

Minutes of the March Meeting of the Municipal District of Callan-Thomastown

Date: Wednesday 10th March, 2021 at 4.00p.m.

Venue: Meeting conducted via MS Teams remote access due to Covid-19 restrictions

Chair: Cllr Peter Chap Cleere

Present via MS Teams: Cllr Deirdre Cullen, Cllr Matt Doran, Cllr Michael Doyle, Cllr Joe Lyons, Cllr Pat O'Neill.

Apologies: None

In attendance via MS Teams: Ms Fiona Deegan, Meetings Administrator; Ms Mary Mulholland, Director of Services; Mr Seán McKeown, Director of Services; Ms Naomi Scully, Assistant Planner; Mr Nicolaas Louw, Senior Executive Planner; Ms Bernadette Moloney, Environmental Awareness Officer; Ms Mags Whelan, PPN; Mr Frank Stafford, Senior Engineer; Ms Martina Comerford, Tourism Officer; Mr. Declan Murphy, Area Engineer; Ms Sian Moloughney, Kilkenny People; Ms Shauna McHugh, KCLR96fm Ms. Carmel Brett, Staff Officer.

1) Confirmation of Minutes

(a) Minutes of Municipal District Meeting of 10th February, 2021

The Minutes of the Municipal District Meeting of Wednesday 10th February, 2021 were proposed by Cllr Doran, seconded by Cllr Cullen and agreed.

2) Consideration of Reports and Recommendations

(a) Draft Litter Management Plan 2021 – 2023

Cllr Cleere welcomed Ms Bernadette Moloney to the meeting and she proceeded to give the members an overview of the contents of the Draft Litter Management Plan 2021-2023, saying there are 32 objectives contained in the Plan and it is a requirement of the Litter Pollution Act that the plan is reviewed every three years.

She said chapter 6 of the Plan, which addresses unauthorised temporary signage, illegal dumping, keeping bottle banks litter free, provision of litter bins, roadside litter and dog fouling, is extremely pertinent and it is hoped to have good community engagement in tackling these issues.

Ms Moloney said it is hoped to streamline the temporary signage process and look at pricing for same and this will be in a new policy document, separate to this draft plan which is currently under development by the Enforcement Team.

A lot of complaints from the public are being received regarding illegal dumping and while more CCTV would help curb illegal dumping at bottle banks, there is an issue with GDPR which is being dealt with on a national level. Bottle bank tonnage increased by 50% in 2020 with banks operating at capacity; full banks can encourage illegal dumping.

Ms Moloney said financial implications have to be taken into consideration with the provision of litter bins and that roadside litter is now more visible due to low growth.

Although National Spring Clean 2021 hasn't been advertised due to Covid Level 5 restrictions, 78 registrations have been made in Kilkenny to date, with only household units

or individuals participating. Group events aren't being supported by the Council due to Covid restrictions.

There is an increase in complaints regarding dog fouling; Ms Moloney said a campaign would be launched jointly with Carlow, Waterford and Wexford County Councils, placing the onus on dog owners to be responsible for their dogs and encouraging it to be socially unacceptable not to clean up after dog fouling.

Ms Moloney also said both Callan and Thomastown have great potential for promoting dog walking routes where facilities such as dog bag dispensers and bins are in place.

Cllr Cleere and the members thanked Ms Moloney for her presentation and the following items were raised:

- Education needed on the high cost of clearing up illegal dumping versus the relatively low cost of responsible disposal of rubbish – funding application will be made to roll out a campaign against illegal dumping later in the year;
- Capacity to provide and service dog bag dispensers outside of the scheduled towns – noted that dispensers without accompanying bins can create additional problems;
- Better advertisement of recycling centres needed – this to be added to list of actions;
- Potential for installation of CCTV at illegal dumping black spots;
- Possibility of increasing fines for illegal dumping and impose substantial fines for repeat offenders.

(b) Presentation of Public Participation Network Workplan for 2021

Cllr Cleere welcomed Ms Mags Whelan to the meeting and she proceeded to give the members an overview of the contents of the Public Participation Network (PPN) workplan 2021.

Ms Whelan advised the members of the actions and timelines contained in the workplan. She said capacity and relationship building would be ongoing throughout 2021, and new training programmes relevant to community groups would be facilitated by a series of online workshops and webinars.

