

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON
ON MONDAY, 28th June, 2021 AT 2.15 pm.**

PRESENT:	Councillor Joe Murphy, Cathaoirleach 2021/2022	PRESIDED
MEMBERS:	Cllr L. Fallon, Cllr E. Kelly, 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 J. Cummins, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr M. Mulligan, Cllr J. Naughten, Cllr K. Shanagher and Cllr L. Callaghan.	
OFFICIALS:	Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive Majella Hunt, Director of Services Shane Tieman, Director of Services Pat Murtagh, A/Director of Services Sean Mullarkey, Acting Head of Finance Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator Michelle Carney, Staff Officer Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator	

Apologies:

68.21 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby
SECONDED by Cllr. Fallon

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 24.05.2021

69.21 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

70.21 MANAGEMENT REPORT

- Management Report for May 2021 noted.

71.21 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2020

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McDermott
SECONDED by Cllr. Cummins

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Draft Annual Report of Roscommon County Council 2020

72.21 LOCAL PROPERTY TAX VARIATION FOR 2022

Mr. Sean Mullarkey, Financial Accountant, gave a presentation on the recently announced changes to the structure of the Local Property Tax under the Finance (Local Property Tax) (Amendment) Bill 2021:

- Revised method of calculating liability resulting in most homeowners facing no increase
- The bringing of certain currently exempted and excluded properties into the LPT system
implementation of recommendations of the 2019 LPT review regarding regularly bringing new properties within LPT charge each November, providing that property valuations are reviewed every 4 years, ending certain exemptions for first time buyers and unsold trading stock and modifying the

exemption for properties vacated by persons due to illness.

The LPT was calculated based on valuation on 1st May 2013 and the revised valuation date is 1st November 2021. All money collected locally is retained; the consultation period is reduced to two weeks and the new revenue deadline is 31st August (in revaluation year).

- Effects on Roscommon LPT 2022:
 - Circular Fin 15/2021 dated 17 June 2021
 - Baseline allocation for 2022 is €10,216,232 – no change to allocation model. 80% LPT retention locally + 20% to fund equalization
 - Equalization funding of €6,965,449
 - 80% retained locally €3,250,783
 - 1% LPT variation +/- equates to €40,634, 15% LPT variation equates to €609,521
 - Public to pay LPT in 2022 on new band valuations from 1 Nov 2021
 - Will be early 2022 before Revenue determine impact of new valuations and bands. This will affect the 2023 Budget
- Agreement is required on the consultation period – 28th June to 11th July
- The Council will be required to make a decision on the LPT at the July Plenary meeting.

The members discussed as follows:

- How will property owners value their properties and will guidance be available?
- The change includes associated buildings and up to one acre and can even include a second dwelling on the site – how will this be assessed?
- Potentially up to 98% of property owners will have their property tax at the €90 rate. Is this correct?
- It should be easy to do the assessment of the valuation by checking the price register for local property values. However there will be many properties close to the €200k valuation.
- Insurance valuations cannot be used because the rebuilding costs are not a measure of the valuation. Is there merit on calling on Revenue to give guidance?
- Are there figures available on new properties in ghost estates from 2013 to date that have not previously been liable for property tax?
- Will the property register be the valuation basis?
- What is the baseline property tax for Roscommon?
- People need to be clear on what basis they should make their valuation.
- Can insurance values be used for valuation?

In reply to the queries on valuation, Mr. Mullarkey replied that no guidelines have been issued as yet with regard to valuations but it will be self-assessment by whatever means is considered appropriate. There are no statistics available on new properties in ghost estates but it is considered to be of the order of €100k nationally. The property tax baseline is €10.2m and this will not change presently so any shortfall in tax collected locally will be paid by central government. There is a significant change in the bands that will affect the collection rate in Roscommon but it will be 2022 before it is known what that will be.

73.21 APPOINTMENT OF SECTORAL MEMBER TO HOUSING, ICT AND RURAL WATER SPC

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cummins

SECONDED by Cllr. Keogh

It was **AGREED** to appoint the PPN nominee of Mr. Bernard Kearney to the Housing, ICT and Rural Water Strategic Policy Committee.

