Minutes of April Monthly Meeting of
Westmeath County Council held at 3:00 p.m. Monday, 29th April 2019
in Council Chambers, Áras an Chontae, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath


Officers present: Mr. Pat Gallagher, Chief Executive.
Mr. Jimmy Dalton, Head of Finance.
Mr. Barry Kehoe, Director of Service.
Mr. Martin Murray, Director of Service.
Mr. Mark Keaveney, Senior Executive Officer.
Mr. Hugh O’Reilly, Senior Executive Officer.
Mr. Cathaldus Hartin, Senior Planner.
Ms. Anne Galvin, Administrative Officer.
Ms. Geraldine Barden, Clerical Officer.

3:00 p.m.: An Cathaoirlech, Cllr. John Dolan opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

Vote of Sympathy – Martin Hynes, R.I.P. (Former Member of Westmeath County Council)

An Cathaoirlech, Cllr. John Dolan and Cllr. Ken Glynn, on behalf of the Fianna Fáil Party, led the tributes to former Member Mr. Martin Hynes, R.I.P.

The Members unanimously resolved to pass a vote of sympathy to the Hynes family on the recent death of Martin Hynes, R.I.P., former Member of Westmeath County Council.

Mr. Pat Gallagher, Chief Executive, extended sympathy to the family of Martin Hynes, R.I.P., on behalf of the management and staff of Westmeath County Council and stated that he would like to be associated with the sentiments
expressed by the Members of Westmeath County Council.

3:05 p.m. On the proposal of AnCathaoirleach, Cllr. John Dolan, the Members unanimously agreed to adjourn the Council Meeting for a period of 10 minutes as a mark of respect to the late Martin Hynes, R.I.P.

3.15 p.m. Meeting resumed.

1. Miontuairisci

(i) On the proposal of Cllr. McDermott and seconded by Cllr. Crum, the Members approved the minutes of the March Monthly Meeting of Westmeath County Council held in Council Chambers, Áras an Chontae, Mullingar on Monday, 25th March 2019 at 3:00 pm.

(ii) The Members noted the minutes of CPG meeting of Westmeath County Council held in the Board Room, Áras an Chontae, Mullingar on Wednesday, 20th March 2019 at 8.30 a.m.

(iii) The Members noted the minutes of Mullingar Municipal District meeting of Westmeath County Council held in Council Chambers, Áras an Chontae, Mullingar on Monday, 11 March 2019 at 2.00 p.m.

(iv) The Members noted the minutes of the Athlone Municipal District meeting held in Civic Centre, Church Street, Athlone on Monday, 4th March 2019 at 3:00 pm.

(v) The Members noted the minutes of the Economic, Enterprise and Tourism SPC meeting held in the Executive Lounge, Áras an Chontae, Mullingar, on Friday, 14th December 2018.

2. Management Report

The Members noted the Management Report as circulated.

3. Chief Executive Orders

The Members noted the Chief Executive Orders as circulated.

4. Disposal of Land/Property

(i) Proposed licence of 0.0817 plot to Sarsfield Square Residents Association, in accordance with the terms of Section 183 Notice of the Local Government Act 2001 circulated within the specified period.
An Cathaoirleach called for a vote by a show of hands and declared the disposal approved.

(ii) Proposed licence of 0.916 acre plot at entrance to Mount Carmel Drive for provision of Park, in accordance with the terms of Section 183 Notice of the Local Government Act 2001 circulated within the specified period.

An Cathaoirleach called for a vote by a show of hands and declared the disposal approved.

(iii) Proposed lease of Former Jail and Caretaker’s residence to rear of Moate Courthouse to Moate Museum & Historical Society CLG for a period of 6 years, in accordance with the terms of Section 183 Notice of the Local Government Act 2001 circulated within the specified period.

An Cathaoirleach called for a vote by a show of hands and declared the disposal approved.

(iv) Proposed Exchange of lands at Grange South, Newbrook, Mullingar with Waterways Ireland (to supersede exchange of lands with Office of Public Works approved at Council meeting of 24th February 1997), in accordance with the terms of Section 183 Notice of the Local Government Act 2001 circulated within the specified period.

