Regulations 2022.

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

A/Head of Finance, Mr. Sean Mullarkey informed the members that loan of €1.5m was required for the Home Loans Fund as part of the current Local Authority Home Loan Scheme (LAHL) and the previous Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan (RIHL) Scheme. 69% of the total loan allocation has already being drawn down with a balance remaining of €655,000.

Mr. Mullarkey said there were currently eight active LAHL loans totalling €800,000 with one RIHL loan of €60,000. He said the local authority was seeking another loan for the balance of 2021, for 2022 and 2023 in respect of housing purchase loans.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Leyden

SECONDED by Cllr. Naughten

It was **AGREED** to approve the raising a loan with the HFA in the sum of €1,500,000 under S106 of the Local Government Act, 2001 - House Purchase and Improvement Loans.

135.22 NOTICES OF MOTION

136.22 10.22 REVIEW OF FIRE COVER IN THE GREATER CASTLEREA AREA - CLLR. FITZMAURICE

“I am calling on Roscommon County Council to undertake a review of the current fire cover for the greater Castlerea Area and to provide a full fire service based in Castlerea utilising Castlerea Fire Station.”

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

In mid-2020 Roscommon County Council presented an Operations Risk Management Review and Area Risk Management Report on the provision of Fire Services in County Roscommon, as requested by the Elected Members. It included an assessment of the community risk and of the Fire Service response. This report was peer reviewed and approved by an independent fire services expert.

The report confirmed that County Roscommon has an efficient and effective fire service that complies with national standards and the Council’s statutory obligations under the Fire Services Acts 1981. The report showed that:

- The County is currently served by 18 fire stations from Counties Galway, Longford, Leitrim, Mayo, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo and Westmeath.
- Nearly one fifth of the fire incidents (167 of 973 calls) in County Roscommon were managed by Fire Stations in surrounding counties.
- The majority of calls to the Fire Service were chimney fires, false alarms, bog/gorse/forest fires and road accidents.
- The travel times of fire brigades attending incidents in County Roscommon have and continue to meet the recommended relevant national standards.
- Fire brigade activity has reduced considerably over the years. Back in 2007 there were nearly three times the number of fires compared to recent years.
- This decrease in calls to the Fire Service is due to improved building standards; fire prevention work that has reduced the number of chimney fires and false alarms. Furthermore, oil spills are now being dealt with directly by other County Council staff instead of the Fire Service.

Castlerea Fire Station has been closed for over five and a half years. The Area Risk Categorisation remains low at E1 and in fact there has been a drop in primary calls which would ‘lower’ the Risk category even further. The average call outs were 14 per year over the last 3 years or 1 callout every 3.7 weeks.

The quantifiable fact remains with over five years of data that the four neighbouring fire stations in Ballaghaderreen, Ballyhaunis, Elphin and Roscommon Town are effectively responding to and managing all incident risks in Castlerea. The response times to all incidents to-date in Castlerea are appropriate and well within the National Standards required.

RN12 Castlerea Area Urban & Rural

02/02/2017 - 13/09/2022

| Year | Attended | Tertiary | Secondary | Primary |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| 2017 | 42 | 20 | 19 | 3 |
| 2018 | 22 | 16 | 3 | 3 |

| | | | | |
|------|-----|----|----|----|
| 2019 | 27 | 19 | 6 | 2 |
| 2020 | 16 | 9 | 5 | 2 |
| 2021 | 11 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| 2022 | 14 | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| | 132 | 82 | 33 | 17 |

Average Travel Time [132 Incidents] = 16:52 [mm:ss].

NOTE: National Standard E1 < 30 Mins. RCC has set the target at 20 mins

Primary = Fires or other incidents involving reported casualties or situations requiring rescue of persons.

Secondary = Fires and incidents involving vehicles (but not cars), RTA's, haybarn/bog/gorse forestry or related property fires – non-casualty.

Tertiary = Fires and incidents which pose little or no threat to life and the property damage resulting is likely to be very limited e.g. chimney, car, skip and bonfires.

