

MINUTES OF MONTHLY Meeting OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNCIL Chamber, Áras an Chontae, Roscommon
MONDAY, 26TH MAY, 2025 AT 2.15 pm.

PRESENT:	Councillor Paschal Fitzmaurice	PRESIDED
MEMBERS:	Cllr L. Brennan, Cllr V. Byrne, Cllr L. Callaghan, Cllr D. Connolly, Cllr R. Conboy, Cllr T. Crosby, Cllr L. Cull, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr V. Duffy, Cllr L. Fallon, Cllr M. Frain, Cllr M. Holland, Cllr E. Kelly, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr S. Moylan, Cllr M. McDermott and Cllr T. Ward.	
OFFICIALS:	Shane Tiernan, Chief Executive Caitlín Conneely, Director of Services Chris Flynn, Director of Services Mark Keaveney, Director of Services Sean Mullarkey, Director of Finance Karen Hanley, Meetings Administrator Claudette Collins, Staff Officer Michaela Fallon, Assistant Staff Officer	

Apologies:

68.25 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.

69.25 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Connolly

SECONDED by Cllr. Fallon

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 28.04.2025

70.25 MATTERS ARISING

Cllr. Crosby raised the matter of the proposed letter to the government regarding unfinished housing estates. He queried whether a reply had been received

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby

SECONDED by Cllr. Byrne

It was **AGREED** to write again to the Department of Local Government to highlight that national funding is required to address the challenges posed by unfinished housing estates, to support local authorities in managing and remediating these developments.

On this matter, Cllr. Callaghan informed the meeting that the Fine Gael members met with Minister for State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage John Cummins and highlighted the issue of unfinished housing estates and the need for additional funding.

Cllr. Moylan raised a matter in relation to the discussion of the Public Realm Works in Ballaghaderreen under AOB at the previous meeting. Cllr. Moylan stated that he did not name any Deputy during the discussion.

71.25 MANAGEMENT REPORT

- Management Report for April 2025 noted.

72.25 DISPOSAL OF LANDS - HOUSING

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne

SECONDED by Cllr. Crosby

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 0.0347 hA at Alderford Td., Ballyfarnon, Boyle, Co. Roscommon.

The person(s) from whom the land was acquired: Peter Gaffney

The person(s) to whom the land is to be disposed of: Peter Banks as Legal Personal Representative of Philomena Banks, deceased. 10 Lios an Ri, Cloghairanka, Co. Kildare

The consideration proposed in respect of the disposal: €9,863.66

73.25 CORRESPONDENCE

Noted as circulated in advance of the meeting.

74.25 CLIMATE ACTION PLAN - IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Climate Action Coordinator Aoife Moore delivered a presentation outlining the Implementation Report for the Climate Action Plan (CAP), which was circulated in advance of the meeting. The CAP was adopted in February 2024.

Director of Services Caitlín Conneely introduced the presentation, advising that this was the first progress report on the CAP. She thanked all the staff across the services in the Council for their input.

Cllr. McDermott, Chairperson of the Climate Action, Environment, Rural Water SPC, also outlined that this report had been agreed at a recent SPC meeting and also thanked staff for their input.

During the presentation, Ms. Moore outlined the following:

- The report fulfils the reporting requirements set out in the CAP across three areas, Governance and Leadership, Climate Adaptation and Mitigation and Engagement with Communities.
- In the CAP, there are 44 individual actions across 5 thematic areas. The actions are categorised as adaptations (current climate change issues), mitigation (preventative measures) and combined (mix

of both). Roughly half are combined, and the other two types account for roughly one quarter each.

