

**MIONTUAIRISCÍ ÓN GCRUINNIÚ IOMLÁNACH DE CHUID
CHOMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH TIONÓLTA AR AN LUAN,
18 NOLLAIG 2023 AG 3.00 I.N. I SEOMRA NA COMHAIRLE, HALLA AN
CHONTAE & VIA FOIRNE MS**



**MINUTES OF PLENARY MEETING OF KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY, 18TH DECEMBER, 2023 AT 3.00 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL & VIA MS TEAMS**

Chair: Cllr. Michael Doyle.

Elected Members: *Council Chamber*

Cllrs. Martin Brett, Tomás Breathnach, Mary Hilda Cavanagh, John Coonan, Michael Delaney, Fidelis Doherty, Maria Dollard, Matt Doran, Pat Dunphy, Pat Fitzpatrick, David Fitzgerald, Ger Frisby, Denis Hynes, Joe Malone, Michael McCarthy, Andrew McGuinness & Eugene McGuinness & Patrick O'Neill.

MS Teams

Cllrs. John Brennan, Peter Cleere & Deirdre Cullen.

Officials: Lar Power, Sean McKeown, Martin Prendiville, Fiona Deegan, Tim Butler, Mary Mulholland, Michael Leahy, Seamus Kavanagh & Anne Maria Walsh.

Apologies: Cllrs. Eamon Aylward & Joe Lyons.

1. Dearbhú Miontuairiscí - Confirmation of Minutes

(i) *Miontuairiscí Chruinniú Iomlánach mhí na Samhna*
Minutes of November Plenary Meeting

Proposed by Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh, seconded by Cllr. John Coonan and agreed:

"That Minutes of Minutes of Plenary Meeting of Kilkenny County Council held on Monday, 20th November, 2023 as circulated with the Agenda be and are hereby approved".

(ii) *Miontuairiscí ar Chruinniú Buiséid Reachtúil - Minutes of Statutory Budget Meeting*
Proposed by Cllr. Eugene McGuinness, seconded by Cllr. Fidelis Doherty and agreed:

"That Minutes of Minutes of Statutory Budget Meeting of Kilkenny County Council held on Friday, 24th November, 2023 as circulated with the Agenda be and are hereby approved".

(iii) *Miontuairiscí Chruinniú SPC1 - Minutes of SPC1 Meeting*

Proposed by Cllr. Martin Brett, seconded by Cllr. Michael Delaney and agreed:

"That Minutes of Minutes of SPC1: Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Tourism, Planning & Development Policy held on Thursday, 21st September, 2023 as circulated with the Agenda be and are hereby approved".

Fógraí - Announcements

Cllr. Michael Doyle, Cathaoirleach extended congratulations to the following:

- All involved in the Age Friendly MacDonagh Train Station Project which recently won a National Pride of Place Award.
- Dicksboro Camogie Team who won the All Ireland Senior Club Final.
- O'Loughlin Gaels on winning the semi-final AIB All Ireland Club Championship.
- Combined Choir of Loreto and CBS who won gold medal in Bratislava in the International Advent Festival recently.
- Thomastown and Tullogher Rosbercon on reaching the Hurling Intermediate and Junior All Ireland Finals.

He also wished the citizens of Kilkenny a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas and joy and goodwill in the New Year.

Vótaí Comhbhrón - Votes of Sympathy

Cllr. Michael Doyle, Cathaoirleach extended vote of sympathy to the following:

- Cllr. Ger Frisby and his wife Maureen on the death of her mother Betty Quaid, Limerick.
- Maureen Daly, Planning on the death of her father Quek Tee Kim, Malaysia.
- Patricia Dwan, Finance on the death of her father Paddy Burke, Cork.
- Luke Slye, Housing Maintenance on the death of his mother Margaret Slye, Carlow.
- Fergus O'Hanrahan, IT on the death of his mother Mary O'Hanrahan.
- Family of the late Paddy Murray, Kilkenny City [*Pensioner*]
- Family of the late Sean Phelan, Johnstown.
- Family of the late Sean Power, Piltown.
- Family of the late Billy Norris, Piltown.
- Family of the late Billy Dunne, Mooncoin.
- Family of the late Mick Fitzpatrick, Mooncoin.
- Family of the late Marie Duggan, Hugginstown.

2. (a) Tithíocht & Díuscairt Eile - Housing & Other Disposal

- (i) It was proposed by Cllr. Michael Delaney, seconded by Cllr. Michael McCarthy and agreed:

"That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Kilkenny County Council hereby approves of the disposal of its interest, in Property at Clogh, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny - as identified on the attached map - to Respond, Dominick Place, Airmount, Waterford for the nominal sum of €1,778.00 with each party being responsible for their own legal costs associated with the transfer. The Consent of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage is not required."

