

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY, 9TH FEBRUARY, 2015 AT 11.00AM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, RIVERSIDE, SLIGO**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:**

- Councillor Baker,
- Councillor Bree,
- Councillor Casserly,
- Councillor Gormley,
- Councillor Healy,
- Councillor Keaney,
- Councillor Kilgannon,
- Councillor Lundy,
- Councillor Maguire,
- Councillor MacManus,
- Councillor Mac Sharry,
- Councillor Mulvey,
- Councillor O'Boyle,
- Councillor O'Grady,
- Councillor Queenan,
- Councillor Scanlon,
- Councillor Taylor.

**OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:**

- Mr. Ciarán Hayes, Chief Executive (CE)
- Ms. Dorothy Clarke, Director of Services (DOS)
- Mr Tom Kilfeather, Director of Services (DOS)
- Ms. Marie Leydon, Head of Finance
- Mr. John Moran, Senior Executive Officer (SEO)
- Mr. Joe Murphy, Senior Executive Officer (SEO)
- Ms. Margaret McConnell, Senior Executive Officer (SEO)
- Mr. Tom Brennan, Senior Engineer (SE)
- Mr. Seamus O'Toole, Senior Executive Engineer (SEE)
- Mr. Donal Tinney, County Librarian
- Mr. Kevin Colreavy, Meeting Administrator
- Ms. Sinéad Branley, Staff Officer

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**CATHAOIRLEACH:**

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Joe Queenan presided.

**1. FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE:**

The Cathaoirleach gave a brief overview of the meeting with Minister Alan Kelly and Senior Officials from his Department.

The Cathaoirleach thanked the members of the delegation, Councillors Baker, Bree, Keaney, Healy, the CE Mr. Hayes and Head of Finance Ms Leydon.

A key outcome of the meeting was the request to restructure the Financial Plan to cover a 5 year period, with an emphasis on increasing income and further reducing expenditure.

The Cathaoirleach then invited the other members of the delegation to comment. The Council thanked the deputation for their comments on the meeting.

The CE, Mr. Hayes also thanked the Cathaoirleach and the members of the delegation, and acknowledged their contribution, both in the preparation for the meeting and on the day. Mr. Hayes commented further on the meeting as follows:

- A copy of a letter dated 6th February was circulated to the members before the start of this meeting concerning the Council's request for further clarification on the issue of the closure of Motor Tax services.
- The Minister had advised that the nature of the savings to be introduced were a matter for the Council
- The decision to raise the LPT charge to increase revenue to the Council will be a matter for the members to consider.
- The incentivised career break is currently being explored with expressions of interest requested from staff by 12th February.
- The issue over acting posts will now be reviewed in its entirety and discussions with staff and unions will be commencing immediately.
- The Local Government Auditor has been asked to conduct the 2014 audit earlier in order to demonstrate the improved financial position.

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The members had a further discussion around the CE's comments and in response to their queries Mr. Hayes clarified the following:

- Clarification was sought from the Department in relation to the Motor Tax issue to establish clarity in relation to their views.
- The issue of limiting the Library Service relates to staff shortages rather than the finances. The Library Service cannot sustain three branches with current staffing levels.
- The Department has asked the Council to fulfil their statutory obligation in relation to coronor's fees. There is no cost recovery stream in this area but the Department has indicated there may be a review of this in the context of the Local Government sector.

In response to members' queries regarding the Library Service Ms Clarke, DOS advised the members of the following;

- 21 full-time equivalents are needed to staff the Library Service and there are currently only 15 full-time equivalents.
- 2 full-time equivalents are needed for the Mobile Library service.
- There are issues around redeploying staff to the library as there are contractual differences, including evening and weekend working hours.

The CE, Mr. Hayes confirmed that additional library staff have been sought through the Workforce Plan and discussions are ongoing with the Department in this regard.

## **2. CONNACHT ULSTER ALLIANCE:**

With the agreement of the meeting this Item was deferred.

## **3. SLIABH MÓR, CARNEY:**

“Seeking an update on taking in charge Sliabh Mór, Carney.”