Responding to his notice of motion, Cllr Fitzmaurice said Castlereagh had a growing industrial base and the fire cover area was now bigger than previously. He cited previous fires in the town and said there had been some fire incidents in the town in recent years. He disputed journey times presented to fire scenes and claimed the journey time to fire incidents in the town was now in the range of 24 to 28 minutes. He said the Council should look at new models of providing fire cover.

The members discussed the motion as follows:

- Castlereagh was the second largest town in the county. Insufficient consideration was being given to stakeholders or people in outlying areas over the nature of fire cover for the town.
- There is not enough fire cover for Castlereagh and all elected members wished to see a return of fire services to the town. The independent review of services did not produce satisfactory answers and a new review of services is warranted.
- People living in the town and those incarcerated in Castlereagh Prison need to feel safe. Fires are unpredictable and unforgiving and the station in Castlereagh should be reopened.
- Credit is due to members of the county's fire service but it could take up to two years for personnel to be recruited and have the Castlereagh Fire Station running again and West Roscommon is not served sufficiently by fire services.
- There is an argument for a further review of fire services in the county - while the response times to emergencies may be acceptable, this is not the case in the event of any incident with flammable material.
- When the Fire Station closed, Castlereagh was left without a very valuable service. The town was justified in having a Fire Service to support the level of business in the town.
- An improved service is long overdue for the town and Castlereagh was the second largest town in the county.

The Director of Services Shane Tiernan informed the members that the decision to close Castlereagh Fire Station was based on facts and the facts governing its closure, still remained. He said four existing fire services were already serving the town. Mr. Tiernan said it was important for people to realise the importance of having a smoke alarm installed in their homes and repeated that call out times remained

consistent with national fire brigade call-out times. He claimed the average response times to fires in the Castlerea area was 16 minutes and noted that the local authority faced considerable challenges in meet recruitment requirements for the fire service. The north of the county was served by four fire stations, while the south of the county was not served by an existing fire station. The service, he emphasised, continued to comply with national call-out time standards.

The Chief Executive said it had not been his intention to close Castlerea Fire Station but he had to. He said that if a review of services were to take place now, the Council would be considering a Fire Cover presence in the south of the county, where none exists at present.

With the budget process beginning shortly, elected members had the authority to put money into the reopening of the fire service in Castlerea, and this was the responsibility of the elected representatives. He said the Council had tried everything to get a resolution to issues affected Castlerea Fire Station for three years prior to its closure

Director of Services Shane Tiernan said the number of fire service call-outs had reduced, noting that people have better facilities available to them to combat the threat of fire outbreaks. The fire cover for the county was satisfactory and said call-out charges in the past three years amounted to €27,000 for the Castlerea area. In respect of the fire service for the county, the service was costing the county an average of a €250,000 per fire station per annum.

137.22 11.22 RE-OPENING OF POWER STATIONS - CLLR. WALDRON

‘In light of the ever worsening Energy Crisis, that this Council propose to call on the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Deputy Eamon Ryan, to urgently reopen West Offaly Power Station, Shannonbridge, Co. Offaly and Lough Ree Power Station, Lanesborough, Co. Longford’

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires resolution of the Council.

Moving the motion, Cllr Waldron said he first moved the motion in October 2021 and had received no response from the Minister’s office.

The members welcomed the motion and discussed as follows:

- There is no back-up to support the country’s energy need and said the matter was at crisis point.
- both power stations were facilities that could be utilised to meet any potential power shortages.
- 70 wind turbines were currently lying idle at Derryadd Windfarm due to EU energy regulations, citing this is an example of the availability of potential energy resources to offset any energy shortages.
- the former power stations at Lanesboro and Shannonbridge should be converted into biomass burning generation stations to enable farmers to diversify their farming portfolio.
- The movement of bog rail tracks was the movement of a potential tourism resource. Every energy generating option needed to be considered.
- Now is not the time for climate change measures in the light of the energy crisis. There is a risk of power outages affecting householders. And uncertainty for the elderly
- The closure of both stations was poor foresight and planning the original decision was to close both power stations in 2025 and Minister Ryan should reverse the decision to close both plants.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Waldron

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** to call on the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Deputy Eamon Ryan, to urgently reopen West Offaly Power Station, Shannonbridge, Co. Offaly and Lough Ree Power Station, Lanesborough, Co. Longford. The motion should be forwarded to neighbouring local authorities in Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath and Minister of State, Mr. Peter Burke T.D.

