

**Minutes of the December Meeting of the Municipal District of Callan-Thomastown**

**Date:** Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 at 4.00p.m.

**Venue:** Meeting conducted via MS Teams remote access.

- Chair:** Cllr Michael Doyle
- Present via MS Teams** Cllr Peter Chap Cleere, Cllr Deirdre Cullen, Cllr Matt Doran, Cllr Joe Lyons, Cllr Patrick O'Neill.
- Apologies:** None
- In attendance via MS Teams:** Ms Fiona Deegan, Meetings Administrator; Mr. Declan Murphy, Area Engineer; Ms Mary Mulholland, Director of Services; Ms Carmel Brett, Staff Officer; Mr John Carr, Mr Declan Fitzpatrick & Mr Kevin Sturgeon, DBFL Consultants; Mr Christopher Dunne, Kilkenny People; Ms Edwina Grace, KCLR 96 FM; Mr. David Looby, New Ross Standard.

**1) Confirmation of Minutes**

- (a) Minutes of the Municipal District meeting of Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2021**  
The minutes of the Municipal District meeting of Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 were proposed by Cllr Lyons, seconded by Cllr Doran and agreed.
- (b) Minutes of 2021 Budget meeting of Municipal District of Callan-Thomastown**  
The minutes of the Budget meeting of the Municipal District of Callan-Thomastown were proposed by Cllr Cullen, seconded by Cllr Doran and agreed.

Sympathy was expressed on the death of former Kilkenny Councillor and Cathaoirleach Mr. Andy Cotterell, Inistioge and also on the death of Ms Joan Murphy, Graiguenamanagh.

**2) Consideration of Reports and Recommendations**

- (a) Presentation on the Ballyhale Flood Relief Scheme – Draft Final Report (DBFL Consultants)**  
Mr John Carr, joined by Mr. Declan Fitzpatrick and Mr. Kevin Sturgeon, gave the members an overview of the draft final report on the Ballyhale Flood Relief Scheme, saying the objective of the project is to identify, design and construct an acceptable flood relief scheme to alleviate the risk of flooding in Ballyhale.  
He said the scheme is at stage one (scheme development & design) of five stages with the remaining four being Planning, Tender, Construction and Handover.  
Baseline assessments on issues such as habitat and aquatic ecology and constraints such as Special Areas of Conservation and development were identified. The process then moved to screening viable measures of flood risk management options and appraising these measures relative to flood mechanisms present.  
Four flood relief options were developed and then analysed against a range of criteria – social, economic, environmental and technical – and also rated for present value cost and benefit to cost ratio.

Mr Carr said Option A, which includes weir removal which will benefit fisheries & provide increased gradient and inclusion of a possible riverside walkway, scored highest over the range of criteria and the process would move to stage 2, leading to an application for planning permission in Quarter 2 of 2022.

Cllr Doyle thanked Mr Carr and his colleagues for their report and the members raised the following items:

- Provision of future public workshops/distribution of details of the preferred option to allow communities to engage with the planning process – Mr Carr said consultation was carried out throughout the process of arriving at option A as the preferred option through meeting with landowners, gathering views and opinions of the public, engaging with directly affected residents, and facilitating an online presentation. Once the planning process commences there will be a statutory consultation period in place also.
- Projected timeframe – decision expected by An Bord Pleanála by end of 2023;
- Suggestion to write to Minister O'Donoghue regarding potential for progressing schemes for Thomastown and Inistioge to Stage 1 of the process

**(b) Update report on Kings River, Callan (Mary Mulholland)**

Ms Mulholland said that following a request at a previous Municipal District meeting for a delegation from the Kings River Committee, she undertook to get feedback from all involved over the past number of years on issues relating to the condition of the Kings River in Callan.

She recapped that Town & Village renewal funding of €72,000 was allocated in 2017 to undertake in-river and riverbank improvements which eventually led to a detailed design and specification being prepared by Kilgallen Consultants.

Several issues arose, including some waste being classified as hazardous which would require removal to a suitably licenced facility, and identification of a 200mm AC main crossing the river bed, which indicated significant cost implications for consultative requirements and works proposed.

Evidence provided also indicated that silting would reoccur over a 5 to 7-year period.

Ms Mulholland provided further information on the funding and maintenance requirements needed for the option of desilting the river, stating that desilting does not impact flood risk in any way, and that ecological assessment recommends retention of the silt beds.

She listed objectives, benefits and requirements of the alternative option of retaining and managing the silt beds, proposing a consultative approach to the creation of a vegetation management plan for this option together with a cultural engagement process to acknowledge and document the cultural value of the Kings River in Callan.

Ms Mulholland concluded that cost benefit for silt removal is not justified, as potential investment of €400,000 would result in reoccurrence of the beds within 5 years, with a total silt removal cost estimate of €1.8m, while retention of the silt beds is a preferred ecological and environmental option with cost estimate of €570,000.

She advised the members that, while the local community feels strongly about the Kings River, it was necessary for all the information around the issues to be made clear including that funding is currently not in place for either option.