74.21 NOTICES OF MOTION SUBMITTED

75.21 12.21 NOTICE OF MOTION FROM COUNCILLORS LEYDEN, SHANAGHER, BYRNE AND MCDERMOTT

“That Roscommon County Council recognises the major archaeological discovery on the N61 as part of the Coolteigue Road’s Project with the erection of a sculpture of sufficient scale and magnificence (possibly symbolising a Viking woman discovered as part of the DNA analysis during the Ranelagh Osteoarchaeology Project) and the mounting of information boards outlining this significant archaeological site used for over 1400 years which also included the extraordinary discovery that the settlement developed into a cemetery with 664 human burials. The sculpture and viewing area information point on a height off the road would commemorate these Roscommon people long gone (but not forgotten through this important action of Roscommon County Council). It would also act as an important heritage tourism marker.”

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

1. It is not standard practice to erect sculptures or other such features at the location of findings on road projects. As this is a national route, this proposal has already been referred to Transport Infrastructure Ireland as the funding and approvals body for works on National Routes. The Project Archaeologist has stated that the site was previously unknown and possesses no amenity value. The site, and all material recovered during excavations, will be the subject of a two-volume monograph in the TII Heritage Series. This book forms just the latest entry in a large suite of publicly available dissemination products and public outreach activities which have the effect of comprehensively memorialising the site and those buried there. The book is a labour-intensive but very exciting prospect and will represent a year-long collaboration between Queen’s University Belfast, Irish Archaeological Consultancy (IAC) Ltd., Stakeholders, excavators and specialists.
2. TII Safety Division have stated that the N61 Coolteigue Scheme has been developed to address, inter alia, road safety along this section of national road. The proposal to introduce a commemorative site resulting in a new junction or access/egress arrangement and / or the creation of additional associated turning movements onto and off this high speed section of improved national road has the potential to undermine this investment and introduce additional road safety risks on the N61, national road, that the scheme was developed to address.
3. Such as proposal would involve an increase in traffic on the realigned N61 at a location where the 100kph speed limits apply. Such a proposal is contrary to the objectives of the road project in terms of road safety and has the potential to create a traffic hazard. As indicated by TII, such a proposal would not be consistent with current planning policy including but not limited to policy set out in the RCDP.
4. There is no provision in the scheme budget to progress the proposals set out in the Notice of Motion.
5. As part of the development of the N61 Coolteigue road project, all works in respect of archaeology has been undertaken with the full knowledge and formal approval of the National Monuments Service (NMS), and in keeping with the terms of the Code of Practice for Archaeology agreed between the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (June 2017).

6. The archaeological excavations, and the post analysis work completed on the project by both Irish Archaeological Consultancy (IAC) Ltd and Queen's University Belfast to date, represents a very substantial investment of resources – both human and fiscal – over a period of 5+ years. In addition to this, the TII Heritage Series monograph for this scheme (due for publication towards the end of 2022) will be available publicly as a long term detailed memorial of the site.

Cllr. Leyden stated that this was a significant archaeological site and it was important to commemorate our people and give them dignity and respect. Access to a commemoration would be via the old road and we should seek other avenues of funding if the TII could not accommodate this. She acknowledged the work done by the TII and the work done on the book but the story needs to be brought to the people and if a memorial cannot be accommodated at the site, perhaps it could be marked in the town centre. She suggested a female Viking would be an appropriate commemoration.

Cllr. Byrne referenced the run from Mullymux to Ranelagh and the interesting history of the area that should be highlighted as part of Roscommon history. She supported the female Viking proposal and also noted that all of the important historical artefacts of the county are in Queens University or museums.

Cllr. McDermott supported the motion and as the proposed site is not on the main road, it should be accommodated.

Cllr. Fallon supported the motion and stated that a commemoration at the site is warranted.

Cllr. Keogh also supported the motion and is not in favour of artefacts stored away in Dublin museums and should be accessible in the county.

