Comhairle Contae
Ros Comáin
Roscommon
County Council

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY** Meeting **OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL**
**COUNCIL** Chamber, Áras an Chontae, Roscommon
**MONDAY, 24TH FEBRUARY, 2025 AT 2.15** pm**.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Paschal Fitzmaurice **PRESIDED**

**MEMBERS:** Cllr L. Cull, Cllr S. Moylan, Cllr M. Frain, Cllr L. Brennan, Cllr D. Connolly, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr L. Fallon, Cllr E. Kelly, Cllr T. Crosby, Cllr M. McDermott, Cllr T. Ward, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr V. Byrne, Cllr L. Callaghan and Cllr V. Duffy.

**OFFICIALS:** Shane Tiernan, Chief Executive
Caitlín Conneely, Director of Services
Sean Mullarkey, Director of Finance
Mark Keaveney, Director of Services
Fiona Ni Chuinn, A/Director of Services
Greg O'Donnell, A/Director of Services
Karen Hanley, Meetings Administrator
Claudette Collins, Staff Officer

**Apologies:** .

**13.25 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 Members.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Crosby
It was **AGREED** to suspend standing orders, and thereafter suspend the meeting for 15 minutes as a mark of respect for the late Cllr. Anthony Waldron (RIP).

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fitzmaurice paid tribute to the late Cllr. Anthony Waldron (RIP), noting his contribution to Ballintubber, Castlerea and all of County Roscommon. He remarked that Cllr. Waldron was a great advocate for tourism in the county, and acknowledged his great work in the establishment of the Credit Union in Castlerea. The Cathaoirleach acknowledged Cllr. Waldrons immense contribution to his community and noted that he will be missed greatly by all. The Cathaoirleach also remembered the late Cllr. John Naughten (RIP) in his comments.

All of the members paid tribute to the late Cllr. Waldron (RIP) and noted his passion for tourism for Roscommon and his dedication to the Suck Valley Way Conference. He was also a great supporter of the Percy French Festival, and the Strokestown Show. He had an avid interest in the potential of Ballintubber Castle and also the tourism potential for the Donamon area. He was remembered as a great advocate for Ballintubber and the wider Roscommon area. Members remembered him as a gentle, reliable and kind person, who had a deep compassion and was a hard working councillor for his community. His contribution to the rambling house, addressing the concerns of rural isolation and the vulnerability of people living alone was admired. His active work in tackling rural crime was also remembered.
Cllr. Waldrons' ability to energise communities and seek funding for projects was admired and his ability to

garner support from many different stakeholders was a key to his success and why people admired him so much.

His political career was admired, and the fact that he ran as an independent candidate in 2019 and 2024 was noted as testament of his popularity with the people of Roscommon, and a recognition of his great contribution to his county. He was admired as a true community man and an exemplary public representative, who worked as a team player in the Council and had the ability to look at the wider aspect with consideration, whilst having a great vision for the potential of what could be achieved.

Sincere condolences were given to his friends, family, the wider community in Ballintubber and his great fried Tommy Joe Finnegan.

On behalf of the management and staff, Chief Executive, Shane Tiernan expressed the sincere sympathies to Cllr. Waldron's family and friends on his passing. He acknowledged that the tributes paid by the members were a fitting reflection of the esteem in which Cllr. Waldron was held. His firm belief in the tourism potential of Roscommon and in particular his contribution to the Suck Valley Way will be remembered and he will be greatly missed.

The Cathaoirleach expressed his sincere sympathies to the Waldron family, and suspended the meeting for 15 minutes as a mark of respect.

The meeting was suspended for 15 minutes.

**14.25 ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Crosby
It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 27.01.2025.

**15.25 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**16.25 CO-OPTION OF CASUAL VACANCY**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Crosby
It was **AGREED** to fill the casual vacancy in the membership of Roscommon County Council by the co-option of Valerie Duffy, Fine Gael, in accordance with with Section 19 of the Local Government Act 2001, following the resignation of Cllr. John Naughten (RIP).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Connolly
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Crosby
It was **AGREED** that Cllr. Duffy is nominated to the following SPCs, Economic Development, Enterprise and Regeneration, and Housing, Integration, Community and Culture.

Cllr. Duffy spoke on her co-option. She stated it was an honour to join Roscommon County Council and thanked everyone for their welcome. She thanked Cllr. Connolly and Cllr. Callaghan for their support, and also expressed thanks to her family, Fine Gael, her neighbours, friends and work colleagues, as well as her community in Moore. She remembered John Naughten (RIP), and noted that he worked hard to make Roscommon a better place.

Members welcomed Cllr. Duffy:

- Her success in Moore Community Council was noted, with her work ethic acknowledged as a key driver for the achievements and success.
- It was noted that it was a proud day for South Roscommon and the parish of Moore.
- Her community advocacy was admired, and her work to date in youth advocacy was noted.