The letter should include reference to the fact that a previous similar motion had received no reply from the Minister.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kilduff

SECONDED by Cllr. Waldron

It was **AGREED** to include the letter to the Minister that while the power stations be reopened on an emergency basis, they should be transitioned into biomass generators.

138.22 12.22 ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL INVESTMENT IN ENERGY MEASURES - CLLR. KILDUFF

‘That Roscommon County Council takes immediate steps to hedge the organisation against spiralling energy costs by embarking on a program of significant investment in micro generation and energy conservation supplemented by availing of all accessible grant assistance and utilising every available and suitable corporate roof space to install solar panels and also implement other energy saving facilities enhancements in the interest of prudent resource management, leading by example and in accordance with our 2030 emission reduction commitments’

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

Roscommon County Council is committed to achieving the national targets to reduce carbon emissions by 51% by 2030, or an average 7% per annum over the decade and becoming a climate neutral economy by no later than 2050. Roscommon County Council are committed to work on climate issues where the focus is on decreasing the organisation’s carbon footprint. In 2020, the Council surpassed its 20% target, achieving a 38% improvement in energy efficiency. A concerted effort will be made throughout the organisation to continue that leadership role in terms of reducing energy use. Roscommon County Council is a member of the Midland Energy Agency, collaborating with four midland local authorities of Laois, Offaly, Westmeath and Longford to manage and reduce our energy consumption in accordance with national targets.

We are currently in the process of carrying out energy audits on a number of buildings with a view to identifying a pipeline of energy related upgrade projects that can be developed over the coming years. These retrofit projects will be developed in conjunction with advice from experts and part funded through SEAI’s pathfinder programme. The investment required by Roscommon County Council to meet our 2030 targets is significant.

Roscommon County Council are implementing the measures approved by the Cabinet, on 7 September 2022, to cut energy use across the public sector. Measures include setting temperatures to 19 degrees Celsius in buildings, turning off the heating in office buildings at least one to two hours before closing the buildings and ensuring that no lights other than security lights are on after 8:00pm.

Roscommon County Council has signed up to a number of energy campaigns including ‘Optimising Energy at Work’, ‘Reduce Your Use’ and ‘Engaging People Accelerator Course’, which are run by the OPW and SEAI. They form a key part of the approach under the National Energy Security Framework. The campaigns empower organisations to reduce their energy use and encourages long-term sustainable behaviour.

Energy efficiency advice is available from experts at the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland. Our approach will be practical and evidence-based, detailing the actions that can save the most money and energy.

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) plays a key role in helping the State to save money when buying goods and services. Roscommon County Council are part of the OGP frameworks for energy purchasing which includes gas and electricity.

Cllr Kilduff said he was disappointed with the reply received. He said there was a need for investment in solar panels on local authority buildings, claiming such investment would take pressure off the national grid.

The Members welcomed the motion and supported it and discussed as follows:

- The Government should be looking at installing solar panels in primary and secondary schools. The swimming pool, where solar panels had been erected, reducing energy bills.
- How much of the local authority's housing stock had been retrofitted?
- Concern expressed at the rate of conversion of local street lighting to new LED lighting, claiming only 25% to 30% of all street lights had been converted?
- All lights should be converted by the end of 2023 instead of 2024.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Cllr. Shanagher

That the solar panel exemption of 50 square metres for industrial buildings be changed.

Director of Services Caitlin Conneely confirmed solar panels were already in place on the local Fire Station and Swimming Pool. She said 53% of local public lighting was LED lighting, and the project to convert public lighting was being led by Mayo County Council, which was subject to a procurement process, which Ms. Conneely said she would inform members in due course.

Concluding the debate, Cllr Kilduff said energy resources were finite and said an emergency response needed to be called, like in the case of the Covid-19 pandemic. He said strategic infrastructure needed to be built in the national interest.

139.22 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

There was no Chief Executive business.