Councillor O'Grady had placed this on the Agenda in January and indicated to the meeting that the issue of taking in charge this development was dealt with as a Headed Item at the last meeting.

## **4. OYSTER BAY, ROSSES POINT:**

**Proposed by Councillor R. O'Grady**

**Seconded by Councillor T. Mac Sharry**

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“Seeking an update on taking in charge Oyster Bay, Rosses Point.”

In response Mr Murphy, SEO stated that *a site resolution plan addressing the outstanding issues in this development has been agreed, with works to commence shortly. It is understood that a taking in charge application will be submitted to the Council when the outstanding works are carried out.*

Councillor Mac Sharry asked for a further update at the next Sligo Municipal District meeting.

**5. WALL AT ROCKFIELD CEMETERY:**

**Proposed by Councillor D. Mulvey**

**Seconded by Councillor J. Lundy**

“To ask Sligo County Council to repair the section of boundary wall at Rockfield Cemetery, Coolaney.”

In response Mr. O’Toole, SEE stated that *the Area Engineer is examining this boundary wall to see if anything can be done with very limited funding.*

**6. JUNIOR CERT:**

With the agreement of the meeting Councillor Kilgannon withdrew this motion.

**7. DIRT TAX:**

**Proposed by Councillor S. Kilgannon**

**Seconded by Councillor S. Mac Manus**

AND AGREED

“Sligo County Council calls on the Minister for Finance to urgently Reform DIRT Tax to exempt Old Age Pensioners from this Penal Tax of 41% interest on savings in banks, building societies and credit unions.”

**8. PROPERTIES RENTED BY COUNCIL:**

**Proposed by Councillor D. Bree**

**Seconded by Councillor S. Mac Manus**

“That the Council be provided with a report, including the identity of each property rented by the Council, the purpose for which each property is used by the Council, the annual rent paid for each

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property and the rent paid per square ft, the date on which the rental agreement was entered into in respect of each property and when the lease on each property terminates.”

In response Ms Clarke, DOS stated that *the Council has significantly reduced the number of leased properties it had over the past number of years and has achieved savings of over €500,000 (€524,661) as a result. Added to that, savings have also been made on rent reduction on renewal of existing leases.*

It was agreed to circulate a copy of the full report to the members following the meeting.

**9. RESPITE CARE GRANT:**

**Proposed by Councillor D. Bree**

**Seconded by Councillor R. O’Grady**

AND AGREED

“That this County Council calls on the Government to restore the Respite Care Grant.”

**10. WATER CHARGES:**

**Proposed by Councillor D. Bree**

**Seconded by Councillor S. O’Boyle**

“That this Council unequivocally opposes domestic water charges and calls on the Fine Gael/Labour Government to abolish domestic water charges forthwith; and further this Council confirms that it has no confidence in Irish Water.”

Following a discussion by the members and as agreement could not be reached the Cathaoirleach called for a vote.

**For:** Baker, Bree, Casserly, Gormley, Healy, Kilgannon, Lundy, Mac Manus, Mac Sharry, O’Boyle, O’Grady, Queenan, Scanlon and Taylor.

**Against:** Keaney, Maguire and Mulvey

*As the vote was 14 For and 3 Against the Cathaoirleach declared the motion **carried**.*

**11. POST BOX IN KEASH:**

**Proposed by Councillor M. Gormley**

**Seconded by Councillor P. Taylor**

AND AGREED

“That this Council calls on An Post to provide a post box at a suitable location in the village of Keash.”

**12. VIOLENT CRIME:**

With the agreement of the meeting this Item was deferred.

**13. PUBLIC LIGHTING:**

**Proposed by Councillor J. Lundy**

**Seconded by Councillor E. Scanlon**

“To ask what is the Council’s policy on public lighting *i.e.* housing estates, dangerous junctions, public car parks at churches, and one-off public lights in rural areas in the interest of safety.”

In response Mr. Kilfeather, DOS stated that *the public lighting in the charge of the Council is maintained in good condition as far as funds allow. No funding exists to provide any new public lighting at junctions, car parks or once off lights in rural areas.*

**14. BUS SHELTERS ON N17:**

**Proposed by Councillor J. Lundy**

**Seconded by Councillor D. Mulvey**

AND AGREED

“To ask the Council to contact Bus Éireann to provide 2 bus shelters on the N17 at Curry village and 2 bus shelters at Tubbercurry for its customers.”

