

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL  
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON  
ON MONDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 2023 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 V. Byrne, Cllr J. Cummins, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr M. Mulligan, Cllr J. Murphy, 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 J. Naughten

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

There were no Disclosures of Conflict of Interest declared by the Members.

**19.23 ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Ward

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Shanagher

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 23.01.2023

**20.23 MATTERS ARISING**

**Digital Maps:** Cllr. Fitzmaurice asked for an update regarding the access for Elected Members to Digital Maps that contain all road numbers.

In reply, Mr. Sean Mullarkey stated that a link to the maps referred to is available through the GIS platform and the link will be shared with the Members.

**21.23 MANAGEMENT REPORT**

- Management Report for January noted.

**22.23 PRESENTATION ON POST OFFICE SERVICES**

Mr. Tom Callaghan from the independent Postmasters Group gave a presentation to the Members on the post office network:

- His group was comprised of independent Postmasters who were actively seeking ways to make rural post office services more viable, claiming the current model, which was heavily reliant on Government contracts, was not sustainable. The Post Office network had received a Government subsidy of €30m, otherwise hundreds of Post Offices would already be closed.
- His members are looking for Post Offices to accept e-payments through new banking services which would channel Government payments through the network, which, he said, would generate a sustainable income for Post Offices of up to €60m p.a.
- Up to €23m in state savings were lying idle in banks, which was an incentive to enhance banking services through the post office network. He stated services such as motor tax payments to be paid through rural Post Offices.
- He also cited a 'community banking model' used by the postal service in New Zealand, where the post office network has over 12% of the country's overall banking market, in contrast to Irish banks, where 95% of the Irish market is owned by established banks.
- Proposals included the launch of a public information campaign for the public to invest in a 'community banking model'. The potential already exists for rural post offices to be interconnected, as most were already using compatible computer software.
- In conclusion he said local economies would benefit greatly from the adoption of new services in rural Post Offices. He said his proposals afforded Post Offices to consider better ways of doing business and offered business sustainability and asked the members for their support on this issue.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. O'Callaghan for highlighting the issue to the Members and they discussed as follows:

- Post office banking services for Social Welfare payments would be desirable to improve post office services.
- A number of medium sized businesses had closed in local communities, and the €30m Government cash injection would not sustain services indefinitely.
- Are there were particular reasons why Government had yet to roll-out a community banking model for post offices – villages have died when postal services were removed from an area.
- It is important to retain rural post offices and shops that are attached to them but there is little point in having services unless they were supported by the public.
- The closure of bank branches should benefit post offices, which provide a huge 'social network' for communities. Many post offices had considerable workloads which weren't being matched by generated income.
- While not sustainable to have a post office in each village, there is sufficient business and interest in keeping alive business. And there is an appetite for change in the delivery of service.
- Rural postal services could grow from the consequent development in tourism and facilities could be used as Tourism Information Centres.
- With the closure of bank branches in Elphin and Strokestown, one had to visit Ballaghaderreen, Boyle or Roscommon to do their banking.
- The recent closure of Ballyforan Post Office meant people had to travel to Ballygar to avail of services and rural post offices are essential to rural Ireland surviving.
- Rural Post Offices are an important amenity and supportive of the model of service delivery as practised in New Zealand.
- The hinterland of Ballaghaderreen has lost as many as nine post offices in as many years and appealing for all Government contracts for services to be delivered through the postal network.
- It was a contradiction having plans to revive rural Ireland while at the same time closing down rural post offices.
- Changes are needed to what is a banking monopoly. Pressure needs to be brought to bear on the Government to enhance postal services.

Responding to the concerns of members, Mr. O’Callaghan said over six thousand emails had been written to central Government seeking changes to the delivery of rural post office services. He urged pressure be brought to bear on An Post management as well as the public being encouraged to ensure greater use of services. He said rural post offices were at the heart of local communities, which should inform any decision making.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Ward,  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Kelly,

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council write to the Taoiseach, Minister for Finance and the leaders of all political parties in relation to the support of local post offices in County Roscommon and the post office network across the country. Initiatives such as the provision of banking services for welfare payments to be awarded to post offices and the roll out of a community banking model as advocated by the Independent Postmasters Group must be a priority to sustain the network.