- There is a decarbonising zone in Roscommon Town which has 18 specific action areas associated with it, mostly mitigation.
- The CAP aligns with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, an account of which is detailed in the implementation report.
- Leadership and Governance: A structure has been put in place within the Council, consisting of the Climate Action Team (senior management and oversight of the dedicated SPC and Council), working groups, Climate Action unit, specific sub committees deal with individual actions.
- The climate objections have been embedded into the Corporate Plan 2024-2029 and the related Annual Service Delivery Plans.
- Risk Management: Climate Action risks are incorporated into the risk management processes as they are identified.
- Budgetary provisions have been made in line with the CAP, details of which are in the implementation report.
- Training and capacity building has been a key area for implementation to staff, Elected Members and communities.
- Mitigation and Adaptation: The report deals with case studies showing how these actions are taking place, including emission reduction and energy efficiency targets, and how the energy management team regularly report to the SEAI. These reports show that RCC are on target to meet the targets set out.
- There are three case studies relating to mitigation in the report, the refurbishment of Dillion House, the Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Programme, and the installation of EV Charging Infrastructure.
- Adaptation case studies in the report include the local biodiversity fund for the park for Roscommon Town, the successful EV Wind Turbine Course developed in conjunction with GRETB funded by the Just Transition Fund and the Rise and Thrive project.
- The Climate Change risk assessment is ongoing, as information is made available at national level, it is reviewed and taken into account into local authority processes.
- The Community Climate Action Programme is currently underway, €402,000 has been allocated for 15 projects across the county along with an additional €117,00 for two cross boarder cooperation projects. Phase 2 is set to launch in Q3/4 of 2025.
- Section 5 of the implementation report illustrates examples of strong climate action integration throughout the Council's service delivery such as social housing retrofitting, biodiversity and water quality enhancement, Active Travel initiatives and Regeneration development.
- The decarbonising zone has ongoing initiatives such as the Repair Café, SEC energy management and ongoing initiatives with the GRETB.

The Members thanked Ms. Moore for the informative presentation and discussed the following points:

- Views were expressed that joined up thinking isn't happening in relation to SEAI Grants.
- Concerns were raised regarding the upfront costs required to upgrade the energy efficiency of houses if seeking an SEAI grant, which deters people from carrying out this work and calls that if this was addressed, it could have a huge impact.
- Climate Change is happening and is very visible.
- Delight at the refurbishment of Dillon House and it was questioned when it would be reopened.
- The issue of rural septic tanks was raised regarding accessing grants and the amount of paperwork, inspections and criteria involved.
- Concerns were raised regarding the reliance on electric cars and new homes being built without

chimneys during crisis situations such as the recent Storm Éowyn.

- It was asked how strong the sewerage capacity is in Roscommon Town.
- Concerns that nationally, we are not on target to hit the Climate Action targets set by 2030 and the huge penalty that the country is facing as a result.
- It was outlined that a lack of EV charging points is a disincentive to people buying electric cars.
- It was asked what the plan is for the youth, community and voluntary sector, and if there is active engagement with the ETB/IFA/PPN.
- It was asked if there are plans for a generator scheme for communities to help provide support during a crisis.
- It was questioned if there is going to be an addition round of support from the Just Transition Fund.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fallon

SECONDED by Cllr. McDermott

It was **AGREED** to write to SEAI asking for a review the criteria for grant funding for retrofitting homes, particularly to reconsider the upfront costs required and request the introduction of split grant funding.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fitzmaurice thanked Ms. Moore for her presentation and highlighted that more action was needed. He raised the issue that clear air needs to be improved and suggested that idle running cars are causing major issues, and he outlined that awareness was needed where cars are idling such as outside takeaway food establishments. He also noted that it was highly positive to see a new solar farm in the Castlerea area. He proposed that the Neighbour Woods scheme be explored where a new forest is created at the edges of towns with amenities within such as playgrounds. He commended the recent project in Foley Bennetts Orchard where there were 150 apple trees planted by youth and local employment scheme workers.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Cllr. Conboy

It was **AGREED** to ask Roscommon County Council to explore the possibility of developing a Neighbour Woods scheme for 14 acres of low-lying land in Castlerea, currently owned by Roscommon County Council.

Ms. Moore advised the following in response to the Members points.

- She outlined that the issues regarding the SEAI grants had been raised before and explained that there are different grants available including a grant for people claiming social welfare benefits.
- She advised that the opening of Dillion House was a matter for the Assets section and the septic tank issues were a matter for the Environment section.
- She explained that there is a strategy in progress for EV charging points.
- She stated that car idling is a matter for the Environment Awareness Officer.
- She advised that she would be happy to speak to any communities interested in the neighbour woods scheme.
- She outlined that the penalties for not hitting Climate Action targets by 2030 will depend on how much they are missed by but confirmed that it is likely they would be substantial.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fitzmaurice outlined that there was indication from the government that they would establish a scheme to provide generators for community hubs in towns and villages to assist in crisis situations.