The Director of Services, Mr. Shane Tiernan stated that this was the reply received from the TII as a result of the notice of motion and that they want to set out clearly the monograph is an appropriate method of marking the site and that this is not uncommon across Ireland for such projects. With road design guidelines currently and road safety issues, the proposal is not something they can support presently. Access, parking etc. would all have to be considered and the funding source. A historical society or other interested party may look to take on this project in the future.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Mulligan

SECONDED by Cllr. Byrne

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon historical artefacts should be stored in a Roscommon museum and Rathcroghan is a suitable venue.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Leyden

SECONDED by Cllr. Shanagher

It was **AGREED** to refer the matter to the Economic Development, Heritage and Tourism SPC to discuss and look at alternative funding options for the project.

76.21 14.21 NOTICE OF MOTION FROM CLLR. NAUGHTEN

“That Roscommon County Council request the Ministers for Justice and Environment to immediately bring forward legislation, to facilitate the use of CCTV images and other electronic recordings as evidence in prosecutions under the Litter Pollution and Waste Management Acts”

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a resolution of the Council.

Cllr. Naughten stated that he has brought the motion to the Plenary meeting as Chairperson of the Planning, Environment, Climate Action and Corporate Governance SPC where the matter was recently discussed. There is a difficulty in the use of CCTV images and electronic recordings in enforcement and fines and taking prosecutions due to regulations around GDPR and the fact that the Litter Pollution Act was enacted prior to GDPR and it is creating a difficulty for the Council in using the CCTV. This is a nationwide problem and it was agreed by the members of the SPC that this was such a serious issue in our challenge in trying to reduce litter pollution around the county where the Council can't enforce on foot of CCTV information. We are asking the Minister to immediately act on this and that whatever legislative changes are required should be enacted. This proposal had the unanimous support of the SPC.

The members supported the motion and discussed as follows:

- While the Data Protection legislation was introduced in 1988 and the more recent GDPR legislation, there appears to be a slavish interpretation of the rules. This is going to be problematic going forward in prosecuting crimes, which litter pollution is, if CCTV and other recordings cannot be used. GDPR should not hold back the efforts of Government to protect our environment.
- The GDPR is an EU Directive that came in to protect the fundamental rights of people and not to hinder the efforts of the various bodies in the State to prosecute such matters as breaking litter laws and other similar problems.
- Indiscriminate dumping is an ongoing blight in our countryside.
- A working group has been set up Nationally by the Minister to look at the small fines that currently exist under the Litter Pollution Acts and this is at least some progress.

Acting Director of Services, Mr. Pat Murtagh informed the members that legislation is currently being prepared following a consultation process in February. Under the Waste Action Plan for a circular economy it is proposed to extend the fixed payment notices to additional offences under the Waste Management Act by inserting a new Section to provide for the use of CCTV and other technologies in waste enforcement activities. There will also be a new section in the litter pollution acts for the same purpose to provide CCTV and other technologies for litter enforcement activities.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Naughten

SECONDED by Cllr. Keogh

It was **AGREED** to call on the Ministers for Justice and Environment to immediately bring forward legislation, to facilitate the use of CCTV images and other electronic recordings as evidence in prosecutions under the Litter Pollution and Waste Management Acts.

77.21 CORRESPONDENCE

Acknowledgments to Resolutions from Roscommon County Council:

- **26th May, 2021** - Acknowledgement by the Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners, of the Notice of Motion regarding the provision of Post Office Forms.
- **26th May, 2021** - Acknowledgement by Joe O'Brien T.D., Minister of State for Community Development and Charities, of the Notice of Motion regarding PPN.

Replies to Resolutions from Roscommon County Council:

- **1st June 2021** - Reply from Mr Paschal Donohoe T.D., Minister for Finance in relation to in relation to the Notice of Motion ref 10.21 regarding Tax Forms.
- **4th June, 2021** - Reply from Heather Humphreys T.D., Minister for Rural and Community Development in relation to Notice of Motion calling for the establishment of an Annual Fund for necessary capital works projects at cemeteries
- **14th June, 2021** - Reply from Charlie McConalogue T.D., Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in relation to Notice of Motion regarding the Farm Relocation Scheme.
- **16th June, 2021** – Reply from the Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners in relation to the Notice of Motion regarding the provision of Post Office Forms.