### **23.23 SPECIFIED DEVELOPMENT UNDER SECTION 179 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED) AND ARTICLE 81 OF PART 8 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 (AS AMENDED)**

Mr. Greg O’Donnell, Acting Director of Services presented the Chief Executive’s Report on the Part 8 planning application in relation to the N61 Tulsk to Clashaganny Road Project for the Members consideration:

The proposed development comprises of the replacement/improvement of a 3.9km section of the N61 National Secondary Route extending from the townland of Tulsk to the townlands of Sheegeeragh and Manor, approx. 14km north of Roscommon Town (referred to as the N61 Tulsk to Clashaganny Road Project) within the County of Roscommon. The proposed development passes through the townlands of Tulsk, Carrownageelaun, Cargin Demesne, Lissacurkia, Carrowkeel, Carrowrinny, Sheegeeragh and Manor.

The proposed development will provide for the re-alignment and improvement of the existing N61 National Secondary Route to typically provide a Type 1 single carriageway. The principal features include:

- Approx. 3.3km of new road construction and approx. 0.65km of online improvement of the N61 at tie in locations.
- Construction of side roads and associated junctions
- Removal of sections of existing N61 and side roads
- Site clearance, including demolition of three residential properties
- Earthworks, including excavation
- Environmental mitigation and material recovery areas
- Drainage Works, incorporating (SuDS)
- Construction of Culverts
- Boundary treatment
- Construction of shared use cycle and pedestrian facilities in the village of Tulsk
- Utility Diversions
- Road pavement and road markings
- Public lighting
- Access and accommodation works and
- All other ancillary works

Six (6) submissions were received in respect of the Part 8 and where required, mitigation works recommended. The proposed development is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. An EIA screening process has been completed and the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report is not required.

In conclusion, the Chief Executive in his report is recommending that the development should be proceeded with.

Mr. O'Donnell said there had been problems with drainage and alignment on the route and historically the route had been a high collision location. The new road will be aligned in close proximity to the existing route and said parts of the current route which will be made redundant will be retained for local access and access to the new route.

He confirmed there had been and would be extensive consultation with landowners throughout the CPO process to address land boundary treatment specifics.

The Members reacted positively to the development and discussed as follows:

- The road was cited as an accident 'blackspot, where many tragic accidents had occurred previously.
- The road had become more dangerous with increased traffic in recent years.
- Members noted the demolition of three houses along the current road to accommodate the new carriageway.
- Members asked if aforementioned houses being demolished would be rebuilt.
- It was suggested any development or redevelopment would be 'like for like' in the replacement of any stone walls or infrastructure.
- Members urged for local tenders and contractors to be afforded the opportunity to carry out works at the site.
- The work of councillors in both the Roscommon and Boyle MDs, including former Councillor Sean Beime, was recognised in ensuring the development got to Part 8 stage after many years of debate.
- The area where the works are to be carried out was described as a historical location, with recognition that the former Cargins Estate would not be affected by the planned development.
- Works on the N61 were also required on the Boyle side of Tulsk where the road was sinking either side of a culvert and needed attention.
- Any works at the aforementioned site should be carried out now while the route was being updated to avoid carrying out further remedial works.
- It was suggested any current works should be extended to the culvert under the existing CPO (Compulsory Purchase Order). This was proposed by Cllr. J Cummins and seconded by Cllr. J Murphy.
- It was also suggested that if works could not be carried out on the culvert, that they would be carried out as part of the North bound N61 works, north of Tulsk to Shankill junction under the next phase of the N61 development.

In reply to queries raised, the Director of Services said the project was an important step in the overall development of the N61. He said there had been very extensive consultations with landowners in respect of boundary treatments. The concept of 'like for like' for any relocation or rebuilding of residential property was commonly accepted for a development of this nature but Notwithstanding the request to build stone walls, this is not TII policy and was never part of the project with the noted exception of Cargin Demesne as set out in the CE report. The development of the culverts north of Tulsk would be considered under the Shankill phase of the development. The geometry improvements at the junction would be completed under Active Travel measures with footpaths and improved safety features developed at the junction.

Mr. Pat Phelan, Senior Executive Engineer (NRRO) said costs continue to escalate and but minor road projects like this project being considered by members were estimated to cost in the region of €20m. He said a signalised control would be located at the junction. Overall the new N61 works would open up Tulsk from a more East to West trajectory. Land acquisition was moving forward with the N5 bypass and said two of the houses being demolished were derelict with compensation to be paid to the owner of the remaining property.

