

**Minutes of the Athlone Municipal District Meeting which was held in the Civic Centre, Church Street, Athlone at 3.00 p.m. on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2017.**

---

**Attendance:**

Mayor:	Cllr. A. O'Rourke
Members:	Cllr. T. Farrell, Cllr P. Hogan, Cllr. F. Keena, Cllr. A. McManus, Cllr. M. O'Brien
Apologies:	Cllr J. Dolan
Officers:	Barry Kehoe, Director of Services Pat Keating, District Manager Pat Nally, District, Engineer Michael Kelly, Senior Engineer Gerry McCormack, Broadband Officer Frank Dolan A/District Administrator Eilish Reilly, Staff Officer Maria Kearney, Assistant Staff Officer
Others:	Mr Stephen O'Connor SIRO Mr John Dwyer SIRO Deputation from Huawei Mr PJ Griffin RPS

**Votes of Congratulation / sympathy**

Mayor O'Rourke extended his sympathies to the family of Paddy Turley of Baylin who passed away in recent weeks. He also sympathised with the family of Aidan Gallagher who passed away in July, Aidan worked for the Urban District Council some years ago.

Mayor O'Rourke extended his congratulations to the Galway Senior and Minor teams on their historic whitewash in Croke Park yesterday and particularly given the many connections locally with the Galway set-up now and in the past.

He also extended his congratulations also to the Rose of Tralee, Jennifer Byrne and the Byrne family who have strong Athlone and Westmeath connections and to wish her well for the year ahead.

Cllr. McManus offered her congratulations to the Westmeath Rose Eve Cooney who represented the county so well at the Rose of Tralee and to the very deserving winner Jennifer Byrne who will be a great ambassador for the Country.

Cllr McManus extended her sympathies to the Turley family on the death of Paddy and also to the Moran family, Coosan on the death of Adrian Moran.

### **Minutes**

It was proposed by Cllr. Farrell Seconded by Cllr. O'Brien and resolved,  
"That we hereby adopt and confirm the Minutes of the July Monthly Meeting which was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2017.

It was proposed by Cllr. O'Brien and Seconded by Cllr. McManus and resolved,  
"That we hereby adopt and confirm the Minutes of the in committee meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2017 to consider the Athlone Municipal District Public Participation Network (PPN) submission and response with Athlone Municipal district PPN representatives.

It was proposed by Cllr. O'Brien and Seconded by Cllr. McManus and resolved, "That we hereby adopt and confirm the Minutes of the in committee meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 to consider 1. Speed Limit Review 2, Athlone Flood Alleviation Scheme 3 Church St. Enhancement.

It was proposed by Cllr. O'Brien and Seconded by Cllr. McManus and resolved "That we hereby adopt and confirm the Minutes of the in committee meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 to consider 1. Athlone Flood alleviation scheme including a site visit to the Quay, Athlone 2. Budget 2018

### **Matters Arising:**

Mayor O' Rourke asked if there was any update with regard to the building on Lloyds lane and also the lighting of the Castle.

Pat Keating advised that he was still awaiting a report on valuations in relation to the building on Lloyds lane. Mr Pat Nally advised that a response was awaited from the consultants in relation to the lighting of the Castle.

### **To receive a presentation on SIRO (National Telecoms Infrastructure)**

Mr Stephen O'Connor SIRO delivered a presentation to the members in relation to the roll out of SIRO's fibre to building broadband. He gave a background to the members on the service to be provided and advised them in relation to the schedule of works in the Athlone Area. He advised that he hoped that the service would be live in November-December 2017.

The members while they welcomed the presentation and the detail therein advised of their concern in relation to the lack of broadband in rural areas and that this was not addressed as part of this rollout.

Mr O'Connor advised the members that rural broadband was not part of this project and may be addressed under the National Broadband Plan. Mr O'Connor outlined the positives of having such a facility in the town of Athlone.

### **To receive a presentation on Athlone Flood Alleviation Scheme.**

Mr. Barry Kehoe Director of Services advised the members in relation to the work that has been done in relation to arriving at this stage of the project. He advised that RPS were appointed as consultants for the Scheme.