Workshops on crime prevention and Telisis Machine for rural areas to assist in combatting rural crime was put on hold in 2020, to be reviewed in 2021.

Effective representation to be monitored, work on communications and PR will be ongoing through the year.

Numerous programmes such as People of the Year Awards and Healthy Ireland will continue to be supported by the PPN.

Virtual workshops regarding "the Vision for community Well Being" will take place throughout the months of April and May online in each Municipal District.

Work is hoped to commence in June on development of a three-year Strategic Plan for Kilkenny PPN, dependant on what level of Covid restrictions will be in place.

Cllr Cleere and the members thanked Ms Whelan for her updates and the following item was raised:

- Difficulties encountered by community groups accessing and funding Insurance cover – Ms Whelan said there is not evidence to date that discounts were given to PPN members, however the PPN are available to help groups through the process of seeking Insurance cover.

(c) Presentation of Chief Executives report on submissions received to the Joint Graigueamanagh/Tinnahinch Local Area Plan

Cllr Cleere welcomed Mr. Nicolaas Louw and Ms Naomi Scully to the meeting.

Ms Scully gave an overview of the Chief Executives report to the members, outlining the key recommendations and saying 17 submissions were received following public consultation.

These summarised submissions were included in a report to the CE which recommends solutions to the issues raised, the main ones of which were as follows:

- Infrastructural requirements;
- Educational requirements – Duiske College;
- Protection of natural and built heritage;
- New residential land requirement;
- Development of Tourism industry;
- Car parking;
- Public realm improvements/Regeneration improvements;
- Pedestrian accessibility;
- Future development of Brandondale House.

Ms Scully told the members that the process was currently at stage two but is moving towards the final stage and that when the elected members accept the CE report the accepted changes will be made.

She noted that Carlow County Council elected members have already accepted the recommendations and agreed for the plan to go back on public display.

She explained that as the changes are material there will be a further public consultation period of four weeks where submissions will be invited again. These will be summarised in a CE report which will be considered by the members and the Plan can then be adopted.

Cllr Cleere and the members expressed thanks for the presentation and progressing with the process amidst the challenges brought about by Covid restrictions.

(d) Update on Tourism Recreational and Connectivity projects in the Callan-Thomastown Municipal District

Cllr Cleere welcomed Mr. Frank Stafford, Senior Engineer, and Ms Martina Comerford, Tourism Officer, to the meeting.

Mr Stafford gave the members an overview of the various projects funded under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), noting under the 2020 ORIS Measure 1 application process that Brandon Hill, Graiguenamanagh and the Nore Valley Walk secured €20,000 each along with €13,500 to promote the Woodstock Estate in Inistioge. All works to be completed by November 2021.

Mr Stafford also noted the works funded under 2019 ORIS Measure 2, Silaire Wood Boardwalk and Trail Enhancement which received €200,000, whilst substantially complete and opened to the public since before Christmas, would be finished once restrictions around Covid permitted and that these works included surface dressing of the carpark, landscaping and the installation of seating and signage.

He also noted the following two schemes were successful under the 2020 ORIS Measures 2 Programme, Woodstock Estate Trail Enhancement Scheme and the Callan Moat Field Trail Phase 2 with each receiving a grant allocation of €200,000.

Mr Stafford then informed the members of twelve other potential future schemes which would be investigated but noted the progression of same would be subject to the necessary funding and resources becoming available. He went on to say that ideally he wants to be in a position to advance projects to a stage so that potential of securing funds under various future grant programmes can be maximised.

Members expressed thanks for the presentation and the following items were raised:

- The news was welcomed that discussions had taken place with Coillte around the provision of a carpark at Brandon Hill off the Inistioge Road side access, and that a verbal commitment was given by same subject to the agreement of the local community;

- Members requested that a solution to remedy safety concerns at bridge in Graiguenamanagh be found;
- Lack of visitor facilities in Bennettsbridge was discussed. The members welcomed that the potential for improved access to the River Nore was to be reviewed but noted the difficulties around same with respect to the flood plain etc;
- Members requested that a feasibility study for a pedestrian bridge in Bennettsbridge be considered;
- Potential benefits of creating pedestrian/cycle connectivity from Goresbridge, Graiguenamanagh and Woodstock to the SE Greenway were discussed
- Potential to develop pony trek routes in conjunction with Coillte and equestrian groups within the Woodstock Estate was discussed;
- Possibility to install audio link in Inistioge linking back to Woodstock;
- Lighting of Moat Field, Callan – possible issue of ecological impact to be investigated;
- Positive feedback received regarding possible Heritage Trail in Callan;
- Huge tourism potential of Linguan Valley noted.