An Cathaoirleach called for a vote by a show of hands and declared the disposal approved.

5. (a) To make Variation (No.5) to the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020, incorporating the Westmeath County Retail Strategy 2019-2026, having considered the proposed Variation (Draft Westmeath County Retail Strategy) and the Chief Executive’s Report

(b) To make Amendment (No.4) to the Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020 (as extended), incorporating the Westmeath County Retail Strategy 2019-2026, having considered the proposed Amendment (Draft Westmeath County Retail Strategy) and Chief Executive’s Report

(c) To make Variation (No.4) to the Athlone Town Development Plan 2014-2020, incorporating the Athlone Joint Retail Strategy 2019-2026, having considered the proposed Variation (Draft Athlone Joint Retail Strategy) and Chief Executive’s Report
Mr. Cathaldus Hartin, Senior Planner delivered a presentation on the Retail Strategy to the Members.

Mr. Pat Gallagher, Chief Executive, referred to Items 5 (a) and (b) on the agenda and advised Members that the Chief Executive’s reports had been circulated to the Members on 29 March 2019 and that the Chief Executive’s report on Item 5 (c) had been circulated on 27 March 2019. Mr. Gallagher further advised that the Athlone Municipal District Members had had thorough engagement with their counterparts in Roscommon County Council and added that the adoption of the joint Retail Strategy for Athlone is a significant development and augurs well for future cooperation in planning, transportation and economic development. Mr Gallagher confirmed that a similar variation is being considered by Roscommon County Council today.

On the proposal of Cllr. D’Arcy and seconded by Cllr. Hogan, the Members resolved:

To make Variation (No.5) to the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020, incorporating the Westmeath County Retail Strategy 2019-2026, having considered the proposed Variation (Draft Westmeath County Retail Strategy) and the Chief Executive’s Report

and

To make Amendment (No.4) to the Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020 (as extended), incorporating the Westmeath County Retail Strategy 2019-2026, having considered the proposed Amendment (Draft Westmeath County Retail Strategy) and Chief Executive’s Report

Cllr. Paul Hogan proposed the following:

(c) To make Variation (No.4) to the Athlone Town Development Plan 2014-2020, incorporating the Athlone Joint Retail Strategy 2019-2026, having considered the proposed Variation (Draft Athlone Joint Retail Strategy) and Chief Executive's Report, subject to a non-material amendment to Section 7.3.1.2 Integration & Public Realm of the Athlone Joint Retail Strategy 2019 - 2026 (in italics and brackets in the following paragraph):

“In addition, as part of the above equation, Golden Island Shopping Centre (and the adjacent mixed use site) is a dated centre surrounded by extensive surface car parking and adjacent to a mix of poor condition retail, commercial and industrial buildings, excluding the Aldi store, set in a generally degraded environment. Given the area’s proximity to the Core Retail Area and its profile on the major amenity and tourism asset of the Shannon, it is a priority that there is strategic environmental enhancement and upgrading of the area.”
Thais was seconded by Cllr Farrell and there were no counter proposals.

**Matters arising**

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. John Dolan, welcomed Ms. Anne Galvin, Administrative Officer to the Corporate Services section. All the Members welcomed Anne Galvin and wished her well in her new role.

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. John Dolan wished Mr. Billy Coughlan well in his retirement.

The Members joined with the sentiments expressed by An Cathaoirleach and paid tribute to Billy Coughlan’s knowledge of local government legislation and administration.

Mr. Pat Gallagher, Chief Executive, joined with Members sentiments and paid tribute to Billy Coughlan in terms of his service to the Council and in particular, in relation to the business of Council meetings and his role as meetings administrator. Mr. Gallagher sincerely thanked Billy Coughlan for his 43 years of service in Local Government and for his contribution to Westmeath County Council and he wished him and his family health and happiness in the future.

Mr. Gallagher wished Ms. Anne Galvin well in taking over the role that Billy Coughlan had previously held.