Mr PJ Griffin RPS delivered a presentation to the members in relation to the works proposed and planning implications in each of the eight cells under the Scheme. He advised that RPS were in ongoing consultation with Irish Water in relation to the Athlone Main Drainage projects where they impact the Flood Alleviation Scheme

Mr. Kehoe stated that Cell 3 was currently going through the Part 8 planning process and the closing date of submission was the 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2017. He advised that the Chief Executive's Report would be presented to the members at the Council Meeting of the 18<sup>th</sup> September.

Mayor O'Rourke stated that he was delighted to see this piece of critical investment finally progressing and that a timeline was in place. He advised that liaison is key as there are a lot of big investment projects taking place simultaneously. He advised that following a visit to view some flood alleviation work carried out by the OPW in Dublin that the quality of work was exceptional and that it was aesthetically pleasing.

Cllr O'Brien welcomed the presentation and agreed with Mayor O'Rourke's comments in relation to the work carried out by the OPW in Dublin. He stated that he wished to commend Minister Kevin Boxer Moran for all his work in relation to the scheme.

Cllr Frankie Keena thanked Mr. Griffin for his presentation and stated that it was important that people and their properties were protected. He asked what the rationale for choosing Cell Three to start with was and also expressed his concern in relation to the CFRAMS maps as the data in relation to the 2015 floods was not included. PJ Griffin advised that each cell was an individual project and were being progressed where work could progress quickly. In relation to CFRAMS Mr. Griffin advised that RPS in carrying out their assessments of works required in relation to flood alleviation included the data for 2015 floods.

### **To note proposed Flood Defence works at Iona Park.**

Mr PJ Griffin outlined in detail the works required at Iona Park. Mr. Pat Nally advised that the works required were below the Part 8 threshold.

### **To consider the Chief Executive's Report on the Review of the Speed Limit Bye Laws**

Mr. Michael Kelly Senior Engineer outlined the proposed changes to the speed limits and advised that all National Routes required the consent of the TII in relation to the amendments proposed. He advised the members that the Chief Executive's Report would be presented to the members for their consideration at the Council meeting of the 18<sup>th</sup> of September, 2017. Cllr. Farrell felt that it was important to clarify that the N55 (Ballymahon-Athlone) subject to consent would be reduced from a 100KMH speed limit to 80KMH.

**To receive a Report on the Taking In charge of Housing Estates in the Athlone Municipal District**

Mr. Barry Kehoe presented the report to the members and outlined the estates in question. These are:

1. Drumaconn, Athlone
2. Crofton Court, Moate
3. The Orchard, Athlone
4. Canal Walk, Athlone

Cllr Keena asked if correspondence could issue to Resident Associations of the Estates concerned to clarify exactly what was included in the taking in charge in relation to the responsibility of the Council and the Residents.

**To note design drawings for schemes included in the Annual Roads Programme, Clar Programme, Regional and Local Roads Safety Improvement Works Programme and National Road low Cost Safety Works Programme**

Works to take place at following locations:

1. Ard Grainne, Moate.
2. Auburn Villas, Athlone.
3. Ballymore;
4. Bullet Road, Glasson
5. Moyvore,
6. Annagh
7. Streamstown Railway Station
8. Valley Court, Athlone.

Mr Pat Nally District Engineer briefed the members in relation to the works proposed at different locations under the various programmes. He advised the members that the works had been sent out for tender and the works would be expected to be completed by the end of October 2017. He stated that an additional project, the crossing at Moate GAA that required agreement with the GAA would be presented at a future time.

**To receive an update on Church St Enhancement**

Pat Keating District Manager updated the members in relation to Church St Enhancement. Mr. Keating advised the members that radio advertisements will be broadcast two weeks in advance of the one way system and also that free one hour parking in the car park at The Strand would be introduced once the one way system commences and will remain in place for the duration of the main contract works

Mayor O'Rourke asked what the update was in relation to Northgate Street. Mr Nally District Engineer advised that work would continue on Northgate Street for the next two to three months. He stated that works had commenced at the crescent on Monday the 4<sup>th</sup> September, with Mardyke Street scheduled next for works. Cllr Tom Farrell wished that it be clarified that if the new signal lights to be installed would be automated. Mr Nally advised that the lights would be automated.