140.22 CORRESPONDENCE

Resolutions from other Local Authorities:

- **22nd July, 2022 – Resolution, Donegal County Council**
That Donegal County Council calls on the Minister for Finance to review and change the rules on inheritance tax in so far as it relates to those who do not have immediate family members i.e. children. Consideration of equality should include the next blood relative".
- **26th July, 2022 – Resolution, Wexford County Council**
That Wexford County Council will write to the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly, the

Oireachtas Health Committee & the HSE CEO Paul Reid requesting that the provision of long Covid Clinics is retained and expanded.

- **16th September, 2022 – Resolution, Tipperary County Council**

That Tipperary County Council call on the Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform to provide significant additional funding to Local Authorities in 2023 having regard to the unprecedented levels of inflation, in particular, spiralling energy costs, rising construction costs, enhance payroll commitments, impact of the cost of living on other revenue streams such as rents and rates.

- **19th September, 2022 – Resolution, Sligo County Council**

That Sligo County Council write to the Minister for Finance to introduce a windfall tax on energy companies' excessive profits at a time when ordinary people cannot afford to heat their home, and the funds from this windfall tax be ring-fenced for redistribution over the winter to those most in need.

- **19th September, 2022 – Resolution, Sligo County Council**

That Sligo County Council carry out a county wide audit of the availability of disabled parking places. This to include all urban areas and tourist amenities

Acknowledgments to Resolutions from Roscommon County Council:

- 8th September, 2022 – Acknowledgement of correspondence by Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly T.D., ref letter regarding Kidney Dialysis Unit for Roscommon Hospital.
- 8th September, 2022 – Acknowledgement of correspondence by Minister for Social Protection, Heather Humphreys TD, regarding a Notice of Motion in relation to the Tús Scheme for Ukrainian nationals.
- 12th September, 2022 – Acknowledgement of correspondence from Catherine Martin, TD. Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media regarding a Notice of Motion in relation to Culture Night.

Replies to Resolutions from Roscommon County Council:

- **15th August, 2022** – Reply from Darragh O'Brien T.D., Minister for Housing, in response to Notice of Motion regarding grants available under the Rural Water Programme and the ongoing review of same.
- **17th August, 2022** – Reply from Stephen Donnelly T.D., Minister for Health, in response to Notice of Motion regarding the urgent need for additional paediatric occupational therapy and speech and language therapy services in County Roscommon.

141.22 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh

SECONDED by Cllr. Murphy

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McDermott

SECONDED by Cllr. Keogh

It was **AGREED** to approve the conferences and training events for attendance by Councillors as circulated.

142.22 RETIREMENT OF MR. EUGENE CUMMINS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Members paid tribute to the Chief Executive, Mr. Eugene Cummins who is attending his last meeting of Roscommon County Council, before his retirement on September 30th.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Crosby said the retirement of the Chief Executive would be keenly felt, not just among elected representatives but also by his colleagues and the entire staff of the local authority. He said Mr. Cummins brought energy, dedication and commitment to the tasks and challenges he faced on a daily basis which was underpinned by his sincerity, his integrity and passion for the people and communities of county Roscommon.

The Chief Executive had always adopted an 'open door policy' for the Members and would always give Councillors a listening ear. This much in evidence in the leadership he showed on behalf of the citizens of South Roscommon affected by the floodwaters of Lough Funshinagh.

Working in collaboration with his colleagues here in Roscommon County Council, he found solutions to what appeared to be intractable problems. This is very much in evidence in the transformation of The Square here in Roscommon town and the transition of the Local Authority to its new state of the art civic offices.

The Cathaoirleach acknowledged Mr. Cummins' record of over forty years of service to the local authority sector and he dealt with people without fear or favour. He had an immense ability to understand what worked best for both Roscommon and its people and was prepared to go that extra mile, in their best interests.

The Cathaoirleach also wished Mr. Shane Tieman well in his new role of Temporary Chief Executive in succession to Mr. Cummins and concluded by wishing the CE and his family long years of health and happiness.