Director of Services Caitlín Conneely advised that the septic tanks grant allocations increased from €5000 to €12,000 recently but appreciates there are still issues with the scheme that prevents people from engaging with it such as the upfront cost, inspections and the time it takes to draw down the money. She advised that the Council are continuing to work with Uisce Éireann on the issue of sewerage capacity in line with the Roscommon County Development Plan. She explained that the Council's Climate Actions are funded through the Budget, and that there is no funding provided from the government for these actions. She also added that the ZEVI, the EV charging strategy, which will be before the Council in the coming months, will set out where the charging points will be located.

75.25 ELECTORAL REGISTER UPDATE

The Administrative Officer of Corporate Services, Karen Hanley, delivered a presentation of an update on the Electoral Register. The presentation summarised the recent Electoral Commission Report and gave an update on the upcoming voter.ie project.

Oversight Report on the Electoral Register

- The report was published on the 1st May 2025 by the Electoral Commission (EC).
- The EC was 'deeply concerned' at the legacy accuracy issues on the electoral registers nationally and has recommended a plan for the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the 31 local authorities to address this issue before the next round of electoral events in 2029.
- The EC stated that "Roscommon's register appears to be one of the more accurate registers".
- Roscommon ranks 2nd nationally for elector date of births, 10th for elector Eircodes, 4th for combined DOB and Eircodes, and 31st for elector PPSNs recorded (the national average is low for this metric and PPSNs can be hard to obtain due to GDPR).
- Overall Roscommon County Council is noted by the Electoral Commission as having one of the more accurate registers, with high levels for DOB, Eircode and combined DOB/Eircode records.
- Roscommon had fieldworkers in 2023 and are employing them again for 2025, from June to August 2025.
- The findings from the EC include a recommended increase in funding for each local authority to enable maintenance and the updating of their registers, they also recommend that local authorities should develop and publish plans setting out their activities on the register. The EC have committed to carryout annual assessments on electoral registers nationally. The move to one single electoral register nationally should also help improve accuracy on the register.

Changes in Electoral Registration 2025-2026

- Three electoral events were held in 2024 (March, June and November). There was over 9% increase in the number of Electors in Roscommon, 10,762 electoral records added, deleted or updated and as of 17th December 2024, there were 53,724 electors on the register.
- Registration Activities in 2024 included 400 new register applications following school's roadshows, library visits in Strokestown & Castlerea, advertisements on Facebook, X, Instagram and through printed media, seminars in schools, communities and online to encourage increasing the participation of women and diversity in Local Government including voter registration.
- In 2025 and 2026, there will be increased activity due to online applications and rolling registration, data cleansing work being carried out prior to moving to a single National System (voter.ie) and carrying out the recommendations of the EC.
- Local Government Electoral Registration System (LGERS) Project: The Electoral Reform Act 2022 mandated the creation of a single national database for the electoral register to make it easier for

electors to register online and improve the accuracy of data.

- Each local authority will still be responsible for the accuracy of its own register.
- Data cleansing will take place until early 2026, after which the national roll out of voter.ie will be carried out.
- The term of office of the current President expires on 10th November 2025. An election shall be held in the 60-day period before the expiry. This election will be run on the existing register system and is not impacted by the voter.ie project.
- Voter.ie will replace the Check the Register portal and back-office system, the new system will use MyGovID in addition to PPSN authentication, it will be easier to search for townlands, addresses and the elector's own registration details, all address details will be included bilingually to comply with Irish Language Acts, electors will be allowed to upload documentation (change of citizenship, name etc.), and standardize data protection and retention.
- Data work that is currently underway for 2025 in the Franchise section includes completing townland and polling station addresses (English and Irish), working through priority identified data issues (full database data cleansing), following up with potential duplicate electors and working with other local authorities to identify potential duplicates/deceased across county borders.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fitzmaurice thanked Ms. Hanley for the informative presentation and noted the scale of changes that are being made. He also mentioned issues regarding electors voting at Polling Stations that is not their closest one and questioned whether there was any plan to review this. He also thanked those working on the register for their work.