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

It was **AGREED** to proceed with the proposed works in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief Executives pursuant to Section 179(3) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations (as amended) in respect of the N61 Tulsk to Clashaganny Road Project.

#### **24.23 ADOPTION OF THE COUNTY OF ROSCOMMON SPECIAL SPEED LIMIT BYE-LAWS 2023 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 9 OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC ACT 2004.**

Acting Director of Services Greg O'Donnell informed members that the Chief Executive's report was in accordance with the Road Traffic Act. The first section of the report noted the current bye-laws were adopted on September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019.

In the second section of the report, a second review of the current bye-laws began in 2022 with three workshops having taken place. Final proposals, accompanied by maps were circulated to members.

Default speed limit changes required consent from TII (Transport Infrastructure Ireland). He said a notice specifying speed limits would soon be coming into effect.

Cllr E. Kelly enquired if the speed limits in Athleague village were remaining the same or would be changed. Responding, Mr. O'Donnell said no agreement could be reached with the TII on this and they will remain as they are.

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

It was **AGREED** to adopt the County of Roscommon Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws 2023 in accordance with Section 9 of the Road Traffic Act 2004.

#### **25.23 NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR. WALDRON AND CLLR. CALLAGHAN - 03.23 USE OF ROSCOMMON CREST AND ASSOCIATION WITH ROSCOMMON SHEEP BREED**

"Roscommon County Council would ask groups or organisations using the Roscommon crest to bear in mind the historical reason as to why a sheep is represented on the Roscommon crest. People should take cognisance of the appearance of the sheep and reflect it as accurately as possible to that of the Roscommon sheep breed."

The meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This motion requires a Resolution of the Council.

Moving the motion, Cllr Waldron welcomed representatives of the Roscommon Sheep Breeders Association present in the public gallery at the meeting – Donal Mee, Sandra Coote, Fergus Moffatt and Sean Flanagan. He said that many representations of a sheep on Roscommon crests were of a black faced or horned type sheep, which was not representative of the local sheep breed. There is huge potential to develop the Roscommon sheep breed, not only for farmers, but also for crafters. He said the association were active and met in Tulsk on a regular basis with the desire to revive popularity in the Roscommon sheep breed.

Cllr Liam Callaghan said the Roscommon sheep breed could be traced back to the 1800's. He commended the work of the Association and appealed for all Roscommon crests to feature the white faced version of the Roscommon sheep breed.

Cllr L. Fallon said the association were committed to reviving the Roscommon sheep breed and their efforts should be recognised in the correct type of sheep breed being showcased on all Roscommon county crests. In the past, the Councillor said the breed was exported to Australia and were recognised for their wool and meat qualities.

Cllr T. Ward said it was important the county was not promoting a breed of sheep that didn't belong to the county. Cllr N. Dineen said all county Roscommon crests should feature the correct Roscommon sheep breed.

Cllrs P. Fitzmaurice, D. Kilduff and V. Byrne all supported the notice of motion.

Chief Executive Shane Tiernan said it was imperative Roscommon County Council uses the correct county crest, which it had been doing. He informed members that the crest was officially adopted through the Irish Heraldry Office in 1961.

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

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council would ask groups or organisations using the Roscommon crest to bear in mind the historical reason as to why a sheep is represented on the Roscommon crest. People should take cognisance of the appearance of the sheep and reflect it as accurately as possible to that of the Roscommon sheep breed."

#### **26.23 NOTICE OF MOTION CLLR'S. NAUGHTEN, FALLON, KEOGH, KILDUFF, KELLY AND WARD - 04.23 SPEED LIMITS OUTSIDE SCHOOLS**

"Roscommon County Council write to the Minister for Transport and Environment Eamon Ryan requesting him to immediately instruct Transport Infrastructure Ireland to implement a reduced speed limit of 50km/hour outside all schools. This will not only improve safety in the vicinity of the schools, it will also ensure more pupils can utilise pedestrian and cycleway infrastructure in a safe environment on a daily basis."

Proposing the motion on behalf of the members of the Athlone Municipal District, Cllr Keogh said the motion derived from concerns previously expressed over speeding vehicles outside Cornafulla National School and Ballybay National School. He said it was particularly important speed limits were reduced to ensure the safety of children using their local school. He said it may be necessary to amend by-laws and said any changes should be adopted at Council level as part of an overall policy to reduce speed limits outside all schools.

