

**MINUTES OF THE CASTLECOMER MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 16<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026 AT 11.45AM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, JOHN STREET, KILKENNY**

**In the chair:** Cllr Pat Fitzpatrick  
**Present:** Cllrs John Brennan, Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Michael Delaney, Michael McCarthy (remotely) and Maurice Shortall  
**In attendance:** Mr Paraic Butler, Mr Martin Prendiville, Mr Michael Leahy, Ms Nancy Byrne, Ms Caitriona Corr, Mr Emmanuel Chaona & Mr Paul Byrne

**Vote of Sympathy**

Cllr Mary Hilda Cavanagh extended a vote of sympathy to Ms Freda Byrden and the Byrden family on the death of Mr John Byrden, Glashare, Johnstown.

**1. Confirmation of Minutes of:**

- (a) The minutes were proposed by Cllr John Brennan, seconded by Cllr Mary Hilda Cavanagh and agreed.

**2. Consideration of Reports and Recommendations:**

**(a) Urban Speed Limit Update**

Mr Paul Byrne updated members on the Speed Limit Review 2023 as follows – the review to be implemented in 3 stages, the first stage the Rural Speed Limit – 60km/h default completed in February 2025, the current stage the Urban Speed Limits – 30km/h and the final stage the National Secondary Roads – 80km/h default to be implemented later in 2026 by TII. The Urban Speed Limit of 30km/h is not a default speed limit, each case will be assessed on its own merits and will be implemented as a Special Speed Limit Bye-Law review. Also included in Stage 2 will be:

- R639 – Old N8 Urlingford to Cullohill
- R448 – Old N9 Paulstown to Carlow
- R712 – Old N10 Kilkenny to Paulstown

The pre-draft consultation phase for Stage 2 is already done, draft bye-laws will be prepared in consultation with TII and An Garda Síochána following public consultation. The deadline for adoption of bye laws is 30<sup>th</sup> October 2026 with a view to implementation by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027.

Contributions were received from the members as follows: -

- Cllr Fitzpatrick sympathised with all those who have lost loved ones in road accidents owing to excessive speed.
- Cllr Cavanagh shared concerns raised in relation to proposed reduction of speed on the R639.
- Cllr Brennan highlighted the need for greater enforcement.

**(b) Section 38 – Paulstown Safe Routes to School Scheme**

Ms Corr updated members on the ‘Safe Routes to School Scheme’ in Paulstown to be delivered under the Active Travel Programme. The proposed scheme includes front of school treatment, improved footpaths, new and improved crossing points as well as the installation of a new bus bay and school zone treatments on the approach to the school. Proposed steps to manage traffic flow more safely will feature junction tightening and raised crossings to slow vehicles in the vicinity. Key benefits and timeline for delivery of the Scheme were detailed.

Contributions were received from the members as follows.

- Cllrs Fitzpatrick and Cavanagh acknowledged the significance of the Scheme for Paulstown.
- Cllr McCarthy sought clarity on the inclusion of an additional drop off point.

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

None

4. **Other business set forth in the Notice convening the Meeting**

(a) **Items submitted by Cllr Pat Fitzpatrick:**

i **Update on plans for the N78 at Ballyhimmin outside the entrance to Tirlán and the Castlecomer Business Park**

Mr Paraic Butler provided an update. Last year a preliminary outline design was undertaken and submitted to TII, TII have reviewed and requested a multitude of design stages, outline design is now complete and resubmitted. Once approved tender will be prepared to procure consultants for detailed design and construction specification documents. Works are dictated by TII budgets and expected to go for tender in 2027. An extension of public lighting is proposed as part of the works

Mr Paul Byrne confirmed talks have also taken place regarding extension of the speed limit.

ii **Request for the provision of passing bays at Esker, Jenkinstown as the volume of heavy goods traffic using this stretch of road is causing serious difficulty for the local community.**

Mr Butler advised the road in question is a local primary road with an average width of 3m. He acknowledged there is merit in the request and confirmed the issue will be investigated prior to the March Road Works meeting. Cllr Fitzpatrick requested feedback.

(b) **Items submitted by Cllr Michael McCarthy:**

i **Castlecomer twinning partnership with Penvénan, France & its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Cllr Cavanagh read as follows on behalf of Cllr McCarthy who joined the meeting remotely: "As Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council I was honoured and privileged to accept an invitation from Castlecomer Twinning Committee to travel to Penvénan to celebrate their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations. I was delighted to be joined by our Director of Services Mary Mulholland.

This twinning since its inception has gone from strength to strength. We were delighted to witness at first hand the close friendship cultural, sporting and industrial ties that have grown in that time and continue to expand.

This original idea dates from January 1966 created by a small group of friends under the leadership of its first President Claudie Broudic. The road to realisation was a long one. Little by little over musical get togethers the Penvénan Committee was born thanks to Patrick Worthington who lived in the Tregor Region and who had friends in Castlecomer. In May 1999 the first group led by the late Ger Heffernan, Chairman of Castlecomer Development Association made the initial trip to Penvénan. The formal agreement was signed on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2000.

The ceremony took place in the Town Hall, James Brett was our Cathaoirleach. Senator Rene Regnault, Philip O'Neill Director of Services, Fernando Le Duc Mayor of Penvénan and Presidents of the Committees were also present.

The Charter sets out the aims of the relationship between the two communities which was to encourage and develop Education, Culture, Sporting and Tourism links.

The following year 2021 a group of 17 travelled to Castlecomer and the agreement was signed.

Over the years exchange programmes have involved regular trips strengthening the bond between the Breton and Irish communities”.

Cllr McCarthy advised a group from Penvénan are due to visit Kilkenny on 30<sup>th</sup> April to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning partnership. He asked his fellow councillors for a contribution in the amount of €1,000 from the MD fund to support this occasion.

All members supported Cllr McCarthy’s request.

**(c) Items submitted by Cllr Maurice Shortall:**

**i Clarification on the utilisation of the Fire Service with regards to dangerous conditions in extreme weather conditions**

Cllr Shortall advised that during recent severe flooding he required the services of the Fire Services on behalf of a constituent and dialled the Council’s emergency number but instead had to dial 112

Mr Prendiville clarified in such instances the Fire Service is activated following risk assessment by the Station Officer. Mr Butler advised members that in emergencies such as flooding they should contact Kilkenny County Councils out of office number. The on-call GSS will be deployed to do an assessment and with knowledge of drainage etc will make a call whether Fire Services are required.

Cllr Cavanagh sought clarification on liability for Fire Brigade callout charges and asked that a message be sent from the meeting reminding people to check insurance policies to ensure appropriate cover is included.

**5. Notices of Motion**

**(a) 2(26) Cllr Mary Hilda Cavanagh**

“In view of the changing weather patterns and the heavy winter rainfall, I am asking that special funds be allocated for maintenance of roadside drains and the opening of gullies and that a timetable be agreed so that all works can be done as a matter of routine each late Autumn”

That a request be sent to the Department for extra funds now to repair our roads which are so damaged by recent weather.”

Mr Butler advised of a request received from the Department for details of all roads damaged during the past three months. Mr Prendiville confirmed a submission would be made from the full Council.

All members spoke on the Notice of Motion

**6. Correspondence**

None

**7. Matters arising from minutes**

None

**8. Any other business**

**(a) MD Workshop – 2026 Road Works Programme**

Members agreed a workshop would be held in County Hall on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> of March at 2.30pm.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Chairperson:

Richard R. Goff

Date:

23/3/26