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. John Dolan proposed that the Council Members write a letter of thanks to Billy Coughlan and this was unanimously agreed by all the Members.

6. **To consider Draft Annual Report 2018**

Mr. Pat Gallagher, Chief Executive, advised the Members in relation to the Draft Annual Report 2018 which had been circulated to all Members prior to the April Council meeting and further advised each Member to check their details on the Draft Annual Report and if there were changes to be made, they should revert back to Anne Galvin, Corporate Services. Mr. Gallagher further advised the Members that the Draft Annual Report would be formally adopted at the June Monthly Council Meeting by the Members.
7. To receive update on review of Municipal District areas

Mr. Hugh O’Reilly, Senior Executive Officer, presented the update on review of Municipal District areas to the Members.

Mr. Pat Gallagher, Chief Executive, reassured the Members in relation to the general staff allocation advising that this is based on the population and activity in the areas being generally 50/50. Mr. Gallagher further advised that the Executive is currently looking at staff numbers and the intention is to transfer 4 indoor staff and 6 outdoor staff to Athlone-Moate Municipal District. Mr. Gallagher acknowledged that this will involve engagement with staff on this matter and it will be ensured that Customer Services will be receive appropriate attention.

In response to Cllr. Farrell, Mr. Gallagher confirmed that further engagement on the details involved could be arranged with councillors in the Moate electoral area.

In response to Cllr. McDaniel, Mr. Gallagher advised that the former Kilbeggan Area Office is now leased to accommodate a medical practice. Mr. Gallagher further advised that a service delivery analysis was carried out in advance of changes being made, and the staff complement which currently serves the transfer area will not reduce.

In response to Cllr. Crum, Mr. Gallagher advised that it is intended to establish a depot in the northern half of the transfer area. As in 2014, the transfer will be done practically and seamlessly. Mr. Gallagher further advised that the report presented today is a Draft and can be reviewed. Mr. Gallagher advised that the Council is prepared to do as much as needed to reassure the public, and that public information notices will be issued as suggested by Cllr. Crum.

8. Motions:

Cllr. Ken Glynn:

“That Westmeath County Council home to two Garrison Towns, repeat their call that the Minister of state with special responsibility for defence immediately address the issue of low pay and conditions for members of the defence forces”.

Cllr. Ken Glynn presented his motion to the Members and advised that he had presented a similar motion in 2017 and proposed to write on this occasion to the Minister for Justice and Equality, Minister for Defence and An Taoiseach.
This proposal seconded by Cllr. Dollard was unanimously agreed by all the Members.

9. Recommendation(s) from Corporate Policy Group

- Athlone Municipal District to host an Address of Recognition to the local Special Olympians Shauna Stewart, Sarah Kilmartin and John Keenan on their achievements in the 2019 Special Olympics

- Athlone Municipal District to host an Address of Recognition to the Sub-Aqua Club and RNLI to acknowledge their work

The recommendations from the Corporate Policy Group were unanimously approved by the Members.

10. To receive reports and recommendations from SPC Chairpersons

➢ Report from Cllr Ken Glynn, Chair of the Housing Community Corporate and Culture SPC re Cathaoirleach Awards 2019

Cllr. Ken Glynn presented the following report to the Members:

“A proposal for the Community Grant and Awards for 2019 was considered at a meeting of the Housing Community Corporate and Culture SPC meeting on Monday 8th April. This included a review of grants and awards issued in 2018 and proposals for the range of grants and awards in 2019.

Members will be aware that for the past number of years, this Council has provided significant support to the Community Sector in the form of grants and awards. The purpose of this is to recognise the work that local volunteers and Community groups carry out on an ongoing basis to help their local community.

The range of grants considered included:

- Festival & Events Grants
- Town and Village Christmas Lights
- Tidy Towns
- Residents Associations
- Community Action Grants
- Community Day Grants - (which is new)
The final decision on the awarding of each of the above grants is a matter for the relevant Municipal District Members.