The Elected Members also paid tribute to Mr. Cummins on his retirement:

- Cllr J. Cummins said Mr. Cummins's word was his bond, describing the outgoing CE as very approachable and for his role in steering the development of the former Royal Hotel site.
- Cllr. O Leyden said the CE made many visible improvements to the county in a quiet, yet measured fashion.
- Cllr L. Fallon said Mr. Cummins was determined, decisive and dedicated to the county's citizens.
- Cllr J. Murphy hailed Mr. Cummins' vision claiming Mr. Cummins' words were always genuine and fitting.
- Cllr J. Keogh said he had brought the CE to Monksland, an area, he said, which has been transformed, claiming he had put in a huge amount of work, particularly in trying to find a resolution for residents affected by flooding at Lough Funshinagh.
- Cllr M. Mulligan said it didn't matter what politics one had, the CE treated everyone the same, irrespective of political affiliation or none at all.
- Cllr J. Naughten said the CE had left the county in a stronger position through significant investment in local towns and villages.
- Cllr P. Fitzmaurice said the door of the CE was always open to Councillors and cited his role in the

- development of the Food Hub in Castlerea.
- Cllr M. McDermott described the outgoing CE as a decent and nice man who would be missed by members, staff and the community at large.
 - Cllr D. Kilduff said the county had been left in significantly better shape by the CE and wished him well on his retirement.
 - Cllr K. Shanagher said it was appropriate that on the news of Keadue winning a gold medal in the Entente Florale that the CE was departing. She said the announcement was just one legacy of Mr. Cummins' delivery for the county.
 - Cllr T. Ward said that when monies were tight for the Council, the CE ensured investment in lands in Monksland. He said that in his efforts to find a solution to the Lough Funshinagh funding issue, the CE stood with local people.
 - Cllr E. Kelly described the CE as an advocate for the people of South Roscommon and the county at large, describing him as constructive, honest and professional.
 - Cllr A. Waldron said business people were impressed by the CE who always made himself available to elected representatives.
 - Cllr L. Callaghan said Mr. Cummins was a man of great leadership and good nature who was determined to see the N5 bypass occurring.
 - Cllr N. Dineen wished Mr. Cummins well, describing him as fair and honest and for his track record of delivering projects.

On behalf of the Management of Roscommon County Council, Director of Services Shane Tiernan wished Mr. Cummins well. He said in his four years with the local authority, he was amazed at the work rate of Mr. Cummins, bringing social, infrastructure and economic development to the county.

Mr. Tiernan said the CE was a very generous man of heart, particularly towards marginalised people as evidenced during the Ukrainian and Syrian Refugee influx to the country and to Roscommon in recent years. He went on to describe Mr. Cummins as a good mentor, colleague and manager, claiming that if one delivered, you and your department grew as a result.

Addressing the Elected Members, Mr. Cummins paid tribute to his colleagues, management and elected representatives of Roscommon County Council, saying he left with the absolute respect of everyone he came into contact with.

He said on his arrival in the post, he had come to do business and to show respect. He also paid tribute to former Cllrs Eugene Murphy, Rachel Doherty, Ivan Connaughton, Dominick Connolly, Maura Hopkins and Michael Creaton as well as the county's Oireachtas representatives.

Mr. Cummins said that with effect from October 1st, he would be succeeded by Shane Tiernan as CE in an temporary capacity. As a result, Mr. Greg O'Donnell would fill the vacancy of Director of Services left by Mr. Tiernan. The outgoing CE described his management colleagues as one of the finest management teams in the country.

Mr. Cummins also paid tribute to the many local organisations and national agencies who supported him in his work as CE. He also acknowledged the work of the county's many community groups and described the people of the county as nothing short of extraordinary.

Mr. Cummins received a standing ovation from all present after which the meeting concluded.

143.22 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Clr. Waldron informed members of 'Make Way Day' a national initiative aimed at highlighting the challenges faced by people with disabilities accessing public spaces. The event was taking place on Friday, September 30th.

Clr Waldron also informed members that RTE television programme 'Crimecall' was to feature information on a recent Ballintubber break-in. He said anyone with information should go to Castlerea Garda Station to assist enquiries.

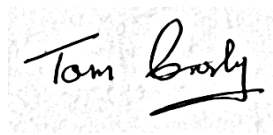
NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Monday, 24th October, 2022.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:

Petrizis Bohan
Meetings Administrator



Cathaoirleach

Petrizis Bohan
Countersigned