

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON
ON MONDAY, 23RD JANUARY, 2023 AT 2.15 PM.**

PRESENT: Councillor Tom Crosby **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: Cllr L. Fallon, Cllr E. Kelly, Cllr P. Fitzmaurice, Cllr D. Kilduff, Cllr A. Waldron, Cllr T. Ward, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr V. Byrne, Cllr J. Cummins, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr J. Murphy, Cllr J. Naughten, Cllr K. Shanagher and Cllr L. Callaghan.

OFFICIALS: Shane Tieman, Chief Executive
Majella Hunt, Director of Services
Caitlín Conneely, A/Director of Services
Sean Mullarkey, Acting Head of Finance
Fiona Ni Chuinn, A/Director of Services
Greg O'Donnell, A/Director of Services
Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator
Claudette Collins, Staff Officer
Darragh Kelly, Communications Officer

Apologies: Cllr M. McDermott, Cllr O. Leyden and Cllr M. Mulligan

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

There were no Disclosures of Interest declared by the Members.

2.23 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

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

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 19.12.2022

3.23 MATTERS ARISING

Library Services: Cllr P. Fitzmaurice asked if there was an update on the availability of forms accessing digital services in the local authority's public libraries. He previously raised the issue at the December plenary meeting, following the launch of the Council's Digital Strategy. Director of Services Majella Hunt replied that all of the county's library services had access to computers and Wi-Fi technology at each of their public counters. She said staff were willing to assist customers with any queries completing online applications. Roscommon County Council is committed to the roll-out of all services through its 'My Online Services' portal. Responding Cllr Fitzmaurice requested services be promoted to the public to a greater extent.

Meeting with Minister Roderic O'Gorman: Cllr L. Callaghan asked if a response had been received from Minister Roderic O'Gorman's Department, seeking clarity on the provision of increased services for newly arrived refugees in Ballaghaderreen. He asked if the Minister was willing to meet representatives of the local community on foot of concerns he raised at the previous meeting. Responding, Meetings Administrator Patricia Bohan said no response had been received to date from the Minister's office.

Community Car Scheme: Cllr L. Callaghan said an application has been made for two cars, under the Community Car initiative for the county following representations made at the December plenary meeting, at a meeting of Longford/Roscommon/Westmeath Local Link. An application for the provision of two cars had been made to the National Transport Authority (NTA) by Local Link but no decision had been made on

the application to date. He also informed the meeting that a pilot scheme is being proposed for Elphin and a grant of up to €6,000 is available. Cllr. Ward expressed his disappointment that there were no applications for such a service in South Roscommon and it is needed in the area. Cllr. Byrne welcomed the proposal for a pilot scheme in Elphin. A/Director of Services Fiona Ní Chuinn confirmed that two applications for community cars were sent to NTA and a reply is awaited. A meeting with the local Link committee is scheduled for next week and she will raise the matter of a scheme for South Roscommon.

Pride of Place Awards: The Cathaoirleach paid tribute to the county's three nominees in the All-Ireland Pride of Place Awards which had taken place last weekend in Dublin, attending along with CE Shane Tiernan and Director of Services, Majella Hunt. These annual awards, an All-Ireland initiative, recognise the efforts made by community groups. He paid tribute to volunteers associated with the Lough Ree Access for All project and members of the Lisnamult Tidy Towns and Residents Association, who were both runners-in in their respective categories. The third group nominated, The Melting Pot were nominated in the Community Wellbeing awards. Cllr Crosby said the achievements of all three groups would inspire other communities throughout the county. Cllr. Shanagher paid tribute to Council staff and the volunteers in the communities who prepared the applications.

4.23 MANAGEMENT REPORT

- Management Report for Quarter 4 2022 noted by the Members.

5.23 CULTURE AND CREATIVITY STRATEGY 2023 - 2027

Cllr. John Keogh, Chairperson of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support (including Tourism, Culture and Libraries) Strategic Policy Committee presented the Roscommon Culture and Creative Strategy 2023-2027 to the Council Members for discussion. He said was part of the Creative Ireland programme and a Government initiative. The strategy's main function is to enhance engagement, employment and cultural activity within the local arts sector. He informed the meeting that the strategy was presented to the SPC at their meeting on December 7th and subsequently adopted. The strategy was prepared and co-ordinated by the Council's Arts Office and he recommended the adoption of the Strategy by the Members.