Resolutions from other Local Authorities:

- **18th May, 2021 - Resolution from Leitrim County Council**
That Leitrim County Council ask the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage when the report into the tenant purchase scheme will be published, and if the issues relating to income from social welfare, and persons over the age of seventy, being allowed to purchase a Local Authority, house will be addressed?
- **25th May, 2021 - Resolution from Limerick City & County Council**
That Limerick City and County Council call on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to maintain the status quo with regard to policy on one-off rural housing in our County and City Development Plan and that the phrase "social and economic need" not be included.
- **2nd June, 2021 - Resolution from Sligo County Council**
That Sligo County Council write to the Minister for Social Protection, Heather Humphreys and ask that all working mothers and their partners be allowed to take paid leave after suffering a miscarriage or stillbirth.
- **10th June, 2021 - Resolution from Monaghan County Council**
That Carrickmacross/Castleblayney Municipal District calls on the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD, the Minister of State at Dept. of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and youth, Anne Rabbitte TD, and the HSE to put in place measures to support those who are cared for in their homes, on a full* time basis, whose carer may be incapacitated due to ill-health or emergency; we ask that an emergency response unit be made available (care team/carers) that could be called in to support patients in these circumstances.
- **17th June, 2021 - Resolution from Mayo County Council**
That Mayo County Council calls on the Minister for Social Protection and the Government to carry out a review of the Carer's Allowance Scheme and the Carer's Benefit Scheme.

78.21 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

The Chief Executive briefed the members that he had advised the CPG this morning that additional staff are to be funded for Active Travel measures and also in the near future for Climate Action and later in the year for a new integration role we will have in relation to housing. There is also an additional resource allocated to the LEO, who have been very busy in this past year and will be going forward as a response to the pandemic. Because of this more space will be required for staff and it is intended to take back the offices

on the ground floor that was allocated to The Cube. The project was very worthy at the time it was set up but was not as successful as was hoped. In the meantime, broadband has been successfully rolled out to community hubs that will cater for this need. The LEO office needs more prominence as their work and role was never more important and this proposal was agreed by the CPG.

ClIr. Leyden stated that she was not supportive of the decision without consultation with the members who gave their allocated rooms to facilitate The Cube and not for the use of staff. The Cube was to be the start of the provision of enterprise and innovation space for start up businesses in the County Town notwithstanding all the progressive projects that have been undertaken. A proposal was made at the February meeting to apply for funding for an enterprise and innovation centre and remote working hub in the former Motor Tax office and until this comes to fruition now is not the time to close The Cube.

The members of the CPG supported the Chief Executive on the matter and stated there was considerable discussion on the matter at the CPG meeting and it was accepted that, although it was regrettable to close The Cube, the usage had not been what had been anticipated the, additional staff will have to be accommodated for the new programmes coming on-stream and no other option is available. Assurance was also given by the Chief executive that meetings rooms will always be made available for councillor meetings when required. There is also an obligation to ensure that public monies are spent when made available for projects and progress in this matter must be accommodated. It would also not be desirable to seek alternative accommodation for staff outside this building.

The Chief Executive stated that we are not finished with the development of rural remote hubs in the county and our rural policy is based on the provision of these hubs. The next plan, working with the Western Development Commission and the NWRA has commenced. The Royal Hotel in Boyle and Innovation Centre in Monksland are being progressed to fulfil the need to provide these facilities.

Majella Hunt, Director of Services provided an update on the refurbishment of the Royal Hotel and the Monksland project. As regard the usage of The Cube, there were 280 seats per month available and at the height of its usage only 46 were used. She also noted that facilities are available in the Library.

ClIr. Leyden commended the work done to promote enterprise support in the county and asked that we redouble efforts to deliver a remote working centre in Roscommon town, possibly in an older building.

ClIrs. Ward, Fallon, McDermott, Kilduff, Shanagher, Byrne and the Cathaoirleach acknowledged The Cube had served its purpose and supported the move of the Local Enterprise Office to this location in Áras an Chontae.

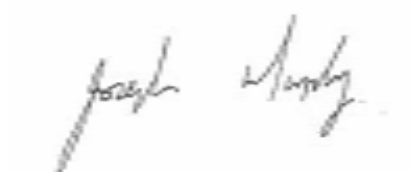
NEXT MEETING

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

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:

PATRIZIO BOHON
Meetings Administrator

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joseph Murphy".

Cathaoirleach

PATRIZIO BOHON
Countersigned