- (i) It was proposed by Cllr. Michael McCarthy, seconded by Cllr. Pat Dunphy and agreed:

"That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Kilkenny County Council hereby approves of the disposal of its interest, in Property at Barrack Street, Goresbridge, Co. Kilkenny - as identified on the attached map - to Respond, Dominick Place, Airmount, Waterford for the nominal sum of €1,651.00 with each party being responsible for their own legal costs associated with the transfer. The Consent of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage is not required."

- (i) It was proposed by Cllr. Eugene McGuinness, seconded by Cllr. Martin Brett and agreed:

"That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Kilkenny County Council hereby approves of the disposal of its interest in land at Poulgour, Wetlands, Kilkenny - as identified on the attached map - to Cairn Homes Properties Limited, 7 Grand Canal Street Lower, Dublin 2, for the nominal sum of €10.00 and Kilkenny County Council will be responsible for all legal costs associated with the sale in accordance with standard rates of payments for legal fees under CPO procedures. Combined area measures 0.14 hectare. The Consent of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage is not required."

(b) ***Pleanail - Planning***

(i) ***Ag Glacadh i gCúram: Taking in Charge [Final] Steps into Linear Park***

It was proposed by Cllr. Eugene McGuinness, seconded by Cllr. Martin Brett and agreed that:

"We, the Members of Kilkenny County Council approve the initiation of proceedings for the taking in charge of the following development in accordance with Section 11 of the Roads Act, 1993 and in compliance with Section 180 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 as amended by Section 59 of the Planning & Development Act 2010."

Development: TIC174 – Final: Steps into Linear Park at Talbots Inch Village

(c) ***Bóithre - Roads***

(i) ***Plean Sábháilteachta ar Bhóithre - Road Safety Plan***

Mr. Seamus Kavanagh, Senior Engineer gave a PowerPoint Presentation on the Road Safety Plan 2022 to 2030.

In his Presentation he gave an overview on the following:

- Road deaths in Ireland per million inhabitants for 2012 and 2022 compared to a number of European countries.
- Long-term fatality trend.
- Fatalities in Ireland for 2018 to 2023.
- Fatalities per County and per road users.
- Five fatalities in Kilkenny in 2023, 178 in Ireland.
- Vision for the Plan – zero road deaths and zero injury by 2050.
- Targets for reduction by 2024 and 2030.
- Safe System approach – 7 Intervention Areas.
- Actions Safe Roads and Roadsides.
- Example of Road Improvement in County Kilkenny and Low Cost Accident Schemes.

He advised that the Road Safety Plan has been presented to the JPC and SPC2. SPC2 has recommended approval to the Plenary Council.

Contributions were received from Cllrs. Michael Doyle, David Fitzgerald, Fidelis Doherty, Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Maria Dollard, John Coonan, Pat Fitzpatrick, Pat Dunphy, Deirdre Cullen, Martin Brett, Denis Hynes, Tomás Breathnach and Eugene McGuinness.

Issues raised by Members as follows:

- Need to reduce fatalities in County Kilkenny.
- Reduce speed limits
 - responsibility lies with drivers
 - enforcement by Gardaí.
- Education, Enforcement and awareness for drivers and all road users.
- Continuous improvements required on our road network.
- Recent accident at Dinan Bridge
- More funding for Low Cost Accident Schemes and other projects.
- Promotion – new speed limits effective on 1st January, 2024.
- Concerns on safety at a number of locations – Greensbridge, High Street/Parliament Street.
- Realignment of N77 National Secondary Road
- Courtesy Crossings – not effective.

- Improvements on Ring Road, Kilkenny.
- Use of scooters on the roads – no high viz vests.
- Improvement required on N25.
- Changes in signage – drivers complacent with existing signage.
- Meeting with TII in person at a Council Meeting.

Mr. Seamus Kavanagh responded to the issues/concerns raised by the Members. He advised that the Council will be carrying out a campaign in early January on the new speed limits. He stated that funding in Kilkenny is quite good when compared to other counties. The TII and Department of Transport have funded a full-time Safety Engineer and this is very welcome. The Council liaises with the Gardaí in relation to road improvements and other road issues. Request will be sent to TII for their attendance at a Council meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr. Michael Doyle, seconded by Cllr. David Fitzgerald and agreed that:

“We the Members of Kilkenny County Council approve the Road Safety Plan, as circulated.”

