

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

Date