Members broadly thanked Ms. Hanley for her presentation and discussed the following points:

- Praise for the work carried out and delight that Roscommon was in the top few counties of most metrics.
- It was questioned if the use of MyGovID was necessary on the new system, due to issues with the site historically.
- Agreement that a single National Database would have a positive effect on the accuracy of the register.
- It was questioned if an automated process of notifying/adding people turning 18 to the register could be looked at.
- Concern with regards some of the scoring of other counties in the report.
- Reiteration of a review to the Polling Stations being needed.
- Concerns were raised that the public does not have sufficient trust in the register to share their PPSN data, making it challenging to obtain this information.
- The discrepancies that were highlighted in relation to Polling Stations are also prevalent in Municipal District/engineering areas.
- Concerns were raised in relation to Postal Voting, and it was recommended that it should be less restrictive to include people who are out of the country on polling days.
- Disappointment at the number of ballot papers not stamped in last year's Local and General Elections.
- Concerns that any change to electoral boundaries should be made well in advance of Local Elections so that candidates could be informed.

Ms. Hanley advised that some of the issues raised were not a matter for the Council and therefore couldn't address them.

- She clarified that the absence of fieldworkers in 2024 was due to the high number of electoral events that occurred during the year. She confirmed that for 2025, preparation is in progress and the fieldworkers are scheduled to commence in the coming months.
- She added that fieldworkers will encourage electors to update their PPSN data on checktheregister.ie
- She explained that Polling Stations are a matter for the Courts Service.
- She also explained that the use of MyGovID for the new system is being driven nationally.
- She noted that electors can already pre-register before they are 18 and are automatically registered to vote after their 18th birthday.
- She reiterated that the EC's concerns are with the legacy records, not with live records, therefore there should be no trust issues nationally with the overall system.
- She advised that the policy regarding Postal Votes is set in legislation, and local authorities are bound by regulations as to the granting of same.

Director of Services Caitlín Conneely stated that the issue concerning unstamped Ballot Papers in last year's elections were addressed with the Courts Service at the time. She further clarified that any amendments to Polling Stations fall under the remit of the Courts Service, and that changes to electoral boundaries can only happen following a national census, which is an issue that is beyond the control of the Council's authority.

76.25 DRAFT ANNUAL SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN

Director of Finance, Sean Mullarkey outlined the draft Annual Service Delivery Plan, which was circulated in advance of the meeting, and sought approval of same.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh

SECONDED by Cllr. Kelly

It was **AGREED** to adopt the draft Annual Service Delivery Plan.

77.25 PROPOSED DELETIONS FROM AND ADDITIONS TO THE RECORD OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES

Director of Services Mark Keaveney outlined the Planning Department's Report which includes the Planning Authority's recommendation on the proposed deletion from and additions to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) with respect to Cargin Demesne contained within Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Moylan

SECONDED by Cllr. Callaghan

It was **AGREED** to approve the proposed deletions from and additions to the Record of Protected Structures.

78.25 DRAFT WEST REGIONAL HOMELESS ACTION PLAN

Cllr. Connolly, Chairperson of the Housing, Integration, Community & Culture Strategic Policy Committee, presented the Draft West Regional Homeless Action Plan Presentation.

The Draft West Regional Homeless Action Plan 2025-27 was prepared in consultation by the West Regional

Homeless Management Group which comprises of Galway City Council, Galway County Council, Roscommon County Council and Mayo County Council.

Cllr. Connolly outlined the Strategic Vision of the West Region Homelessness Action Plan is to work towards the eradication of homelessness in the West through:

- the provision of sufficient appropriate affordable housing
- a focus on preventing homelessness
- supporting those who are most vulnerable to empower them to access and sustain appropriate accommodation which meets their needs with a holistic, compassionate and proactive approach.

In Roscommon, this includes.

- continued development of the housing delivery pipeline
- strengthen of the Homeless team with Roscommon to provide supports
- provision of Community Based Housing (a shared housing model) supported by NGO's
- Provision of dedicated homeless accommodation with in-reach supports including a cold weather response unit

Cllr. Connolly advised that the draft Action plan was presented to the members of the Housing, Integration, Community & Culture SPC on 1st May 2025. The members of the SPC raised a number of queries in relation to the implementation of this policy, the queries were responded to by the Senior Executive Officer and Director of Services for Housing.