The Arts Officer Ms. Rhona McGrath detailed the contents of the Strategy which sets out Roscommon's part in the next Creative Ireland five-year journey through the Creative Communities Pillar. This is a partnership between the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Ireland's Local Authorities. All strategies are approved nationally. The strategy will be delivered by the Council's Culture and Creativity team.

The themes of Practice, People, Place and Partnership will be prioritised in order to extend opportunities for creative participation, inclusion, cohesion and expression within communities.

Ms. McGrath gave the Members a snapshot of some of the major projects undertaken in the past five years under the previous Strategy:

- Exhibition of Táin Tapestry
- 'Hidden Gem' exhibition in Boyle
- 'See You in the Green' dance exhibition, which took place on the grounds of Roscommon Castle,
- Cruinniú na nÓg annual Children's Festival, taking place on June 10th this year.
- Eco Showboat which travelled along the River Shannon last year, highlighting the culture and heritage of the area and stopped at two venues in Roscommon.
- A further projects highlighted include initiatives undertaken by Ballyleague Men's Shed, the 'Festival In A Van' initiative whereby a vehicle was parked outside the county's Nursing Homes to entertain residents and staff alike as well as the Brothers of Charity Comedy Club.

Ms. McGrath said an 'open call' for funding under the Creative Roscommon funding stream will begin before the end of January. New strands have been added due to the allocation of extra funding, including a new outdoor cultural events section, straddling two separate programmes. She also stated that this is the last year of the Decade of Centenaries grants.

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Crosby welcomed the Strategy and paid tribute to everyone who contributed to the Strategy.

The Members discussed the Strategy:

- Encourage everyone to read the strategy and avail of the events and opportunities that it presents
- It is important to embrace the Arts and the Creative Ireland Programme has been a great initiative to bring the arts to the people. The Cruinniú na nÓg festival has been very successful throughout the country.
- Somers Park in Castlerea has hosted successful outdoor events and we should expand on this.
- It is important to promote and highlight artistic events taking place in the county – many more than we think
- All of the events that are held throughout the county help to promote tourism.
- Suggest that the call for Creative Roscommon funding should be advertised via the county's PPN (Public Participation Network)
- A Creative Community Collective workshop, promoting mental health was held recently and a welcome initiative
- The future of Roscommon is in unlocking our tourism potential - the county's representation at an International Angling Show in France as evidence of the importance of showcasing the county's resources.
- There is an appetite for outdoor events and entertainment, and a suggestion of the creation of a 'Music Hub' where bands to have a facility to rehearse. There are a number of buildings that could be transformed for this.

In conclusion the members noted the strategy and thanked the Arts Officer for her enthusiasm and creativity and her work to promote the Arts in the County.

6.23 APPOINTMENT OF SECTORAL MEMBER TO THE HOUSING, RURAL WATER AND ICT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby

SECONDED by Cllr. Murphy

It was **AGREED** to appoint Mr. Cormac Dalton, a sectoral nominee of the Construction Industry Federation, to the Housing, Rural Water and ICT Strategic Policy Committee to replace Mr. Alex Connolly.

7.23 APPOINTMENT OF SECTORAL MEMBER TO THE ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION AND EMERGENCY SERVICES SPC

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Callaghan

SECONDED by Cllr. Dineen

It was **AGREED** to appoint Mr. Philip Glover, a sectoral nominee of the Construction Industry Federation, to the Housing, Rural Water and ICT Strategic Policy Committee to replace Mr. Matthew Dwyer.

8.23 LOCAL ELECTIONS (DISCLOSURE OF DONATIONS & EXPENDITURE) ACT 1999 AS AMENDED

The Meetings Administrator advised the members of the requirements to submit a completed signed Donation Statement on or before 31st January 2023.

9.23 ETHICS FRAMEWORK - PART 15 OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001

Meetings Administrator advised the Members of the requirements to complete and return an Ethics Declaration on or before 28th February 2023. The return will be online and details will be forwarded in due course.

10.23 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

There was no Chief Executive business.

11.23 NOTICE OF MOTION

11.23a NOTICE OF MOTION CLLR. KELLY - 01.23 DENTAL SERVICES

"I am calling on Roscommon County Council to write to the minister again, expressing the need to address the growing number of dentists not accepting medical cards, therefore preventing people from accessing required dental treatment".