(d) ***Tithíocht- Housing***

(i) ***Plean Gníomhaíochta Réigiún an Oirdheiscirt do Dhaoine gan Dídean 2023-2026 - Southeast Regional Homeless Action Plan 2023-2026***

Ms. Mary Mulholland advised the Members that the Homeless Strategy for the South East has been developed by Waterford City & County Council as the designated lead in partnership with the other four Counties in the Region. It is recommended that Kilkenny County Council adopts the South East Regional Homeless Action Plan 2023-2026.

Mr. Michael Leahy, Senior Executive gave a PowerPoint Presentation. In his Presentation he gave an overview on the following:

- Objective of the Action Plan
- Statutory provisions for homelessness.
- Structure in the South East for the provision of services.
- Overview of the Homeless Strategic Management Group.
- Overview of the South East Homelessness Consultative Forum.
- Homeless Co-Ordinator’s role in County Kilkenny.
- Services offered by the Homeless Prevention and Support Worker.
- Policy context for the service.
- Funding provided for the service.
- Key Performance Indicators.
- Units available in County Kilkenny for Homeless Service users.
- Challenges facing the provision of the service and the number of homeless presentations.

Cllr. Eugene McGuinness asked if Kilkenny was in a position to offer accommodation to all those who presented as homeless.

Cllr. David Fitzgerald complemented the Housing staff on the delivery of a much needed and challenging service. He said that Kilkenny does not have a high number of rough sleepers compared to other urban areas across the Country.

Ms. Mary Mulholland and Mr. Michael Leahy responded to the query raised.

It was proposed by Cllr. Eugene McGuinness, seconded by Cllr. David Fitzgerald and agreed that:

"We the Members of Kilkenny County Council approve the Draft Southeast Regional Homeless Action Plan 2023-2026, as circulated."

(e) **Economic Development – Forbairt Eacnamaíoch**

(i) ***Straitéis Turasóireachta Chill Chainnigh 2023-2028***
Kilkenny Tourism Strategy 2023-2028

Mr. Sean McKeown presented the Tourism Development Strategy & Action Plan for 2023-2028. He advised the Members that this is a Five Year Plan and has been prepared in consultation with SPC1. Public Consultation was also undertaken and engagement with Fáilte Ireland in the drafting of the Strategy. The Plan sets out the principle activities to be undertaken by the Council to achieve the following five objectives:

- (i) Destination Marketing
- (ii) Destination Management
- (iii) Infrastructure Development
- (iv) Partnership Working
- (v) Festival & Event Support.

He noted that 20% of the labour force in Kilkenny is employed in hospitality. The Strategy is to attract visitors to Kilkenny and to stay longer in Kilkenny, make it easier to get around and ensure sustainable principles are at the core of all tourism activity in Kilkenny. Mr. Sean McKeown recommends to the Council the adoption of the Strategy.

It was proposed by Cllr. Tomás Breathnach, seconded by Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh and agreed that:

"We the Members of Kilkenny County Council approve the Kilkenny Tourism Strategy 2023-2028, as circulated."

(g) **Gnóthaí Corparáideacha – Corporate Affairs**

(i) ***Tuarascáil Mhíosúil an Phríomhfheidhmeannaigh***
Chief Executive's Monthly Report

Mr. Lar Power, Chief Executive presented his monthly report to the meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh, seconded by Cllr. Fidelis Doherty and agreed that the Chief Executive Monthly Report be taken as read and noted.

3. **Comhfhreagras – Correspondence**

(i) ***Admháil ón Roinn – Acknowledgement from Department***

Acknowledgement from Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine in relation to Notice of Motion 13-2023 was taken as read and noted.

(ii) ***Admháil ó Oifig na nOibreacha Poiblí – Acknowledgement from OPW***

Acknowledgement from OPW in relation to Notice of Motion 14-2023 was taken as read and noted.

(iii) ***Freagra ón Roinn – Response from Department***

Response from Department in relation to Notice of Motion 15-2023 was taken as read and noted.

4. Gnó ar athló ó chruinniúroimhe seo - Business adjourned from a previous Meeting

None.

5. Dátaí agus Amanta do chruinnithe a shocrú - Fix Dates & Times of Meetings

(i) Sceideal na gCruinnithe - Schedule of Meetings

It was proposed by Cllr. Tomás Breathnach, seconded by Cllr. Pat Dunphy and agreed.

It was noted that the monthly meeting for Piltown Municipal District is on Wednesday, 10th January, 2024.

**6. Plé ar Thuairiscí agus Moltaí ó Choistí an Comhairle
Consideration of Reports & Recommendations of Committees of the Council**

(i) Tuarascáil ar Chruinniú SPC 1 - Report of SPC 1 Meeting

It was proposed by Cllr. Ger Frisby, seconded by Cllr. Michael Delaney and agreed that Report of SPC 1: Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Tourism, Planning & Development Policy held on Thursday, 21st September, 2023 be taken as read and noted.