In response Mr. O’Toole, SEE stated that *Bus Éireann will be contacted regarding the possibility of two new bus shelters at Curry and two more at Tubbercurry.*

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 1.00pm and resumed again at 2.10pm.

**15. R293, RAGWOOD:**

**Proposed by Councillor P. Taylor**

**Seconded by Councillor M. Gormley**

“To ask Sligo County Council to give immediate attention and carry out repairs to a section of road on the R293 at Ragwood, Gurteen.”

In response Mr. O’Toole, SEE stated that *this depression on the R293 at Ragwood, Gurteen has been examined by the Area Engineer and warning signs have been erected, pending the formulation of the Road Works Scheme 2015.*

**16. PLAYGROUND FACILITIES AT CALTRAGH CRESCENT:**

**Proposed by Councillor S. Mac Manus**

**Seconded by Councillor H. Keaney**

“To ask for an up-to-date report on progress on provision of playground facilities at the public open space in Caltragh Crescent.”

In response Ms McConnell, SEO stated that *there are 68 Social units and 22 Affordable at the Caltragh /Cornageeha Housing development with up to 150 children on the estate. In working with the residents on various programmes the issue comes up that the children have limited recourse to proper play areas that are safe and appropriate. A proposal has been developed by the Housing section in conjunction with the Parks Dept. For the development of a Tarmac Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) on the Caltragh Green and consultation has been carried out with the community to establish their needs and taking their opinions on board regarding location etc.*

*However locating a source of funding for this project has continued to be a problem. A number of funding options have been explored over the years, including the Department of the Environment, Community and local Government, and the Sports Capital Programme of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, regrettably without success. This project has also been part of a loan approval which did not receive the approval of the Department. The council will continue in 2015 to seek any funding opportunity that might arise for this project. In its absence the Council will continue to work with the residents and other agencies by encouraging tenant participation. This has helped contribute to a more stable environment in the estate minimising anti social behaviour issues but it needs constant attention to be sustained. Work is ongoing on the provision of an Internet cafe project funded through Pobal via the Department of Children and Youth affairs*

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*which in association with County Sligo Leader Partnership will see the conversation and upgrade of part of the Community Centre into a dedicated Youth cafe with facilities to encourage and empower young people to become involved in meaningful and constructive recreation. This is scheduled to finish around Easter and will have a value of circa €50,000. In addition the Council is giving consideration to dedicating a house on the estate to a community house which would provide the location for an Estate Management Office and meeting space to allow a presence on the estate offering focused support and resources.*

Councillor Mac Manus asked that an update on the situation be brought back to the Council in 3 months time. This was agreed by the executive.

**17. COASTAL PROTECTION FUNDS:**

**Proposed by Councillor S. Mac Manus**

**Seconded by Councillor H. Keaney**

“That Sligo County Council would take all possible action, including applying for coastal protection funds, to ensure that the footpath access to the beach at Strandhill south of the promenade is protected and maintained.”

In response Mr. O’Toole, SEE stated that *Sligo County Council will endeavour to maintain the footpath access to the south beach within the constraints of very limited maintenance funding available. The large number of repeated storm events over the past 18 months has reduced the beach’s opportunity to recover and this has resulted in increased and more frequent damage to the crest path. Long term options shall be investigated.*

**18. FUEL LAUNDERING:**

**Proposed by Councillor H. Keaney**

**Seconded by Councillor S. Mac Manus**

AND AGREED

“Sligo County Council condemns all those participating in illegal fuel laundering and calls on the Government to immediately implement a plan to eliminate this activity, thus protecting public health, our environment, our farming and food industry and to bring to justice these people, who for their own monetary and criminal gain, continually put the lives and economic welfare of the people of this country at extreme risk.”