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:
This Motion requires a resolution of the Council

In proposing the Motion, Cllr. Kelly stated that the expansion of the medical card included dental services. There is an increasing number of dentists dropping out of the scheme and the number of dentists operating under the scheme has halved. There is a need to incentivise dentists to participate in the scheme and Medical Card holders should have the same access as private patients.

Cllr. Kelly was supported by the Elected Members with Cllrs. Fallon, Ward, Shanagher, Dineen and Keogh supporting the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** OF Cllr. Kelly
SECONDED by Cllr. Fallon

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister of Health again, expressing the need to address the growing number of dentists not accepting medical cards, therefore preventing people from accessing required dental treatment.

11.23b NOTICE OF MOTION CLLR. FALLON - 02.23 ASH DIE BACK

"The Ash Dieback fungus was first identified in 2006 and since then it has destroyed millions of trees across Europe. The effect on the Irish Ash tree population has been severe leaving large numbers of trees either dead or dying. The dead and decaying trees have become a serious risk to the general public especially road users as many of those trees are on roadside boundaries or close to buildings. I am asking Roscommon Co. Co. to write to the Government requesting a national assessment be carried out immediately and funding to have all diseased trees removed put in place in the interest of public safety."

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a resolution of the Council

Cllr. Fallon, in presenting the Motion said a national assessment was required to assess the extent of trees affected by ash dieback, claiming in some parts of the country upwards of 90% of ash trees are affected. This represents a danger to the public and they will die slowly and become unstable and a National Assessment is required. Surveys have been undertaken in the UK and it is recommended that trees affected are taken down.

The Members welcomed the motion and discussed as follows:

- Any trees removed due to ash dieback should be replaced by native Irish species.
- The Council should provide support for traffic management for the felling of affected trees, funded similarly to a Local Improvement Scheme.
- As this issue evolves a plan must be put in place. The Government needs to take a lead on this and to identify issues on a county by county basis. There also needs to be a wider debate on efforts by Coillte to allow English investment for increased forestry and suggested a representative from Coillte attend a forthcoming meeting to discuss
- Local Authorities and farmers need to work together to resolve the issue.
- Unless affected trees were identified, the problem was going to cost a lot of money.
- Landowners shouldn't be liable for costs removing affected trees on their lands.
- This matter has been raised a number of times previously however if a tree is on a farmers land he is liable for it.
- There are instances of trees having grown under houses and pavements in towns, claiming this needed to be addressed.

The Chief Executive, Mr. Tiernan said a national scheme is a matter for central government. If trees at risk are located on private lands, then this was a matter for the landowner concerned, and not the local authority. If, however affected trees were located on public roads, the issue would be assessed on a case by case basis, subject to the risks involved and the resources available.

Cllr T. Waldron called for an amendment to the proposal, seeking to include the removal of ivy from trees be incorporated into the motion, claiming funding should be set aside for training in this regard. Cllr Dineen seconded the amendment.

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

It was **AGREED** to write to the Government requesting a national assessment be carried out immediately and funding to have all diseased trees removed put in place in the interest of public safety.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Waldron
SECONDED BY Cllr. Dineen

It was **AGREED** to amend the motion to also seek funding for training and removal of ivy as trees can be decayed behind the ivy and this is not visible.

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

It was **AGREED** to ask Coillte to attend a forthcoming meeting of Roscommon County Council to update the members on allowing English firms invest in forestry in Ireland

12.23 CORRESPONDENCE

Resolutions from other Local Authorities:

- **30th November, 2022 – Resolution, Kerry County Council**

“That Killarney Municipal District write to the relevant Ministers requesting that when the Ukrainian Refugees return home, when it is safe to do so, that we would retain their current accommodation to the homeless and those on our Local Authority Housing list, where possible.”

- **20th December, 2022 – Resolution, Cork County Council**

“That Cork County Council would write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage of Ireland to express concern at the proposed Planning & Development Bill coming before cabinet this week which will limit local Councillor’s powers. The proposed bill seeks to change the term of the County Development Plan to ten years which is far too long.”

- **20th December, 2022 – Resolution, Cork County Council**

“That Cork County Council would write to the Government and the Minister for Finance to reintroduce an income tax scheme to incentivize and encourage many more Irish people to take out personal health insurance cover while also preserving the existing rebate of up to €200 at the point of purchase.”