Members supported the Draft West Regional Homeless Action Plan and raised the following points:

- Suggestion that emergency accommodation should be provided in each of the major towns in County Roscommon, not just Roscommon Town, which is currently the case. This disenfranchises people from their area and services such as doctors etc.
- Currently 18 people in emergency accommodation.
- Highlighted the need to provide housing units relative to the need, e.g providing a single unit to a single person, rather than a 3-bedroom unit to a single person.
- Acknowledge of the work of the Council in acquiring 60 houses which saved 60 families from homelessness.
- Stated that Roscommon is lucky not to have the high numbers of homelessness that other counties have.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Connolly

SECONDED by Cllr. Keogh

It was **AGREED** to adopt the West Regional Homeless Action Plan 2025-2027.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fitzmaurice welcomed the plan and mentioned the difficulty of families facing high rents or when a landlord rented decides to sell the rented house or move into it themselves. He acknowledged that the local authority will be responsible for building the majority of houses over the coming years. He expressed his delight that an expression of interest application had recently been advertised in relation to the Affordable Housing Scheme.

79.25 NOTICES OF MOTION

79.25a CLLR. MCDERMOTT -M12:25 - ROSCOMMON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL PARKING

That Roscommon County Council write to the Minister for Health and the HSE in relation to the parking arrangements at Roscommon University Hospital. People having to park nearly half kilometre away from the hospital is very unfair. I am asking the HSE to consider development of the considerable holding of land directly behind the hospital as a car parking facility. This current situation for patients and visitors is placing an undue burden.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a Resolution of the Council.

Cllr. McDermott outlined that the current situation is very unfair as Roscommon University Hospital is a centre of excellence and should have appropriate facilities.

Members supported the motion and made the following points:

- It was expressed that the issue has been raised several times previously and is yet to be resolved.
- Concerns that people have to park long distances from the hospital and walk to it, often on their own or in great difficulty.
- Views that a multi storey car park at the back would be sufficient to address the issue.
- Residents near the hospital are constantly complaining of cars blocking their driveways due to the lack of parking.
- HSE have, in the past, used the excuse of wanting to expand services first to delay addressing car parking concerns but that has not yet happened either.
- Views that Roscommon University Hospital are carrying out great work and it is a very busy hospital for procedures, yet the lack of car parking is letting it down.
- Members who are sitting on the HSE forum will raise the issue at their next meeting.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fitzmaurice also expressed his support for the motion and asked Cllr. McDermott if he agreed to revise the motion to suggest a multi-storey car park as the solution to the issue. Cllr. McDermott thanked the Members for their support and agreed to the amendment to the motion. Cllr. Keogh seconded the amendment.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McDermott

SECONDED by Cllr. Connolly

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister for Health and the HSE in relation to the parking arrangements at Roscommon University Hospital asking the HSE to consider development of the considerable holding of land directly behind the hospital as a multi-storey car parking facility.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Cllr. Keogh

It was **AGREED** to write to the government to request new standalone services be made available at the rear of Roscommon University Hospital, particularly a new psychiatric unit, which would free up space for a new car park and entrance to the hospital.

79.25b CLLR. WARD - M13:25 - COMPENSATION LOUGH FUNSHINAGH

I am calling on the Government, the Minister for Finance, Mr. Jack Chambers, T.D. and the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Mr. Martin Heydon T.D. to provide the necessary compensation to the farmers that have lands on or adjacent to Lough Funshinagh that are badly affected by the flooding since 2015. I am also calling on the Government to carry out a survey on the amount of damage done to boundary walls and fences, and all trees are dead.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a Resolution of the Council.

Cllr. Ward added that he raised a similar motion three years ago but had yet to receive a reply. He explained that over the last 10 years, the farmers in the area had dealt with a significant loss of income. He praised the recent work that has been carried out by Roscommon County Council to reduce the water level; however, the land is still unusable for farmers.

Members supported the motion and made the following points:

- A full assessment of damage needs to be carried out as the water levels decrease with input from multiple agencies.
- Widespread agreement that farmers should be compensated for the devastation that they have had to deal with.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Ward

SECONDED by Cllr. Fallon (who stated for the record that he is a landowner in the area)

It was **AGREED** to write to the Government, the Minister for Finance, Mr. Jack Chambers, T.D. and the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Mr. Martin Heydon T.D. to provide the necessary compensation to the farmers that have lands on or adjacent to Lough Funshinagh that are badly affected by the flooding since 2015. It was also agreed to ask the Government to carry out a survey on the amount of damage done to boundary walls and fences, and all trees.

Cllr. Ward thanked the Members for their support and reiterated the point that farmers will continue to lose significant income until the water levels are reduced to 2012 levels.

