

Minutes of the Athlone Municipal District Meeting which was held in the Civic Centre, Church Street, Athlone at 3.00 p.m. on Monday 3rd July, 2017.

Attendance:

Mayor:	Cllr. A. O'Rourke
Members:	Cllr. T. Farrell, Cllr P. Hogan, Cllr. F. Keena, Cllr.A. McManus, Cllr. M. O'Brien and Cllr J. Dolan
Officers:	Pat Nally, A/ Director of Service Frank Dolan, District Administrator Eilish Reilly, Staff Officer Charlie Sorohan, Senior Executive Engineer, Housing Dept. Ray Canavan Clerk of Works Annette Barr Jordan, Administrative Officer, Community Section
Others	Mr. John Costello, Athlone Training Centre Marie Reddin, PPN Linda Jo Quinn, PPN

Votes of Congratulation / sympathy

1. Cllr. Paul Hogan would like to express Sympathy to the Farrell family Ballinahown on the recent death of Chrissie Farrell (mother of Mae Farrell, librarian).
2. Cllr. Michael O'Brien would like to propose a vote of congratulations and civic reception for Joe Ward on winning his third European boxing championship.
Cllr. Paul Hogan also wishes to be associated with these congratulations.
3. Cllr. John Dolan would like to propose a vote of congratulations to Leo Varadkar, on his election as Taoiseach.
4. Mayor Aengus O'Rourke would like to congratulate and welcome John Brophy in his new role as Executive Engineer with Athlone Municipal District.
5. Mayor Aengus O'Rourke would like to Congratulate Giulia Vallone Architect with Cork County Council and her colleagues in the Council on Clonakilty's win as 'Best place of the Year 2017' at the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland awards last week.

All of the votes of Sympathy/Congratulations were agreed upon and District Administrator to forward agreed proposal for civic reception to relevant committee for consideration.

Minutes

It was proposed by Cllr. Paul Hogan and Seconded by Cllr John Dolan and resolved,
“That we hereby adopt and confirm the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 6th June, 2017

It was proposed by Cllr Paul Hogan and Seconded by Cllr. Michael O’Brien and resolved,
“That we hereby adopt and confirm the Minutes of the June Monthly Meeting held on the 6th June, 2017

Matters Arising

Cllr O’Rourke asked what the update was with regard to the building on Lloyd’s lane which he had queried at the last meeting.

Mr Pat Nally A/District Manager advised that Mr. Pat Keating District Manager was in negotiations with the owners but that he was on leave and may have an updated position when he returns.

Cllr O’Rourke asked what the situation was with regarding to the lighting of the Castle.

Mr Pat Nally A/District Manager advised that the contractor was on leave at present and on his return he would seek an update.

To receive a Deputation and consider a submission from Athlone Municipal District Public Participation Network

Ms. Annette Barr Jordan gave the members a background to the document and where it had originated from and the process involved. She thanked the Council for their support in achieving objectives in the plan. Ms Linda Jo Quinn wished to acknowledge the work of the late Mr. Alfie Nally RIP PPN representative. Ms Marie Reddin highlighted the fact that the process was working very well.

The members thanked the Deputation for their presentation and the work that the PPN carry out. Cllr O’Rourke advised the deputation that while the document laid out objectives, all the members were available at any time if they wanted to contact them in relation to any matter.

To receive a presentation from Athlone Training Centre.

Mr. John Costello advised the members in relation to the work that Athlone Training Centre carry out. He outlined the different courses that the centre runs and also the various people that take part. He advised the members in relation to the type of apprenticeships carried out at the centre.

The Members thanked him for a very informative presentation and presented a number of questions in relation to the centre which he answered in detail.

To receive a report on inspections carried out on windows and doors on Council houses in Athlone.

Mr Charles Sorohan Executive Engineer presented the report to the members. He went through the report in detail. Following on from the report the members had a number of issues in relation to some of the detail in the report. Cllr Keena asked that a number of addresses he had advised of in relation to having issues with windows and doors were not included in the report and he asked that it be amended to include the addresses. Cllr O’Rourke asked about the houses that had been called to as part of the survey and that were not at home at the time, had a note or phone call made to say someone had called. He stated that at