Members also congratulated Senator Scahill on his recent appointment to Seanad Eireann and acknowledged his community advocacy for Roscommon, both as a councillor and prior to his election to Roscommon County Council.

Chief Executive Shane Tiernan welcomed Cllr. Duffy on behalf of the management and staff of Roscommon County Council. He noted that it was a great honour to represent the people of County Roscommon and that he looked forward to working with her. He also acknowledged the Naughten family and Cllr. John Naughten (RIP).

Mr. Tiernan also wished every success to Senator Scahill on his recent appointment and noted that it was an honour to represent Roscommon in Seanad Eireann.

**17.25 MANAGEMENT REPORT**

- Management Report for January was noted.

**18.25 DISPOSAL OF LANDS- ASSETS**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McDermott
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Keogh
It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the disposal of property pursuant to the provisions of Article 206 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 of particulars of property which it is proposed to dispose of at the location in County Roscommon and to the persons set out in the schedule hereunder. Particulars of the property which the County Council proposes to dispose:

**The Property:** Site comprising 0.28 hA (0.69 acres) at Hawthorne Drive, Ardnanagh, Co. Roscommon
**The person(s) from whom the land was acquired:** Unknown, first registration with Roscommon County Council May 1980
**The person(s) to whom the land is to be disposed of:** Western Alzheimers
**The consideration proposed in respect of the disposal:** €8,000

**19.25 LOAN FOR LAHL AND LAPR SCHEME**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Crosby

It was **AGREED** to approve raising of a loan for granting of House Purchase Loans under the LAHL & LAPR schemes, in the sum of €2m in accordance with Section 106 of the Local Government Act, 2001 as amended.

**20.25 LOUGH REE GREENWAY SECTION 85 AGREEMENT**

A/Director of Services Greg O'Donnell advised that approval was being sought for the Section 85 Agreement between Roscommon County Council and Westmeath County Council for the Lough Ree Greenway scheme.

Members spoke about the project, raising the following points:

- The is an opportunity to utilise the Monksland way and army lands to get connectivity to the Hodson Bay.
- A question was raised enquiring when planning would be sought for the route.
- It was enquired if the greenway from Dublin to Longford side of Tarmonbarry would be connected with the Roscommon side, with connectivity to Rooskey using redundant BNM lands, with the potential to link to the Lough Key greenway.
- It was noted that this has huge potential for tourism in the west of Ireland.
- It was enquired whether the flooding on N61 is included in the plan, and whether the route is for walking and cycling.
- Information was requested on how much funding is there for the project, and when would work commence.
- It was asked whether connectivity to St. Brigid's GAA should be considered.
- It was noted that existing walkways should be considered.
- It was enquired if this matter went across more than one municipal district, and if so, whether a Part 8 would be in order.

A/Director of Services, Greg O'Donnell responded as follows:

- The project is at an early stage, and it is too early to confirm what the final route will be.
- The project has gone through Stage 0 and Stage 1 of TII. This is Stage 2, route selection.
- Public lands are in consideration.
- The Shannon Blueway is a separate project, BNM are looking at Just Transition funding potential.
- All of the projects are being looked at collectively, and the intention is for the schemes to link.
- There may be separate Sections 85 agreements in due course for these projects.
- At the N61 north of Ganly's where flood relief works are identified, there may be some synergies with this and the footpath and cycle routes.
- The funding for route selection is in 2025. Thereafter it will be a number of years before construction is likely to commence, based on project timelines and funding window.
- These are significant projects that will be transformative for the county when delivered.
- When the project reaches design procurement stage, it will be subject to Part 8, which will be in front of the full council.

Greg O'Donnell thanked members and advised this will go to Westmeath County Council for ratification.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the news and noted that these projects will have significant benefit for Co. Roscommon.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Crosby
It was **AGREED** that pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended), Roscommon County Council hereby agrees to make and enter into an Agreement with Westmeath County Council whereby Roscommon County Council will exercise and perform all the powers, functions and duties which may be (i) exercised or capable of of being exercised and (ii) performed or capable of being performed by Westmeath County Council in connection with Lough Ree Greenway Scheme. It is hereby resolved under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) to make and enter into this Agreement with Westmeath County Council as outlined above.

**21.25 RATES ARREARS**

Pursuant to Section 26 (1) of the Local Government (financial Procedures and Audit) Regulations, Director of Finance Sean Mullarkey presented the rates arears for 2024.

He presented the following figures:

- Opening Balance €1,466,294
- Invoices €12,461,149
- Receipts €11,523,035
- Write Offs €1,421,633
- Closing Balance €982,774

**22.25 AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

Director of Finance Sean Mullarkey gave an update to the members on the Audit Committee Annual Report 2024.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Crosby
It was **AGREED** to adopt the Audit Committee Annual Report 2024.