**7. Gnó Eile romhainn i bhFógra reachtála an Chruinnithe
Other Business set forth in the Notice convening the Meeting**

None.

8. Oideachas agus Oiliúint - Education & Training

None.

9. Gnótha ag éirí as Miontuairiscí - Matters Arising from Minutes

None.

10. Aon Ghnó Eile - Any Other Business

None.

11. Fógraí Rúin - Notices of Motion

17 (23) Cllr. David Fitzgerald

It was proposed by Cllr. David Fitzgerald, seconded by Cllr. Michael Doyle and agreed that:

“Kilkenny County Council to prepare a structural buildings conservation report as a first step to repairing, stabilising and conserving Woodstock House and to put a plan in place to repurpose this important tourism, cultural and historical asset”.

Cllrs. David Fitzgerald, Michael Doyle, Mary Hilda Cavanagh and Joe Malone spoke on the Motion. Members expressed concerns on the current state of the remaining part of the house which was burnt down during the War of Independence. The structure needs to be examined and a decision is required on repurposing the structure.

Mr. Sean McKeown advised that in the interest of health and safety fencing was erected. The Council made an application for funding to Fáilte Ireland in 2019 but was unsuccessful. The Council are currently preparing an application for funding to stabilise the house. Conservation Specialist has been engaged to assist with the application.

Kilkenny County Council has invested significant funds in the restoration of the Gardens and Trails in Woodstock. A Route Option Report is underway to explore options for links to the Greenway and discussions are ongoing with Coillte in relation to further development on land in their ownership.

12. **Fógraí i dtaobh Rúin ó Údaráis Áitiúla eile ag lorg tacaíochta ó Chomhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh - Notices of Motion from other local authorities seeking support of Kilkenny County Council**

It was proposed by Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh, seconded by Cllr. Fidelis Doherty and agreed that the following Notice of Motion from Clare County Council be taken as read and noted.

42 (23) Clare County Council

"Today I want to encourage all of you to urge the Minister for Finance to take immediate action in introducing Primary Medical Certificates (PMCs) to all individuals with physical disabilities. I also call upon the members of the Seanad to initiate a commencement debate emphasizing the critical necessity for the Minister for Finance to issue PMCs to all those with physical disabilities.

In recent weeks, I have received numerous heartfelt communications from individuals across our county. These messages have come from parents and family members who share a common belief with me - that the widespread issuance of PMCs to individuals with physical disabilities could significantly enhance the quality of life for these individuals and their families. I understand this is not the first time this issue has been brought to the attention of the Minister, or the Ministers before him, and undoubtedly it will continue to be raised with the ministers who follow.

People born with physical disabilities often endure a multitude of health challenges, including heart problems, early onset arthritis, chronic pain, conditions such as Lupus, MS, Syringomyelia, visual and hearing impairments, bronchial issues, and a compromised immune system, to name just a few.

The introduction of PMCs for all those affected would go a long way in aiding families by providing improved access to transportation for hospital and doctor visits, granting individuals a modicum of independence necessary to maintain their spirits.

The current criteria for obtaining a Primary Medical Certificate is archaic and no longer applicable to the myriad of complex disabilities diagnosed on a daily and weekly basis. A Primary Medical Certificate should be a top priority, not an arduous and exasperating process.

We must recognise that individuals with disabilities deserve our unwavering support and assistance. They should not be treated as second-class citizens but should receive the necessary support to help them navigate each day with reduced pain and improved quality of life. A Primary Medical Certificate is a vital document that confirms severe and permanent disability.

The existing criteria, defined in the Finance Act 2020, no longer suffice. We must advocate for a radical overhaul of the Finance Act in 2024 to adapt to the evolving needs of individuals with disabilities. Our government must actively champion the rights of people with disabilities and provide more than mere table scraps in terms of support and recognition. It is crucial that we facilitate the application process for a Primary Medical Certificate through Local Health Offices.

In conclusion, let us unite in our resolve to make a difference in the lives of individuals with physical disabilities by pushing for the introduction of Primary Medical Certificates. Let us demonstrate our commitment to equality, compassion, and progress for all members of our society."

Mr. Lar Power, Chief Executive thanked the Elected Members for their assistance throughout the year and wished them all a joyous, healthy and happy New Year.

Cllr. Michael Doyle, Cathaoirleach extended good wishes to the Members and staff for the Christmas Season.

Cllrs. Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Pat Fitzpatrick and Tomás Breathnach extended good wishes to all Members and staff for the Christmas and New Year. They thanked them for all the work throughout 2023 and looked forward to working with the staff in 2024 for the betterment of the County.

That concluded the business of the meeting.