- **20th December, 2022 – Resolution, Cork County Council**

“That Cork County Council would write to the Minister for Transport requesting that his Department (Department of Transport) would contribute financially to the LIS Scheme (Local Improvement Scheme). Presently, all funding comes from the Department of Community & Rural Development. The anomalies in the scheme in which there must be two active farmers on the scheme and people have to reapply. It was also agreed that a copy of this letter would be circulated to the Minister for Community & Rural Affairs.”

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Shanagher

SECONDED by Cllr Dineen

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council would write to the Minister for Transport requesting that his Department (Department of Transport) would contribute financially to the LIS Scheme (Local Improvement Scheme). Presently, all funding comes from the Department of Community & Rural Development. The anomalies in the scheme in which there must be two active farmers on the scheme and people have to reapply. It was also agreed that a copy of this letter would be circulated to the Minister for Community & Rural Affairs.

- **3rd January, 2023 – Resolution, Monaghan County Council**

“That Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister for Health, Department of Health and the HSE to put in place proper, sensitive procedures to avoid any further retention of a baby’s organs, at post-mortem, without the express permission of the parent.”

- **12th January, 2023 – Resolution, Cork County Council**

“That Cork County Council call on the Minister for Transport to consider that Uber be allowed to operate in this country. Due to the lack of taxi availability leading to isolation for members of rural communities, Uber could be a welcome resolution.”

- **12th January, 2023 – Resolution, Leitrim County Council**

That Leitrim County Council call on this Government to hold, without any further delay, the long promised referendum on voting rights for Irish citizens abroad.

13.23 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Dineen
SECONDED by Cllr. Murphy

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kelly
SECONDED by Cllr. Dineen

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

14.23 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS AND SYMPATHY

The Cathaoirleach expressed his sympathy to Cllr. Michael Mulligan on the recent passing of his sister Mary Dunning, Westport.

15.23 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Cathaoirleach reminded members that members use the resource of submitting notices of motion in advance of plenary meetings instead of raising issues during any other business at all future meetings.

15.23a AOB - DOG WARDEN SERVICES

Cllr K. Shanagher commented on yesterday's radio interview (RTE Radio News at One) with the Council's dog warden in relation to a discussion on dog control and recent attacks in children by dogs. There is only one dog warden in the county covering Arigna to Athlone and part of their job is to ensure that dog owners have licences and the laws are enforced. There are over 200,000 dogs in the country and a total of 60 wardens. Following on from recent attacks, it is likely that owners are not aware of their responsibilities when taking dogs to public spaces. She asked if there were any plans to employ a second dog warden?

Cllr. Fallon said the provision of one dog warden for the county wasn't enough. He said a priority of the dog warden has to be the control of dogs which are dangerous.

Responding, Director of Services Caitlín Conneely said the local authority have outsourced the provision of the dog warden service and the running of the Dog Pound. We have one dog warden under this service. The local authority actively works with the dog warden promoting responsible dog ownership. She noted that it was the responsibility of owners to be aware of their obligations as dog owners. One dog warden is sufficient but the service will be kept under review.

16.23 AOB - NOWDOC SERVICES

Cllr V. Byrne raised the matter of the provision of out-of-hours doctor's services in Carrick-on-Shannon which was accessed by many people in the county

- Is the HSE of attempting to privatise such services in the town? If services were privatised, staff would lose their jobs

- If people are unable to attend services in Carrick, they would end up visiting their local Accident and Emergency Department, causing further problems, appealing for facilities to be upgraded.

She proposed a letter be sent to Health Minister Stephen Donnelly seeking assurances that this wouldn't happen.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne
SECONDED by Cllr. Shanagher

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister for Health Mr. Stephen Donnelly to outline the situation and seek assurances that the out of hours' services of Now Doc in Carrick on Shannon will not be privatised.

17.23 AOB - ACCESS TO DIGITAL MAPS

Cllr. Fitzmaurice noted that the Elected Members do not have access to a digital online map with local road numbers. He requested if this could be made available to the Members? The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Callaghan.

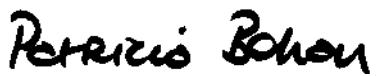
Responding, Acting Head of Finance Sean Mullarkey said he would speak to the GIS Officer to establish if this can be facilitated.

NEXT MEETING

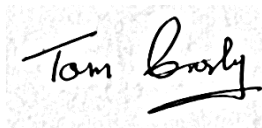
The next meeting will be on Monday, 27th February, 2023.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:



Meetings Administrator



Cathaoirleach



Countersigned