**23.25 NOTICE OF MOTION**

**23.25a M6:25 COMMUTER TRAIN SERVICES - CLLR. MOYLAN**

**Notice of Motion from Cllr. Moylan**

I seek the support of the members in calling on Iarnród Eireann & the NTA to examine the possibility of providing a morning and evening commuter train service Monday to Friday, between Longford & Sligo to cater for the large number of people who work, attend college, hospital appointments etc.

on a daily basis. There is a demand for such a service and I feel that it would be extensively used and would be welcomed by the communities who live along or close to the Sligo - Dublin Line.

**The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:**
This Motion requires a Resolution of the Council.

Moving the motion Cllr. Moylan stated that Sligo is a significant town for the north of the county and the wider region. People using Sligo University Hospital, as well as people studying and working in Sligo need adequate public transport to serve the area. Cllr. Moylan advised he is raising the motion, along with Cllr. Magown who is raising the motion in Leitrim County Council, and Councillors in two other local authorities in the region are raising the motion.
He emphasised that the lack of accommodation in principal towns also reinforces the need to public transport to serve these areas, which should take the pressure off housing requirements.

The Cathaoirleach supported the motion.

Members made the following points in support of the motion:

- Sligo is a growing town with essential services for the region. There needs to be transport services to support that.
- The local link in the region serving Sligo is very busy, proving the need for further services.
- Local link services can also be aligned with train times to give wider connections in the region as required.
- Extension of services would also support remote workers on their occasional travel to place of work, which may ease accommodation pressures.
- A lot of Iarnród Eireann services in the west of the country are being cut, and this needs to be halted.
- The provision of adequate rail services and other public transport would take the pressure of Dublin, reduce the number of cars on the road, and help support climate objectives.
- The All-Ireland railway review had this line included in its report.
- The current times and frequencies of lines do not give enough options to the public.
- Improving the services would make the roads safer.
- As the National Planning Framework is being discussed in this government term, it is timely to make this representation on this matter now.
- It was suggested that a letter is also issued to the minister for Transport on this matter.
- The government need to invest in public transport throughout rural Ireland, across rail, buts and local link.

Cllr. Moylan thanked the members for their support, and added that he will be seeking a meeting with the minister on this matter also.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr. Moylan
SECONDED by Cllr. Fitzmaurice
And AGREED to write to Iarnród Eireann & the NTA to examine the possibility of providing a morning and evening commuter train service Monday to Friday, between Longford & Sligo to cater for the large number of people who work, attend college, hospital appointments etc. on a daily basis. There is a demand for such a service and I feel that it would be extensively used and would be welcomed by the communities who live along or close to the Sligo - Dublin Line.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr. Keogh
SECONDED by Cllr. Moylan
And AGREED to issue correspondence to the Minister for Transport on this matter, including that it needs considered in the National Development Plan, noting that rail infrastructure requires significant improvements in the region and there is a need to consider dual lines to give adequate service to the region.

**24.25 QUESTION**

**24.25a Q2:25 N61 UPGRADE WORKS - CLLR. MOYLAN**

The question and response were circulated in advance of the meeting.

**25.25 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS**

None.

**26.25 CORRESPONDENCE**

Noted as circulated in advance of the meeting.

**27.25 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Connolly
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Keogh
It was **AGREED** to adopt the list of payments for training and conferences as circulated.

**28.25 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS AND SYMPATHY**

Circulated at the meeting.

**29.25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

<u>Area Offices</u>

- Cllr. Byrne raised the matter of secretaries being moved from area offices in the county, and that she did not agree with same, and asked for a rethink on this.
- The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fitzmaurice agreed with Cllr. Byrne and stated his hope that the secretaries will be retained in the area offices.
- Cllr. Keogh enquired whether this was happening at MD level.

A/Director of Services Greg O'Donnell advised that the area offices are not being closed, and will still be the offices for the technical staff, and that currently the offices are not open to the public. As these area offices are typically staffed by one administrative staff only, this creates risk from a health and safety perspective, as well as creating issues when staff are on holiday or off sick, as there is no relief cover. The

staff will be moved to the Municipal District office that area is in, to give a wider administrative team, offering more supports and cover where required.

The Chief Executive Shane Tiernan advised that this is the final item to be delivered on the plan on the efficiency of area offices and municipal districts, presented a number of years ago. This final move will take place to improve the efficiency of the services.

Cllr. Byrne reiterated that she was not happy with the decision, as the administrative staff in the area offices are there to support the technical staff, and she did not agree with the decision.

The Cathaoirleach advised that he was disappointed with the decision.

***NEXT MEETING***
**The next meeting will be on Monday, 24th March, 2025.**

This concluded the business of the meeting.

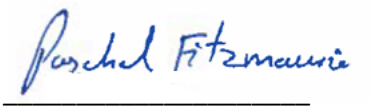
The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:



Meetings Administrator



Countersigned



Cathaoirleach