Seconding the proposal, Cllr. Ward said the issue of school safety outside Ballybay National School had been raised by him back in 2004. There are also safety concerns outside schools in Brideswell and Curraghboy and the absence a footpath made it particularly hazardous for schoolchildren using the road. He appealed for the provision of traffic calming measures on the approach to Ballybay National School as the school was located on a very busy regional road. He said Active Travel measures would benefit, rather than solve, the issue of speeding vehicles outside schools.

Cllrs. Fallon, Kelly and Kilduff also spoke on the motion:

- There are huge dangers outside many schools, particularly outside Ballybay National School where cars were attempting to turn off the N61. Parking is inadequate outside many schools, which should be addressed at the planning and design phase for schools. Mount Talbot National School as a location where there were also traffic concerns.

- It is important a letter is sent to the Transport Minister on the issue. It is only a matter of time before a major road traffic accident occurred outside any school in the county, owing to the speed of passing vehicles.
- There is a need for a nationwide speed limit policy outside all schools or alternatively have 'school zones' monitoring speed limits, like in Australia where there were speed limits which were time bound on the affected road.

Cllr. Fitzmaurice said while he supported the motion he wished to amend it and suggested the adoption of periodic speed limits outside schools whereby speed limits outside schools were reduced from 50km in urban areas as exists outside many schools to 30kph during school set down times.

Cllr Keogh said there was a speed limit of 60kph in force outside Cloonakilla National School.

Cllr Fitzmaurice said that in all towns, the current speed limit outside schools was 50 kph. His proposal was seconded by Cllr Dineen.

A/Director of Services Greg O'Donnell said the Council supported safety measures near schools but said a resolution of the issue was not straight forward. He conceded there were some discrepancies concerning speed limits in urban areas. He said the proposal of members was worthy but needed to be refined but warned schools on secondary or tertiary roads may incur costs from the adoption of new speed limits outside their respective schools.

Responding, Cllr Fallon repeated an earlier suggestion that there should be a standard national speeding policy outside all schools and that TII would ensure such proposals be adopted. Cllr J. Keogh said Citizens Information states that special speed limits could be adopted by the local authority in designated areas.

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

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council write to the Minister for Transport and Environment Eamon Ryan requesting him to immediately instruct Transport Infrastructure Ireland to implement a reduced speed limit of 50km/hour outside all schools. This will not only improve safety in the vicinity of the schools, it will also ensure more pupils can utilise pedestrian and cycleway infrastructure in a safe environment on a daily basis. It was further agreed that the motion be circulated to all local authorities.

## **27.23 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LCDC)**

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

It was **AGREED** to appoint the nominee from the Department of Social Protection, Patricia Gilbride, to replace Antoinette Ryan on the Local Community Development Committee.

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

It was **AGREED** to appoint the nominee from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Pat Compton, to replace John Tansey on the Local Community Development Committee.

## **28.23 SECTION 26(1) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (FINANCIAL PROCEDURES AND AUDIT) REGULATIONS**

Acting Finance Officer Sean Mullarkey outlined the position of uncollected rates to members. As of December 31<sup>st</sup> last, €12.9m in rates collections had been invoiced with €10.5m received. A total of €1.3m were 'write-off's' which were mostly in respect of vacant properties.

In respect of re-valuations, Mr. Mullarkey said the rates waiver in 2022 amounted to €316,000 with €1.79 owed by the end of last year. This, the Finance Officer remarked, represented an 86% collection rate, which was in line with collection rates for 2021 and 2019.

The report was noted by the Members.

## **29.23 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS**

No business.

## **30.23 CORRESPONDENCE**

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

- **2<sup>st</sup> February, 2023** – Reply from Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly T.D. Ref Notice of Motion concerning Dental Treatment Services Scheme.

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

- **24<sup>th</sup> January, 2022 – Resolution, Tipperary County Council**  
"**Tipperary County Council** is looking for support to strengthen the control of Dogs Act Legislation in Ireland. A complete reform of dog owner's responsibilities must take place immediately for public and animal safety. An immediate review of the Dangerous Dogs Act must also take place banning ownership of these dogs in the State. A proper public indemnity insurance requirement must also be enshrined in new legislation for all dog owners. We are asking this Local Authority to write to the Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Rural and Community Development and Minister for Housing on this issue".