this time of the year it would be prudent to advise tenants of their obligations in relation to maintenance of the property. Cllr Dolan expressed concern in relation to the council's maintenance budget. He asked if our Local Authority houses would pass an inspection under the RAS scheme and if not why is the criteria different for Westmeath County Council as a landlord. He agreed that tenants should be responsible for maintaining their property in good condition but expressed concern about materials being defective when not up to standard from the first day. Cllr Paul Hogan stated that he was concerned that phase 3 of the Energy Efficiency Programme was not going ahead. He asked that in relation to the reporting stating that West facing doors would be replaced as priority how many of these doors were in situ. In relation to the expenditure under phase 2 of the Energy Efficiency Programme Cllr Hogan asked if this money was not refunded to Westmeath County Council and therefore it was not our own maintenance budget that was expended. He stated that Management needed to advise the members that the budget for maintenance was not sufficient in order that this could be taken into consideration at budget time and adjustments could be made accordingly. Cllr O'Brien asked if any fire safety inspections were carried out on Local Authority housing and if not he asked that this be done as a matter of importance. Cllr Farrell asked that if the Local Authority could work with companies such as Athlone Home Comforts. That there needed to be joined up thinking in relation to addressing the issues.

Mr Charles Sorohan addressed a number of the issues. He agreed to have the report amended to reflect the addresses raised as having issues by the Councillors. He advised Cllr O'Rourke that the survey was intended as a representative sample and that any house that had not been called to would not be disadvantaged when assessing what works are required. He advised the members that there were limited budgets and therefore work had to be prioritised. With regard to Phase 3 of the Energy Efficiency Programme he advised at no point did the Department give an undertaking that it would go ahead, he advised the members that on confirmation of Phase 2 of the programme that the Department undertook to look at the possibility of Phase 3 upon all Local Authorities having completed Phase 2 of the programme. He advised the members that when preparing a property for re letting that all items in the property in relation to safety were addressed i.e latches on windows etc, he also advised in relation to fire safety that smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, fire blankets and heat detectors were installed in all vacant/void properties. He stated that housing did not carry out fire safety checks but that it may be an issue for the Fire Department. Mr Ray Canavan advised the members that regulations in relation to housing were constantly changing, for example he advised that smoke alarms need now to be fitted in bedrooms of new builds and again stated that this was an additional cost in the region of €900 per property and that it was not possible to do all property at once but that on a phased basis that they were being addressed.

Cllr O'Rourke asked for a further report with costings in relation to all the works that need to be carried out to render the windows and doors in Council properties in Athlone Municipal District up to standard as without such costings it would be difficult to budget for it. Cllr O'Rourke asked the members for their support in relation to writing to the Department seeking funding for a phase 3 of the Energy Efficiency Programme, that would address the issue of defective windows and doors, all the members concurred and a letter is to issue accordingly.

To receive an update of Church St Enhancement

Mr. Pat Nally advised the members that a number of minor issues were identified during the public consultation day on 22nd June and that minor amendments had been done to the design. He stated that the Coosan Point Hospital Junction works would start this week and Mardyke St junction works would follow on from that. He advised that the one-way system was still on the calendar for commencing at the end of August but a final date had not been decided on yet and that plenty of advance notice would be given. VMS signs will be erected on the outskirts of the town and the permanent signs will be erected before then.

Cllr O'Rourke stated that structured communication was needed as was agreed at the commencement of the project. He also stated that it needs a budget and needs to involve more than just the traders.

To receive an update on the Acquisition of Lands for the Railway Field Road

Mr Pat Nally advised the members that we were awaiting final detailed drawings from the consultant showing the road, bus parking layout in the field and boundary treatments with a view to finalising the agreement. This may be delayed slightly due to people in the various parties being on summer holidays.

Questions

The replies to questions for June were noted and supplementary questions answered as attached

Correspondence

Mr. Frank Dolan advised the members of the following correspondence

- Office of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine acknowledging receipt of correspondence with regard to a members motion regarding forestry regulations
- Kevin 'Boxer' Moran Minister of State for the OPW with special responsibility for Flood Relief In relation to the Athlone Flood Relief Scheme, extended an invitation to the elected members and the media to view similar OPW led schemes in Dublin on Tuesday, August 22nd next or alternatively, Friday, August 25th.

Motions

The replies to Notices of Motion, as attached, were considered by the Members:

At 5.30pm The Mayor asked for the Standing Orders to be suspended. This was proposed by Cllr Keena and seconded by Cllr Farrell and resolved.

AOB

Mr. Pat Nally advised the members that the advertisement for the Part 8 for the Flood Defences would be in the papers this week and that the documents would be going on display next week in relation to the Quay Area. He stated that the Part 8 should come before the members of the full county Council at the September meeting. He advised that there would be a number of Part 8's for the flood defences as the town had been divided into a number of cells for the purpose of design and planning. The cells were not interdependent and therefore could be constructed as stand-alone defences. Planning for the other cells would follow through planning one after the other. The OPW will be the main contractor for the works thus saving on time because the need for all the defences to be designed before going to tender didn't arise.