**19. CARRIGANS ESTATE:**

**Proposed by Councillor M. Casserly**

**Seconded by Councillor R. O'Grady**

“To ask the Director of Services for Housing to consider what assistance can be provided to improve the condition of the Carrigans Estate, which is in need of improvement and to engage with the residents to address estate management issues that impact on the quality of the lives of residents.”

In response Ms McConnell, SEO stated that *the estate at Carrigans, Ballinfull, consists of 8 housing units, 7 are in local authority tenancies (4 no. 1 beds and 3 no. 2 beds) and one has been purchased under a TP scheme. All of the houses are occupied. Generally the estate operates as a stable community with limited vacancies arising and no requests for transfers. The council does not have any history of complaints from the residents of this estate and it tends to operate well as a sustainable community.*

*The houses generally are in good condition and Energy Fabric upgrade works were carried out to 5 of the houses in 2014.*

*There are currently no repair requests o/s at this location but if any requests are received the council will administer same and assist where possible in the normal manner subject to resources.*

**20. COMPLETION OF WORKS AT VARIOUS ESTATES:**

**Proposed by Councillor M. Casserly**

**Seconded by Councillor T. Healy**

“To provide an update of the position in relation to the completion of works at Avena Development, Ballysadare, the Granary Estate and The Meadows, Grange.”

In response Ms Clarke, DOS stated that;

***Avena Development, Ballisodare***

*The appointed contractor is currently working on a snag list to complete remaining outstanding issues. The project is practically complete.*

***The Granary Estate Grange***

*Works are nearing completion. The Council are awaiting some further information in relation to public lighting certification, the submission of as-constructed drawings and the provision of road markings.*

***The Meadows Grange***

*Works are almost complete. Some minor issues have still to be resolved in relation to certification of public lighting, provision of a railing along the footpath beside the stream, provision of white lining, the submission of as-constructed drawings, and the resolution of water services issues.*

**21. INNOVATION OFFICER:**

**Proposed by Councillor M. Casserly**

**Seconded by Councillor S. Kilgannon**

“For Sligo County Council to explore the possibility of allocating an existing member of staff to the position of an Innovation Officer - someone who is taking the lead for Sligo, positioning it as a location for creative start-ups that don't want to be part of the usual Dublin story. An exciting lifestyle and dynamic community is here and this needs to be fostered and supported.”

In response Ms Clarke, DOS stated that *the Council has a strong track record over the years in the encouragement, facilitation and promotion of Sligo across a broad range of areas including the creative sector. Notable achievements range from the development of the Model to the securing of EU funding to promote targeted interventions such as the Creative State North West Programme, which married together businesses and players in the creative sector on actions of mutually benefit each other's businesses. Since its incorporation into the Council, the Local Enterprise Office plays an active role in assisting start-ups across all business sectors, including in the creative and craft sector where it has a strong track record of engagement, through advice, mentoring and financial assistance, promotion of product through events such as Showcase, and regular engagement through “Made in Sligo” which the County Enterprise Board was instrumental in setting up. The Heritage and Arts Offices have been innovative in their approach to highlighting the creative and artistic talent and potential the County has to offer in the context of the projects and programmes that they undertake.*

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*The designation of an existing employee from within Sligo County Council to work with the existing staff in the LEO office and the Economic and Community Development Office would most certainly be of benefit in the promotion of Sligo across a number of fronts.*

*The role for such a position would need to be well defined so as to add value to the existing resources that are already in place. However, this matter would have to be considered in the context of our current situation of very scarce staff resources and the specialist calibre of person required and the consequences of taking such a person from their existing brief and workload.*

**22. WILD ATLANTIC WAY:**

**Proposed by Councillor S. Maguire**

**Seconded by Councillor M. Casserly**

“That Sligo County Council will conduct a feasibility study to enquire into possible coastal walking routes at our Wild Atlantic Way points.”