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

Mr Barry Kehoe, Director of Services advised the members that Westmeath County Council were awaiting agreement from Bus Eireann in relation to the bus parking to be provided in the Railway Field for the buses that will be displaced by the road scheme. He advised the members that the area of land subject of the acquisition was in the region of 1.07 acres.

#### **Questions**

The answers to questions were circulated and supplementary questions were answered as attached

#### **Correspondence**

Mr Frank Dolan A/District Administrator advised the members that no correspondence had been received.

#### **Motions.**

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

At 5.30pm the Mayor asked that the Standing Orders be suspended, to allow the meeting continue; this was proposed by Cllr Farrell, seconded by Cllr Keena and resolved.

#### **AOB**

Mayor O'Rourke informed the members that he had visited Cllr Dolan and that he was making a good recovery, and he wished to send his good wishes to him and his family. All the members concurred.

Mayor O'Rourke advised the members that he had invited the Galway hurling team to stop in Athlone but that they were unable to do so as they had a tight schedule to adhere to.

Mayor O'Rourke welcomed Ms. Maria Kearney to the Athlone Municipal District meeting.

Cllr O'Brien asked what the updated position was in regard to the holding of a civic reception for Mr. Joe Ward. He also welcomed Ms. Maria Kearney.

Mr Pat Keating stated that arrangements for the holding of the civic reception would be put in place.

Cllr Tom Farrell stated that he was aware that Minister Zappone was in Athlone on that day. He asked if there was a protocol in place for when a Minister visited the town. Mr Barry Kehoe advised that there was a protocol in place whereby a Minister visited a Council building or was coming to meet Council officials. He advised that the visit on the day had been organised by Central Council and that Westmeath County Council had no input.

Cllr. Keena spoke about the tragic death of the three homeless people the previous week. He stated that it was not correct that the government and the minister for Housing would blame Local Authorities in relation to building of Social Housing. He stated that the members had approved the Part 8 planning process for the social houses at Clonbrusk , however now the Council awaited government response before the project could be advanced. Mr Barry Kehoe advised that he would not comment on the Minister's comments as he did not hear what was said, he stated that the members were updated at the July Council meeting. He stated that the tenders were submitted and they were being assessed at the present time by staff in Housing and once the process was complete it was hoped that a contractor would be appointed.

Both Mayor O'Rourke and Cllr O'Brien stated that Local Authorities should not be blamed for delays in delivering housing.

This concluded the business of the meeting.



**MAYOR**

2-10-17

**DATE**

### Athlone Municipal District – Motions 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Cllr.	Motion	Response	Notes
a) Cllr.A. McManus	That this Municipal District write to the organisers of RAS Tailteann inviting them to host a stage of their race in 2018 in Athlone.	It is understood that various towns host a stage finish and stage start on the following day during each An Post Ras event. Athlone would benefit from a stage finish, but 2018 may not be a suitable year due to the street enhancement works on Church Street. Perhaps a stage finish in 2019 would be more advantageous, following the completion of the works.	The Members agreed with the response.
b) Cllr.A. McManus	That this Municipal District provide for Disabled Parking Spaces adjacent to the playground at Athlone Regional Sports Centre.	This is a matter for the Management of the Athlone Regional Sports Centre and will be referred to the Board for consideration.	The Members agreed with the response.
c) Cllr.A. McManus	That this Municipal District upgrade and repair the footpaths from 73-78 Cartron Drive.	Provision of funding for footpath works at this location will have to be considered in the context of the Members' priorities for funding as part of the 2018 Roads Programme.	The Members agreed with the response.
d) Cllr.M.O'Brien	That Athlone Municipal District write to the Minister for Health, Simon Harris TD, calling for urgent legislation to be put in place for the legalisation of medicinal cannabis oil, and that he takes swift action to ensure that all Irish seeking this treatment abroad are allowed to return home and legally continue with their treatment.	A letter can issue to the Minister for Health if the Members so decide	The Members agreed that a letter should issue