Mr. Nally stated that the Director of Services for Housing wished to advise the members that Westmeath County Council were going to tender for the construction of the 33 houses at Arcadia in the next two weeks.

Cllr Keena asked that Westmeath County Councils website be updated with the minutes of Athlone Municipal District meetings.

Cllr Farrell asked for a report on Athlone Marina and the current situation. He stated that he had received a number of complaints from boat owners. Mr. Pat Nally stated that nothing had changed at the marina, that boat owners were being pursued for any outstanding fees but with regard to the fees and facilities there had been no changes implemented.


Cllr O'Rourke
Mayor

4-8-17
Date

Athlone Municipal District – Questions July 3rd 2017

Cllr	Question	Response	Supplementary Question	Response to Supplementary
1) A. O'Rourke	Can this Municipal District write again to Irish Water to ask them to attend a future meeting of this MD?	At members request a letter issued on 21 st February 2017 and a response was received 2 nd March 2017 stating that Irish Water would not be in a position to attend the Meetings in March or April but that an invite would issue to all Councillors in the District to attend the next Irish Water Clinic to be held in the District. It was agreed by Members that a further letter to issue	None	
2) A. O'Rourke	Can this Municipal District update the members on our plans to improve and modernise our approach to cleaning and maintaining our town streets in the months and years ahead following the agreement by members in recent months to invest in this area	The District Engineer will bring a report with costings to the September Municipal District meeting.		
3) F. Keena	Can this District give its members a full update of the status of the proposed flood defences for Athlone for our July 2017 meeting?	This will be a full agenda item at the September 2017 District meeting.	None	

Cllr	Question	Response	Supplementary Question	Response to Supplementary
4) T.Farrell	Update request on progress regarding the raising of roads in flood areas eg Muckanagh, Tonagh, Gortmore, Carrickobreen and will the works include any necessary improvement to drainage infrastructure.	Survey work is complete and design work is underway for the Golden Island / Carrickobreen Road and includes any necessary drainage infrastructure improvements. Survey work has commenced on the other roads.	With regard to Mucknagh where does it fit into the schedule	Mr. Pat Nally; There is no priority, Golden Island and Carrickobreen Road are further on in the process that is all
5) T.Farrell	Can AMD inform us when the agreed works to create a stop go flow and entrance to the cycleway at Streamstown will commence.	These works will commence in August 2017	None	

Athlone Municipal District – Motions July 3rd 2017

Cllr.	Motion	Response	Notes
a) M. O'Brien	That Athlone Municipal District install a pedestrian crossing and traffic calming measures on the Ballymore Road Moate between Sliabh Rua and the Railway Bridge in the interest of public safety.	Provision of funding to install a pedestrian crossing at this location will have to be considered in the context of the Members' priorities for funding as part of the 2018 Roads Programme.	Cllr O'Brien advised that families that live in particular in Sliabh Rua have to cross the road to get to a footpath that leads to the town. He looked for support for the motion and to seek funding from the Department of Transport under safety measures to address the issue. Mr. Pat Nally advised that for a controlled crossing it did not meet the criteria, that most likely funding would be supplied for regional roads first but stated that the members could allocate funding in 2018 for the project
b) M. O'Brien	That Athlone Municipal District provide an information sign at Moydrum Castle detailing the history of the castle and its location.	This is a worthy initiative and will be forwarded to the Tourism Officer for consideration.	Cllr. O'Brien advised that it was an area of historical importance. Cllr. Keena advised that consultation would have to take place with the land owner prior to commencing any works.
c) M. O'Brien	That Athlone Municipal District install landmark frames in order to highlight our main landmarks and tourists attractions in Athlone.	This will be referred to the Planning Department and the Heritage Officer for advice. Thereafter a short report and a recommendation will issue to the Members.	Cllr O'Brien advised that this was a very simple idea that would be very beneficial and stand out item in the town that would take very little to advance
d) J. Dolan	That this Municipal District provides a plan for the area along the Quay, Athlone to enhance the streetscape and the riverside.	This will be considered in the medium to long term, given the other areas of public realm in the town that require such enhancement. Furthermore, this area will be subject to major works in the next few years including flood defences, cycleway provision and main drainage works.	Cllr Dolan advised the members that funding had been applied for a sculpture, that something appropriate to the area would enhance this part of town