79.25c CLLR. FITZMAURICE - M14:25 - FIRE SERVICE IN CO. ROSCOMMON

Notice of motion calling on Roscommon County Council to reassess the level of fire service in all parts of County Roscommon and take into account factors of risk including the numbers of fires in each area, population and response times and set up a working group to recommend to Government to fund a fire service in areas like Castlerea.

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

Roscommon County Council Fire Service continuously monitor the risk factors to assure that the provision of Fire Services in County Roscommon meets National Standards.

Since the emergency response performance of Fire Services in County Roscommon are compliant with the National Standards, special additional funding is not justified.

It is important to note that the outcome of the recent Firefighters industrial dispute commits Roscommon County Council to pay an additional €1.1 million per annum in Firefighter costs.

In summary, the continuous monitoring of risk factors and adherence to National Standards ensures that the Fire Service operates effectively and efficiently, providing a high level of service to our communities.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fitzmaurice stated that he was disappointed with the reply. He outlined that the fire station in Castlerea shut 8 years ago despite being one of the busiest in the county. He explained that he lodged this motion on the 11th May, and on 18th May a serious bog fire broke out in the Gortaganny area, the worst of its kind in the county. He stated that there was also a serious house fire in Castlerea town in recent weeks. He stated that this was a huge issue for the area and that he has attended several public meetings on the matter. He stated that Castlerea had too big a population, not to have a fire station and stated that Elphin and Strokestown are much smaller, yet they both have fire services. He stated that Castlerea was one of the biggest towns in Ireland without a fire service. He concluded that he hoped the executive would reconsider and that he would continue to raise the matter with TDs, Ministers and the Taoiseach, and ask the government to fund the reopening of the fire station.

Members also expressed their disappointment at the reply, and made the following points:

- Funding shouldn't come into it when people's lives are at stake.
- The house fire that happened in Tarmon Manor could have been saved if there was a fire station in Castlerea town.
- A lot of dialogue on social media regarding the recent fires are incorrect. The fire service from Ballaghaderreen only took 14 minutes to get on the scene of the house fire in Tarmon Manor.
- Agreement that a working group would be very beneficial to tackle the issue.
- Expressions of gratitude towards neighbouring fire services Ballaghaderreen and Ballyhaunis who service the Castlerea area and their work on the recent bog fires and house fire.
- Praise for emergency services personnel and the hard work that they do.
- Calls that the government should intervene on the matter.
- Neighbouring fire services are leaving other areas exposed to deal with fires in other areas.
- As Castlerea is surrounded by bog and forest, and has a national prison, it is bizarre not to have a fire service in the town.
- Services such as a fire service were never intended to be removed once they were installed
- Roscommon Town to Athlone is another huge area without fire service and calls for a full assessment of the need for fire services in the area.
- It was stated that the average time for a neighbouring fire service to reach Castlerea was 23 minutes.
- Following rates being increased at the last Budget, it was questioned what the capital cost would be to reinstate the services and what the ongoing cost would be.
- Reopening Castlerea wouldn't have prevented the Gortaganny bog fires, specialised equipment would assisted, it was questioned if this could this be provided.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Conboy

SECONDED by Cllr. Fitzmaurice

It was **AGREED** to share the local knowledge of water access points with other services in case of emergencies.

Director of Services Sean Mullarkey read a list of fire services both in the county and in close proximity who

service fires in the county when required. They are Ferbane, Ballinasloe, Mountbellew, Claremorris, Ballyhaunis, Charlestown, Tubbercurry, Ballymote, Drumshanbo, Carrick on Shannon, Mohill, Longford Town, Lanesboro, Athlone, along with Boyle, Elphin, Strokestown, Ballaghaderreen and Roscommon. He stated that each station is in the process of increasing to 12 fire fighters each, will total 228 fire fighters servicing county Roscommon.

Mr. Mullarkey explained that, with respect to Castlerea, the objective is to assess needs through area-based risk categorisation. He mentioned that between 2020-2022, there were 626 call outs in county Roscommon, only 54 were in the Castlerea area, in 2023 there was a further decrease to 17 call outs for the Castlerea area (9 rural and 8 urban). He detailed that the response time for the recent aforementioned fire was 13 minutes 49 seconds, with another fire service arriving 2 minutes later.