<b>Cllr.</b>	<b>Motion</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>e) Cllr.M. O'Brien</b>	That Athlone Municipal District provide disabled parking bays outside of the library, bank, post office and medical centre in Moate	<b>There are currently disabled bays within a reasonable distance of these locations. The provision of funding for additional bays will have to be considered in the context of the Members' priorities for funding as part of the 2018 Roads Programme.</b>	<b>The Members agreed with the response.</b>
<b>f) Cllr. F.Keena</b>	That this Municipal District examine the condition of the carparks at Tubberclair Church with the intent of surfacing them.	<b>These car parks are not the property of Westmeath County Council and their maintenance is a matter for their owners.</b>	<b>The Members agreed with the response.</b>
<b>g) Cllr. F.Keena</b>	That this Municipal District seek funding from the relevant Department to install a 'Changing Places' unit in Athlone Civic Building in order to provide facilities that are inclusive of the needs of all citizens of Ireland.	<b>The Changing Places campaign is run by Inclusion Ireland and seeks to introduce fully accessible toilets, providing adequate space for a disabled person and up to two assistants. An assessment of the Civic Centre can be made by the District Engineer and if a suitable space can be identified, funding can be sought.</b>	<b>The Members agreed with the response.</b>
<b>h) Cllr. F.Keena</b>	That this Municipal District discuss the dangerous state of the old Athlone Glass site on the Clonown Road.	<b>This is a private, secured site and no action is deemed necessary under derelict sites legislation at this time.</b>	<b>The District Manager will review this site.</b>
<b>i) Cllr. T. Farrell</b>	That Athlone Municipal District would request the Minister for Housing and Local Government to change the eligibility criteria for improvement Grants for upgrading septic tanks	<b>A letter can issue to the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government if the Members so decide.</b>	<b>The Members agreed that a letter should issue</b>

<b>Cllr.</b>	<b>Motion</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>j) Cllr. T. Farrell</b>	That in view of the proliferation of Pine Marten nationally and in consequence of the damage and upset this species is known to cause, that Athlone Municipal District formally requests the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Culture, Ms. Heather Humphreys TD, in conjunction with the National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS), to remove this species from the Protected List so that it's population can be controlled in keeping with good practice and in the best interests of other wildlife species and society generally.	<b>A letter can issue to the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if the Members so decide</b>	<b>The Members agreed that a letter should issue</b>
<b>k) Cllr.A. O'Rourke</b>	For this Municipal District to support and encourage the 'Living Environment' group (part of Destination Athlone) in their preparation for a workshop event on 28th September at 6pm in the Sheraton Hotel, aimed at engaging with all stakeholders in the greater Athlone area to maximise the potential of this town and region. And, to invite them to present the outcomes to a future District meeting.	<b>The District Manager is working with Living Environment in organising this workshop and an invitation to present the workshop outcomes to a future District Meeting can be made if the Members so decide</b>	<b>The Members supported the motion and an invitation will issue as per the response</b>

<b>Cllr.</b>	<b>Motion</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>l) Cllr.A. O'Rourke</b>	For this Municipal District to expedite the work necessary to enable us to remove the barriers and covers from the section of the Old Athlone Wall at the Civic Square before the end of this year.	<b>The repair of this part of the Town Wall is becoming a priority, given the imminent commencement of the Church Street Enhancement Scheme. The matter will be referred to the Council's Heritage Officer for advice, and proposals to effect a repair will be prepared. The works identified will require the agreement of the National Monuments Service and will require Ministerial Consent.</b>	<b>The Members agreed with the response.</b>
<b>m) Cllr.A. O'Rourke</b>	For this Municipal District to repeat the Christmas 'free car parking week' initiative of last year - which was a great success during Christmas week 2016. So, public car parks would be free to park in, from Monday 18th to Saturday 23rd December 2017.	<b>Free parking in Council car parks was provided in 2016, from Sat 17th December to Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> December. Similar arrangement for 2017 can be put in place if the Members so decide.</b>	<b>The Members supported the motion</b>