In response Ms Clarke, DOS stated that *the Wild Atlantic Way extends from the Sligo Mayo border near Inishcrone, to the Sligo Leitrim border at Bunduff. It incorporates 7 no. Discovery Points as follows;*

- 1. Inishcrone*
- 2. Easky*
- 3. Aughris Head*
- 4. Strandhill*
- 5. Rosses Point*
- 6. Streedagh*
- 7. Mullaghmore*

*Several well know coastal/ inter-tidal beach walks exist along this stretch of Sligo’s coastline, with several cliff walks also established.*

*Sligo County Council has engaged with local groups regarding the achievement of dedicated way marked coastal access routes linking communities and points of interest. The success of these endeavors depends on local engagement, goodwill between the parties involved and agreed access from landowners. Issues including access, insurance/public liability, environmental constraints,*

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*archaeological constraints, livestock management, control of dogs and others are examined to assess the feasibility of individual projects. No funding is currently set aside to conduct a dedicated feasibility study to capture all potential opportunities, however, Sligo Council staff will continue to engage in local dialogue to explore possibilities and see where mutually agreed access routes can be considered.*

**23. CLASS 3 ROADS:**

With the agreement of the meeting this Item was deferred.

**24. HEALTHY EATING AND EXERCISE PROGRAMME:**

**Proposed by Councillor P. Taylor**

**Seconded by Councillor M. Casserly**

AND AGREED

“I call on Sligo County Council to contact the Department of Health with regard to promoting a healthy eating and exercise programme for all our school going children.”

**25. DRAINS AT COLMCILLE DRIVE, ROSSES POINT:**

**Proposed by Councillor S. Maguire**

**Seconded by Councillor R. O’Grady**

“That Sligo County Council will carry out clearing and repair work on drains which have become blocked during the recent storms, thereby preventing flooding and potential road traffic accidents; in particular drains at Colmcille Drive, Rosses Point.”

In response Mr. O’Toole, SEE stated that *we will endeavour to do our best to locate and deal with blockages in our drainage systems, within the tight financial and human resource constraints in which we currently operate. The drains at Colmcille Drive, Rosses Point will be examined by the Area Engineer.*

**26. LIGHTING IN CULFADDA:**

**Proposed by Councillor M. Gormley**

**Seconded by Councillor P. Taylor**

“I call on the Council to provide traffic calming measures and extra lighting in the village of Culfadda.”

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In response Mr. O'Toole, SEE stated that *no funding exists and none is likely to become available, for traffic calming measures and extra lighting in the village of Culfadda.*

**27. VOTES OF SYMPATHY:**

**Proposed by Councillor R. O'Grady**

**Seconded by Councillor T. Mac Sharry**

AND AGREED

“That a vote of sympathy be extended to Attracta, Martin and Tony Burke on the death of Joe Burke.”

**28. VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS:**

**Proposed by Councillor J. Lundy**

**Seconded by Councillor P. Taylor**

AND AGREED

“That a vote of congratulations be extended to Pat Kilcoyne on his election as ‘Mayor of Tubbercurry’ as part of a GAA fundraiser for the Tubbercurry GAA Club.”

**Proposed by Councillor D. Mulvey**

**Seconded by Councillor E. Scanlon**

AND AGREED

“That a vote of congratulations be extended to Lorcan Callaghan on being selected as goalkeeper in the Ireland U15 Soccer Team.”

**29. CONFERENCES AND TRAINING:**

**Proposed by Councillor**

**Seconded by Councillor**

AND AGREED

“That the list of conferences and training circulated for February at this meeting, are unanimously agreed.”

**30. CONFERENCE AND TRAINING REPORTS:**

**Proposed by Councillor**

**Seconded by Councillor**

AND AGREED

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“To note the summary of proceedings of conferences and training attended in accordance with Section 142(5) (f) of the Local Government Act, 2001.”

**31. CORRESPONDENCE:**

Councillor Scanlon enquired had there been any response relating to his motion at the January meeting requesting a meeting with the Minister for Housing regarding the Shared Ownership Scheme.

No response has been received to date.

**Proposed by Councillor**

**Seconded by Councillor**

AND AGREED

“To note the correspondence circulated with the agenda.”

**32. MATTERS ARISING:**

Councillor Kilgannon asked for a follow up on a motion he proposed an earlier meeting regarding the relocation of the Bus Éireann depot in Lord Edward Street, Sligo.

**33. AOB:**

None

**END OF MEETING:**

The meeting concluded at 3.30pm