Cllr Doyle thanked Ms Mulholland for her report and the members raised the following items:

- Request for one eye of the bridge to be unblocked – will investigate if funding available under Bridge Maintenance Programme or Climate Action Fund;
- Statutory regulations around works in rivers which necessitate costly measures are difficult to communicate to the public;
- Need to enter into a consultative process of engaging with the local community around the possibility of retaining and managing the silt beds;
- Local Authority must comply with all regulations around in-river works while also being mindful of potential initial and future costs involved in any suite of works.

**(c) Monthly Roads Update (Declan Murphy)**

Mr D. Murphy A/Senior Executive Engineer updated the members on the following road related matters, outlining various projects updates and timelines.

- Road Works Programme 2021 remaining items – Mr Murphy said the footpath in Dunamaggan is now complete, with road markings to be finished once the weather improves, drainage works are continuing with the jet vac cleaning out gullies in towns and villages, crews are opening inlets, and Low-Cost Safety works at Burnchurch are 80% complete and due to be finished by year end subject to weather;
- Town & Village Renewal Schemes – Updates given for 2020 applications at Stoneyford-Ennisnag and Hugginstown:
- ORIS projects – update given on Moat Field Phase 2, hope to have lease agreement between Camphill and KCC complete by year end;
- CLÁR 2021 –Contractor appointed for first phase of works in Kilmoganny, to commence on site 13<sup>th</sup> December;
- Active Travel – updates given on Callan one-way system, Callan ring road widening of footpaths, Moneen footpaths Graisuenamanagh and Mill Street Thomastown permeability footpaths works;
- General – new seats and benches fitted in Thomastown recreational area, update given on Councillors discretionary funding projects, update given on fitting of ramps at Kilmoganny, Bennettsbridge and Inistioge.

The members thanked Mr. Murphy for his update and raised the following items:

- Timeline for public lighting in Ballyhale – carrying out repairs following recent storm damage has interfered with ESB crews normal works schedule but lighting will be completed within 4 weeks;
- Pole connection & stay in footpath at Ballyhale necessitating pedestrians to move off the footpath – this will be removed;
- Update requested on provision of new signs for Callan to ensure traffic complies with one-way system – this will be referred to Road Design as new signage on a National road requires approval of TII;
- Mr. Michael Murphy thanked for his flexibility on acknowledging the members contributions towards the 2021 speed limit review;
- Thanks was expressed for works carried out by the KCC roads crews following recent storm.

**(d) Monthly Rural Development Update (Mary Mulholland)**

Ms Mary Mulholland said an announcement of funding under Town & Village Renewal and Rural Regeneration Development Fund has not been made as yet.

She listed the many projects funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development completed in the Callan-Thomastown Municipal District over the preceding year and thanked all staff involved.

She said this was achieved by the high level of input given by local communities, the elected members and town teams.

Cllr Doyle thanked Ms Mulholland, staff and elected members for all their contributions during the year.

**(e) Monthly Greenway Update (Fiona Deegan)**

Ms Fiona Deegan gave members an update on the Greenway development based on report from Mr. Sean McKeown (Director of Services), outlining the current status of the following:

- Detailed Design;
- Construction;
- Ferrybank Car Park Options;
- Railway Abandonment;
- Links to Slieverue and Glenmore;
- Business Development Officer (BDO);
- Project website details;
- Resident Engineer details;
- Greenway Animation.

Ms Deegan also informed the members that Mr Frank Stafford will attend the January Municipal District meeting to update the members on extended links from the Greenway. She further stated that Mr. Harry Everard of Trail Kilkenny will also attend the January meeting to update members on the various trails throughout the Municipal District area. Members thanked Ms Deegan for her update.

**3) Business prescribed by Statute, Standing Orders or Resolutions of the Municipal District members for transaction of such meeting.**

Declaration of a Public Road:

“That Kilkenny County Council hereby approves of the proposal to publish notice of the Intention of Kilkenny County Council to declare the existing road a public road at the following location:

Known as Woodstock Avenue in the townland of Inistioge, on the grounds of the Woodstock Estate over a length of 270 metres approximately and connecting the L8280-1 to the Woodstock gardens carpark.”

This was proposed by Cllr Doyle, seconded by Cllr Cullen and agreed.

Mr. Declan Murphy confirmed that a portion of this road is already a public road.

**4) Other business set forth in the Notice convening the meeting**

There were no items for discussion

**5) Notices of Motion**

There were no items for discussion

**6) Correspondence**

There were no items for discussion

**7) Any other Business**

Following a discussion by the members, Cllr Cullen proposed and Cllr Lyons seconded a proposal that the members communicate to the elected members of the other Municipal

Districts a request to write to Minister O'Donovan regarding the progression of flood relief schemes which have not commenced within the County.

Ms Mulholland said a recommendation to invite the Minister to a plenary Council meeting must be put before the Corporate Policy Group.

Cllr Doyle thanked all Kilkenny County Council indoor and outdoor staff and elected members for their work during the year, he also thanked the media present and wished all a Happy Christmas.

This concluded the business of the meeting at 17.31pm

Chairperson: CG Michael Doyle Date: 6/5/22