Ms Comerford responded to queries from a previous meeting regarding the tourism potential of the Slatequarries area, and the possibility of a Heritage trail in Callan. She said that the Slatequarries area is linked in with the wider Lingaun Valley, and funding has previously been provided to Lingaun Valley Tourism CLG for marketing and PR of the area. She confirmed that some lands at the Slatequarries are in County Tipperary so dialogue with Tipperary County Council for a joint project would be required. She also noted that there may be land ownership issues preventing the development of a possible trail.

Addressing the possibility of a heritage trail in Callan Ms Comerford confirmed that an application under Town and Village funding for 2021 will be submitted for tourist orientated signage across the 4 scheduled towns (including Callan). The application is currently being developed to look at Welcome Signage, parking signage, orientation signage and wayfinding in all four towns.

Audio trails are also being prioritised in the scheduled towns, with Graiguenamanaghs nearly complete.

Ms Comerford told the members that the marketing of Kilkenny as a top-class tourist destination will continue for when the county re-opens to visitors. The tourism offering for the county will pivot to our great Outdoor Offering and the many things to see and do across the county. Work will continue through Trail Kilkenny and Outdoor Kilkenny to promote the county as an attractive outdoor visitor destination.

Members thanked Mr Stafford and Ms Comerford for their briefing.

(e) Greenway Update

Cllr Cleere welcomed Mr Seán McKeown, Director of Services, to the meeting and Mr McKeown updated the members on progress with Greenway works.

He said all rails and sleepers have now been lifted, detailed design for main construction works is ongoing and the tenders for the first 3 lots of the main construction works will be awarded shortly, although level 5 restrictions may delay same.

Planning applications, including accesses to the Greenway, will be progressed in the coming weeks.

A preferred site option for the Ferrybank car park to be progressed to Part 8 planning has been identified through the public engagement process.

Discussions have commenced with CE regarding the railway abandonment order.

Preliminary assessment of options for links to Slieverue and Glenmore has been carried out by Roadplan Consultants and interviews will be held for the position of Business Development Executive in the coming weeks.

Members thanked Mr McKeown for his update.

(f) Road Works Programme 2021

Mr Declan Murphy gave an overview of the draft Road Works Programme, saying that the members had already attended a successful workshop on the Programme.

It was agreed to hold a further workshop regarding the discretionary Municipal District allocations.

Cllr O'Neill proposed, Cllr Cullen seconded and all agreed adoption of the Road Works Programme 2021.

(g) Monthly Roads Update

Mr D. Murphy A/Senior Executive Engineer updated the members on the following road related matters, saying the report takes into consideration current Level 5 Covid restrictions suspending all non-essential construction and civil engineering projects until reviewed on 5th April 2021.

- Drainage Works – Essential drainage works and road maintenance to continue
- 2021 Road Works Programme – a workshop for the elected members was held following the DTTAS announcement of 2021 roadworks. Programme adopted at the March Municipal District meeting.
- Town & Village Renewal Schemes – work to commence in the Rower once Level 5 restrictions are lifted
- Town & Village Renewal Schemes Accelerated measures due to Covid
- Rural Regeneration Roads Project – Thomastown Public Realm
- General – Graiguenamanagh Mobility Management Plans update, ORIS Abbey Meadow.
- Additional Works - Active Travel update, works in Thomastown and Kilmaganny to be updated once restrictions are lifted

The members thanked Mr. Murphy for his update.

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

There were no items for discussion

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

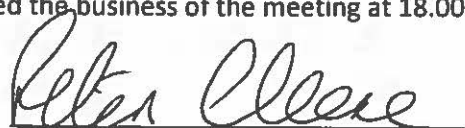
There were no items for discussion

7) Any other Business

There were no items for discussion.

This concluded the business of the meeting at 18.00.

Chairperson:



Date:

14/4/21