At the Cathaoirleach Awards event which is now scheduled for Fri 3rd May, the following awards will be presented:

- Community Person/Group of the Year
- Project of the Year
- Eco schools Award
- Tidy Towns Awards
- Pride of Place awards
- Age Friendly Recognition Award (which is new)
- STEM Awards

The Members, as part of Budget 2019, increased the overall budget for grants and awards to €403,000 from the previous year’s budget of €378,000.

In general, the proposals for 2019 are broadly similar to 2018 with changes in the respective grant budgets shown on table A of the report. The scheme as outlined was considered and approved by the Housing, Community Corporate and Cultural SPC.

I recommend that the Members of Westmeath County Council adopt the attached proposal for the Community Grant and Awards for 2019.

Cllr Ken Glynn (Chair)"

On the proposal of Cllr. Hogan and seconded by Cllr. Farrell, the Members resolved to approve the proposal from Cllr Ken Glynn, Chair of the Housing Community Corporate and Culture SPC re Cathaoirleach Awards 2019.

➢ Report from Cllr Aengus O’Rourke, Chair of the Economic Enterprise and Tourism SPC re Business Promotion Fund

Cllr. Aengus O’Rourke presented the following report to the Members:

“The North Westmeath Creative Tourism Group has been established by stakeholders with the objective to build a strong tourism economy in the North Westmeath Area. The group is fully established and aims to build a community led creative tourism economy. Funding is required to assist in the development of the initiative and this proposed grant is in respect of the provision of a website for the North Westmeath creative tourism group, some familiarisation tours to build the capacity of the group and participation in the FailteIreland Meitheal programme.
Having given the proposal detailed consideration, I recommend that an allocation of €5,000 be made from the business promotion fund to support this initiative, which has the capacity to contribute significantly to the development of tourism in the North Westmeath area.”

On the proposal of Cllr. Hogan and seconded by Cllr. McDaniel, the Members resolved to approve the Report from Cllr Aengus O’Rourke, Chair of the Economic Enterprise and Tourism SPC re Business Promotion Fund.

11. Correspondence

Ms. Anne Galvin, Administrative Officer, advised the Members in relation to the following correspondence:

➢ Letter from Department of Justice & Equality
➢ Letter from CEO of Irish Rural Link
➢ Letter from TII proposing a delegation to meet on 4th July 2019

The Members resolved to accept the invitation from TII to meet on 4th July 2019 and a deputation would be decided at the June Monthly Council Meeting. This was proposed by Cllr. Farrell and seconded by Cllr. Hogan.

Votes of Congratulations:

➢ Cllr. Tom Farrell proposed a vote of congratulations to the Westmeath Footballers and Hurlers on winning their respective leagues and gaining promotion.

➢ Cllr. Tom Farrell proposed a vote of congratulations to Moate Community College on winning the All Ireland under 16 Ladies football.

Vote of Sympathy:

➢ Cllr. Ken Glynn proposed a vote of sympathy to the family of former Council Member, Mr. Martin Hynes, R.I.P.
12. Aon Gnó Eile

(a) An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. John Dolan requested clarification on an application for Athlone Regional Sports Centre for a sports capital grant.

In response to Cllr. Dolan, Chief Executive, Mr. Pat Gallagher, advised that he had discussed the matter the previous week with Cllr. Dolan, and had outlined the situation.

Mr. Gallagher further advised that the consideration of a second pool in Athlone is at an early stage and it is to be determined if the pool is feasible. Mr. Gallagher advised that an up to date swimming pool in the proposed new leisure centre in Mullingar (for which budgetary provision has been made by the Council) is required first before a second pool in Athlone could be provided.

In response to Cllr. Dolan, Mr. Gallagher further advised if the ARSC board were of the view that the feasibility of a second pool in Athlone should be studied, it should consider how budgetary provision for such a study could be provided.

(b) An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. John Dolan wished all the Members well in the Local Elections 2019 taking place in May and he thanked Cllr. Aengus O’Rourke for serving as Leas-Chathaoirleach over the past year.

This concluded the business of the meeting