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Shanagher

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** to support the resolution from Tipperary County Council and to write to Ministers for Agriculture, Housing and Rural Development requesting a review of the dangerous dog's legislation.

- **2<sup>st</sup> February, 2023 – Resolution, Cavan County Council**  
"**Cavan County Council** is looking for support regarding thousands of people who are suffering with adverse effects from Covid – 19 for long periods of time (long Covid)".
- **14<sup>th</sup> February, 2023 – Resolution, Wicklow County Council**  
"**Wicklow County Council** object strenuously to the Coillte decision to partner with a UK based Investment Fund, Gresham House, in the purchase by this Fund of thousands of hectares of Irish forestry lands depriving the Irish people of the profits accruing and at the same time driving up the price of agricultural land which could be bought by Irish farmers. Wicklow County Council calls on the Government to halt this arrangement immediately and ensure that the future ownership of Irish



Forestry assets remains in the hands of the Irish People and that where local farmers who need more land to improve their viability would be able to buy back from this giant Coillte fund”.

- **22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 – Resolution, Sligo County Council**  
“**Sligo County Council** calls on the Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, The Greens and the Independents in Government to make provisions ASAP to include those Working Family Payment to avail of the Fuel Allowance Payment Scheme”.

### **31.23 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Dineen

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Kelly

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Ward

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Kelly

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

### **32.23 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS AND SYMPATHY**

The Cathaoirleach paid tribute to the late Albert Looby, former Strokestown Area Engineer who passed away recently.

Votes of sympathy were also recorded in respect of:

- Danny Rogerson, former Member of Roscommon Council and Outdoor Staff
- Desmond O’Connor, former County Coroner
- John Bruen, former librarian in Castlerea

### **33.23 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **33.23a LACK OF ROADS FUNDING OF N60 FROM TII**

Cllr. Fitzmaurice raised the matter of the recent roads funding allocation announcement for County Roscommon. He expressed disappointment over the exclusion of the N60. He cited an incident during which a lorry left the road along a narrow stretch of the road, due to no road verges. He has raised the issue on a number of occasions and had also raised the matter with the TII, who he said, were open to suggestions from the local authority bring forward safety proposals for this road

Cllr. Fitzmaurice asked what proposals had been brought by the local authority to the TII, claiming that there was a three metre drop on some stretches of the route. He proposed the route be developed and widened to improve safety.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr P. Fitzmaurice

**SECONDED** by Cllr N. Dineen

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council apply to the TII under the protection and renewal budget to make the N60 at Meelickaduff and Arm Cashel safe by widening and strengthening the road verge on both sides of the railway bridge and install a full safety barrier on both sides of the road. Once this is complete to also widen the road and bring it up to standard to allow two lorries to pass safely.

Cllr. Fitzmaurice stated that he should be made aware of the proposals submitted by Roscommon County Council to the TII regarding upgrade works in order that he can progress the matter with Minister Chambers.

### **33.23b INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY EVENT 8TH MARCH**

Cllr. Emer Kelly informed members of an initiative to mark 'International Women's Day' whereby female members of the Council were working collaboratively with the Roscommon Women's Network

The event would see the representation of the local authority 'reversed' to highlight gender representational imbalances on local authorities and takes place in the Council Chamber on 8<sup>th</sup> March

The Members wished Cllr. Kelly well in chairing the meeting and welcomed initiatives such as this to encourage more participation of females in local government.

### **33.23c COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WEBINAR - LECP CONSULTATION**

Acting Director of Services Fiona Ní Chuinn informed the members to support a forthcoming series of webinars, organised in conjunction with the Public Participation Network (PPN) to encourage community engagement in formulating the county's Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). Further details would be circulated to members following the meeting.

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

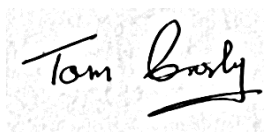
**The next meeting will be on Monday, 27th March, 2023.**

This concluded the business of the meeting.

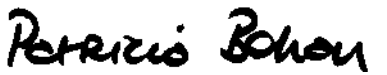
The foregoing Minutes are  
Confirmed and Signed:



Meetings Administrator



Cathaoirleach



Countersigned