The costs of reopening a fire station were assessed in terms of recruitment and training, incident response, and annual operating expenses. The total cost is estimated at €757,000, with annual running costs of €350,000. He explained that the council has no scope to set up a working group as it is a function of the SPC and taking into account the mentioned figure, it would be difficult for them to make a recommendation to reopen the fire station. He outlined that the Council would have no problem with the Elected Members lobbying the government on the issue, but Roscommon County Council wouldn't have the budget capacity to reopen a fire station.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fitzmaurice thanked Members for their support and concluded that he would continue to raise the issue and requested a copy of the figures mentioned.

Chief Executive Shane Tiernan paid tribute to the fire service for their work during the recent fires and stated it was an honour to have such a dedicated fire service in the county.

80.25 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

No further business.

81.25 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE

Noted.

82.25 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS AND SYMPATHY

Circulated at the meeting.

83.25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Tidy Towns and Amenity Grant Scheme Allocation 2025

Director of Services Chris Flynn sought approval for the allocations for the Tidy Town and Amenity Grant Scheme 2025 which was circulated at the meeting. He advised that 73 eligible applications were received from community groups and voluntary organisations who have been granted aid to assist the undertaking of small-scale amenity projects in their local area. €60,000 was allocated as the total budget for the scheme.

Members welcomed the funding and thanked Mr. Flynn and his team for their work on the scheme.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Dineen

SECONDED by Cllr. Fallon

It was **AGREED** to approve the recommended allocations under the Tidy Town and Amenity Grant Scheme 2025.

Proposed Application for an IPAS Centre at Academy House, Goff Street, Roscommon Town

Cllr. McDermott raised the issue in relation to an application for an IPAS Centre at Academy House, Goff Street, Roscommon Town that was submitted to the Planning department as a Section 5 Declaration of Exempted Development. Cllr. McDermott outlined that there has been widespread speculation in the media on the subject, and it was his understanding that the application had been rejected and subsequently appealed to An Bord Pleanála. He explained that while he understood it was no longer an issue of the Council, he asked if the Director of Housing had received any information on the matter.

Director of Planning Mark Keaveney explained that an application for a Section 5 Declaration of Exempted Development had been made for same, but the planning department concluded that the application constituted development that was not exempt development, and the application had been appealed to An Bord Pleanála. He outlined that the outcome of the appeal has not been determined at this stage.

Director of Housing Chris Flynn outlined that the Housing department had not received any correspondence on the matter.

Cllr. McDermott thanked both for their responses and asked that he be notified of any clarity they might receive.

A number of members spoke further on the issue:

- Cllr. McDermott was commended for raising the issue in the correct forum.
- The planning department were praised for making the correct decision in relation to the Section 5 Declaration of Exempted Development.
- There was widespread concern raised regarding social media being used to spread misinformation and commentary on issues such as the IPAS centre being used as a publicity tool.
- It was outlined that statements or comments cannot be made on live planning applications.

Cllr. Holland stated that he has no involvement in the proposed IPAS Centre, despite commentary made on social media linking him to the director who sought the application.

Bully's Acre

Cllr. Ward raised an issue that was mentioned at the Special Meeting during the election of Cllr. Holland in relation to a project at Bully's Acre, which was being worked on by the late Cllr. Anthony Waldron (RIP). He asked if any progress had been made to erect a fence at the site and questioned if the Council were committed to see the project through to completion.

Director of Services Mark Keaveney explained that there are ongoing talks with the landowner and assured that provisions had been made to follow through on the project.

Cathaoirleach's Last Meeting

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fitzmaurice stated that as the next meeting would be the AGM, this was his last meeting as Cathaoirleach and thanked the members, the Chief Executive, staff and the Meeting Administrator Karen Hanley for their help throughout the year.

Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr. Larry Brennan also thanked his fellow colleagues and stated that it was an honour to serve the role for the past year.

Members thanked both the Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach for their work in their respective roles.

Chief Executive Shane Tiernan also thanked both the Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach for the great impact they had made in their roles representing the people of Co. Roscommon.

NEXT MEETING

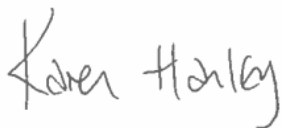
The next meeting will be on Monday, 23rd June, 2025.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:



Meetings Administrator



Countersigned



Cathaoirleach