

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

Date: Wednesday 5th February, 2025 at 3.00p.m.

Venue: Callan Area Office, Prologue, Callan, Co. Kilkenny.

Chair: Cllr Deirdre Cullen
Present Cllr Brian Cleere, Cllr Stephanie Doheny, Cllr Michael Doyle, Cllr Joe Lyons, Cllr Joe Sheridan.
In attendance: Fiona Deegan, Director of Services; Mr Declan Murphy, Area Engineer; Ms Anne Marie Shortall, Meetings Administrator; Ms Regina Fitzpatrick, Heritage Officer; Ms Carmel Brett, Staff Officer.
Remote attendance MS Teams: Cllr Deirdre Cullen
Apologies: None.

1) Confirmation of Minutes

(b) Minutes of the Municipal District meeting of 8th January, 2025.

The minutes of the Municipal District meeting held 8th January, 2025 were adopted, proposed by Cllr S Doheny and seconded by Cllr M Doyle.

2) Consideration of Reports and Recommendations

(a) Update on development of new County Kilkenny Heritage Strategy (Regina Fitzpatrick)

Ms Regina Fitzpatrick, Heritage Officer, gave a presentation to the members outlining the composition, role and aims of the Heritage Office, which is co-funded by the Heritage Council and incorporates both biodiversity and heritage, and includes the built, cultural and natural heritage of County Kilkenny.

Regina summarised the Heritage Office work programme and the role of the Co. Kilkenny Heritage Forum, and outlined the process and timeframe for development and delivery of the new County Kilkenny Heritage Strategy 2026-2030.

Regina outlined how previous projects collating information on Holy wells and mass paths secured excellent engagement from the public, and future commemoration projects would potentially cover the death of James Stephens and the 800-year anniversary of the Black Abbey.

The members thanked Ms Fitzpatrick for her presentation and raised the following items:

- The importance of stakeholder engagement in the process – this will be facilitated via in-person stakeholder and public consultation; invitations to required bodies to make submissions; online engagement, through the Heritage Sections mailing list, advertisement in printed media and with local radio interviews;
- A dedicated museum capable of fulfilling specified criteria would be required for any potential return of local artifacts to Kilkenny from the National Museum in Dublin;
- The possibility of producing a booklet on mass paths was discussed;
- Funding avenues and the potential to install audio guides for Kilkennys five walled towns was discussed, it was noted there is an annual fee of €2500 per town to join the Walled Towns of Ireland;

- Information regarding Insurance issues around access to items of public interest on privately owned lands such as old wells will be sought;
- Future engagement of a Heritage archivist would help with strategic pooling of local heritage knowledge, excavation reports etc.

(b) Monthly Roads Update (Declan Murphy)

Mr D. Murphy, Area Engineer, updated the members on the following roads related matters, stating that recent severe weather events have delayed progress with some drainage maintenance and road repairs:

- Drainage works ongoing over the coming month;
- A draft list of discretionary works is being prepared in advance of a workshop preceding the March Municipal District meeting where the finalised list will be presented to the members for consideration, together with Restoration Maintenance projects;
- Restoration Improvement works to follow the Multi Annual Programme 2025-2027 with any amendments requiring members prior approval. Works to commence 10th March;
- Low-Cost Safety Schemes will be selected by the Department from list submitted by Road Design department;
- CIS and LIS works will be as per current lists;
- Climate Action Projects will be as per list submitted to the Department for approval;
- Active Travel Projects will be as per budgets approved by NTA, with Safe Route to Schools works to recommence soon on the three schools in Graiguenamanagh;
- ORIS funded works have recommenced on Stoneyford to Ennisnag footpath;
- CLÁR funded works at Coolagh carpark nearly completed, seating and gate under order;
- Community Recognition Funded works to commence in Knocktopher early March, traffic calming works will require Section 38 process;
- Installation of new local road speed limit signage nearly complete.

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

- It was clarified that landowners are responsible for cutting back trees as well as hedges on their properties;
- Issues with delayed repair of public lighting faults will be referred to public lighting engineer who will address with relevant contractor
- Disappointment was expressed regarding the manner of distribution of Active Travel funding;
- Timeline 4-6 weeks for publication of Section 38 process for Knocktopher traffic calming works
- Pedestrian safety concerns expressed for approach roads to Dangan Terrace, Thomastown – this will be surveyed for feasibility of a future project in order to apply for funding;
- Revised speed limits will require enforcement in order to be effective;
- Progress update requested on Council owned properties in Bridge Street, Callan;
- Update on Flood Relief Schemes;
- Maintenance at monument on Maxtown Road will be discussed with Tidy Towns;
- Potential for installation of pedestrian crossing in Graiguenamanagh;

- Clarification that urban speed limits are based on Department of Transport guidelines;
- Senior Engineer Roads and Road Design team are discussing a possible request to TII to review the current speed limit on N10 at Danesfort;
- A suitable funding stream needs to be identified in order to implement actions on plan for Inistioge as to date it has been outside the realm of Town & Village Renewal and Active Travel funding;
- Bollards to mark junction of N10 & L4200 Danesfort.

(c) Monthly Rural Development Update (Anne Marie Shortall)

Ms Anne Marie Shortall circulated copies of the KCC 2025 Grants brochure to the elected members and gave details of funding amounts available and closing dates of applications for many of the schemes.

Anne Marie confirmed that when details of this year's Town & Village Renewal Scheme becomes available the Community section will be advertising for expressions of interest in the scheme.

It was agreed to request a report on feedback following the public consultation exercise on Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch Flood Relief Scheme, and to circulate a presentation made to the elected members at the December meeting of the Municipal District. on Flood Relief Schemes

Clarification was given that the Council-owned properties on Bridge Street, Callan form part of the Friary Complex Town Regeneration project, which is in the process of reaching a decision on an anchor tenant.

The members thanked Ms Shortall for her update and raised the following items:

- Update requested on the Kings River, Callan for the March Municipal District meeting;
- Gym on GAA grounds is eligible for consideration for funding if it can be used by the community;
- CCFCs will be advertised in March;
- Statistics and information requested for current water and wastewater services in the Municipal District villages.

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

This concluded the business of the meeting

Chairperson: 