### Athlone Municipal District – Questions September 4, 2017

Cllr	Question	Response	Supplementary Question	Response
1. Cllr. Frankie Keena	When will the directional signs be erected at Halston's Crossroads that is located about two miles outside of Ballymore?	<b>It is planned to erect these this month.</b>		
2. Cllr. Frankie Keena	Can this Municipal District confirm that the Jadotville memorial plaque will be erected in time for the forthcoming 2nd Annual Jadotville Day to be held in Athlone in October?	<b>The District Manager is in discussion with the Director for Ceremonial of the Defence Forces and the event is scheduled for 2pm on 21<sup>st</sup> October next.</b>		
3. Cllr. Frankie Keena	What is the update position from the Department of Transport in relation to the provision of monies to carry out the next phase of the greenway from the Whitegates to the banks of the Shannon?	<b>The Council is not in receipt of capital funding for this section of cycleway but is in funds for ongoing design work.</b>	<b>What is the expected timeframe</b>	<b>Mr Kehoe advised that the funding would be dependent on the outcome of the review being carried out by the department</b>
4. Cllr. Tom Farrell	To ask the Athlone Municipal District further to my numerous representations to provide an update on the safety review carried out at the northern end of Glassan Village (Mountemple Junction) and Ballykeeran	<b>The design for Glasson is complete and €41,000 funding has been secured from TII to complete safety improvement works at the N55/L1437 junction in Glasson. A Road Safety Audit on the design is to be</b>		

Cllr	Question	Response	Supplementary Question	Response
		<p>completed prior to construction.</p> <p>A feasibility report is with TII seeking approval to place a vehicle actuated chevron sign at the bend on the N55 in Ballykeeran</p>		
5. Cllr. Tom Farrell	To ask the Athlone Municipal District when will these works be carried out at Portlick further to recent Government funding having been granted	<b>The funding allocated will allow the Council to carry out enhanced maintenance works, which will be undertaken this month.</b>		
6. Cllr. Tom Farrell	To ask Athlone Municipal District when it will upgrade and replace missing signs at the bad bend on the L1346 at Cloncullen Ballymore.	<b>The District Engineer will arrange for an inspection to assess what signs are missing and, subject to funding, arrange for their replacement.</b>		
7. Cllr. A.O'Rourke	What is the status of the work to build the link road in Athlone under the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund which saw €1.83m allocated to Westmeath County Council in April?	<b>The Transportation, Planning and Housing Sections are working together to bring forward a design for this road and a Plan for the lands that it will serve for the consideration of the Members. It is intended that both would be brought before the Members within the next month.</b>		

Cllr	Question	Response	Supplementary Question	Response
8. Cllr. A.O'Rourke	The unfinished area underneath the mature trees between the Prince of Wales Hotel and our Civic Plaza requires attention, can this area be tidied up and paved in keeping with our plaza by year end?	<b>The Council has been liaising with the management of the Prince of Wales regarding the completion of this area. These consultations will be brought to a conclusion within the next few weeks and the area will be completed before Christmas.</b>		
9. Cllr. A.O'Rourke	Can this Municipal District review the current policy (or contract) for 2018, to spray weeds twice a year as it is not sufficient, and implement a plan instead to spray a minimum of three times a year in April, June, August and allow for our workers to spray anytime on an 'as needed basis' during the growing season?	<b>The current contract includes a clause that the Contractor sprays the appropriate number of times to keep areas in the contract "free of weeds for the duration of the growing season". Unfortunately, the Contractor was appointed after the weeds had established a foothold and have been difficult to eradicate as a result. It is intended that a Contractor would be appointed before the growing season in 2018.</b>		

Cllr	Question	Response	Supplementary Question	Response
10. Cllr. Michael O'Brien	When will the new Ballycumber sign be erected at the Clara/Ballycumbar road junction in Moate?	<b>This sign was erected recently.</b>		
11. Cllr. Michael O'Brien	Does Athlone Municipal District intend to provide signage for the Recycling Bring Bank on the Clara road in Moate?	<b>Environment Section has been requested to ensure that all recycling Bring Banks are adequately signed</b>		
12. Cllr. Michael O'Brien	Does the schedule of Municipal District works provide for water drainage system inspections on our secondary roads?	<b>The Schedule of Municipal District works provides for the maintenance of all road drainage systems on all the public roads in the district. Maintenance is carried out on a year round basis. Resources do not allow that all drainage systems are inspected and maintained every year. If the Members are aware of roads of particular concern then they should report them to the Council.</b>		