Cllr.	Motion	Response	Notes
e) J. Dolan	That this Municipal District conduct a review of the roads that are not taken in charge in the District and discuss the possibility of taking some of them in charge	The Council does not have the resources to properly maintain the current public road network. In this context it would not be appropriate to take further roads in charge.	Cllr Dolan stated that what he was looking was equality for all householders who had paid their levies. Cllr Farrell suggested that a register of roads to be taken in charge be put in place with Cllr Dolan advising costing should also be put in place. Cllr O'Brien suggested a programme be put in place and it be done over a number of years. Mr Pat Nally advised the members that it was an issue county wide and that it may be best placed for the Transportation SPC to progress.
f) J. Dolan	That this Municipal District request that Bus Eireann conduct a review of their town bus service to incorporate route changes to facilitate the servicing of Clonbrusk Primary Care Centre	The timetable for the A2 Athlone Town Bus Service Network includes a bus stop at the Primary Health Care Centre. If there is a concern regarding the actual provision of this service a letter can issue to Bus Eireann / NTA if the members so decide.	The members agreed to write to Bus Eireann in relation to the problem and also highlight the option available in relation to Accommodation Road and to thank them for the service they provide. It was decided that the letter should be copied to NTA and Rural Transport
g) T. Farrell	Request for AMD to compile a register of instances of Japanese Knotweed Growth in Athlone Municipal District and to take precautionary and preventative action to stop the spread of this invasive species.	When the Council becomes aware of the presence of Japanese Knotweed in a public area we deal with it in line with the recommended guidelines. As the number of locations coming to our attention is now growing it is our intention to compile a register for the district.	Cllr Farrell advised the members of the significant dangers of Japanese Knotweed. He asked that Westmeath County Council update their website with details in relation to the weed which should include pictures of the weed at different stages. He suggested that Westmeath County Council should have a register with locations and signage of sighting of Japanese Knotweed similar to what is done in Longford County Council. Mr Pat

				Nally A/District Manager advised that where the Council is made aware of its presence we deal with it accordingly and if it's on private property we advise the landowner.
h) T. Farrell	Ask AMD to construct lay-bys on school road at Ardnagath due to increase of traffic and large buses using this narrow road.		Provision of funding to install lay-bys on this road will have to be considered in the context of the Members' priorities for funding as part of the 2018 Roads Programme.	
J) A. McManus	That's this municipal district look at including the L8001 for resurfacing works in the 2018 programme.		These roads can be considered in the context of the Members' priorities for funding as part of the 2018 Roads Programme.	
K) A. O'Rourke	For this Municipal District to devise a practical and meaningful planning guidance document to deal with shop fronts and shop signage and for the enforcement process to be also clearly defined.		This proposal will be referred to the Planning and Transportation SPC for their consideration as such a guidance document would be applicable to the whole county.	Cllr O'Rourke advised the members that a document was put in place for Clonakilty which was a very worthwhile document and that something similar could be done here.
L) A. O'Rourke	For this Municipal District to address the issue of grease staining on our natural stone finishes in both our Civic Square and at the back of the Castle.		This issue will be looked at as part of the District Engineer's report into our approach to cleaning and maintaining our town streets into the future	Cllr O'Rourke stated that it was terrible to see natural stone treated in this way and that it should be sealed to prevent this happening. Mr. Pat Nally advised that even with sealing that over time it can wear off. He advised that it will be cleaned and then resealed again
M) A. O'Rourke	For this Municipal District and Westmeath County Council to examine and cost the possibility of enabling automated payments for car parking in our public car parks, as is the practice in other towns.		The Paid Parking Section of Athlone Municipal District upgraded the hand held devices used by our Traffic Wardens on the 29th June last which will facilitate them accessing data relating to pay by text from a central controller. It is hoped that the District would pilot a pay by text scheme later this year in an area of the town with a view to rolling it out for the full town if it proves successful.	

Cllr.	Motion	Response	Notes
n) F. Keena	That this Municipal District provide a footpath within the confines of Baylin village out along the Twyford Road (L5455) in the interest of public safety.	Provision of funding to install a footpath at this location will have to be considered in the context of the Members' priorities for funding as part of the 2018 Roads Programme.	
o) F. Keena	That this Municipal District supports the Brawny residents enhance their area in their bid to win the National Pride of Place Award for 2017 under the category best large housing estate.	The Athlone Municipal District will support the Brawny Residents with their bid within the limited resources available from the District's annual maintenance budget.	Mr. Pat Nally advised that Westmeath County Council would support the motion with the limited budget available. He asked that contact be made with the lead persons in the area so that a plan could be put in place.
p) F. Keena	That this Municipal District works in conjunction with local artists to provide a graffiti mural that promotes Athlone and district underneath the new Garrycastle bridge along the greenway.	The council will consider any proposals put forward by local artists.	Cllr Keena advised that it was a great opportunity to promote what Athlone has to offer