

**Minutes of the Piltown Municipal District Meeting held on Wednesday,
7th December, 2022 at 10.00am in the Rhu Glenn Hotel**

Present: Cllr F. Doherty, Cathaoirleach
Cllrs P. Dunphy, T. Breathnach and G. Frisby

In attendance: D. Malone, A/Director of Services, S. Kavanagh, Senior Engineer, S. Cullen, Area Engineer, M. Arthurs, Meetings Administrator, Jill Kelleher, Business Development Officer and O. Bannon, Staff Officer

Apologies: Cllr E. Aylward

1. **Minutes of Ordinary Statutory Meeting held 2nd November, 2022** – proposed by Cllr Dunphy, seconded by Cllr Frisby and agreed.

Minute of Budget Meeting held 2nd November, 2022 – proposed by Cllr Frisby, seconded by Cllr Dunphy and agreed.

Cllr Breathnach noted the formal adoption of the Council Budget for 2023 and confirmed that the discretionary budget for the Piltown MD will be available in 2023. Following discussion, it was agreed that members would meet with S. Cullen to discuss plans for that funding, before the end of the year, if possible.

Vote of Sympathy

The members all joined with the Cathaoirleach in extending a vote of sympathy to Cllr Breathnach and family on the recent sudden passing of his sister Patty Doody. Cllr Breathnach thanked the members for their kind words and vote of sympathy.

Cllr Breathnach also took the opportunity to extend condolences to the family of the late Mary O'Shea, South Kilkenny Historical Society.

Matters Arising

Ferrybank Library – Cllr Doherty referred to the recent celebrations to mark the 10th anniversary of the Ferrybank Library and thanked the staff, Sophie, Helen and Rob, for organising the activities on the day. She also thanked them for their service over the years and previous staff members, Karen, Maria and Jimmy.

Primary Care Centre – Cllr Doherty advised that she had recently paid a visit to the new Primary Care Centre at Ferrybank and asked to follow up on a visit for members. **Action DM/MA**

Vicky Phelan – the members joined with Cllr Doherty in extending condolences to the family of the late Vicky Phelan, paying tribute to her and acknowledging all she has done on behalf of women and her selfless efforts to highlight very important issues in spite of adversity.

LPP Meeting – M. Arthurs noted the recent LPP meeting held 21st November in Glenmore Community Hall, which was well attended, with good feedback and engagement on the day.

Southern Regional Assembly – M Arthurs informed Cllr Dunphy that he had spoken with David Kelly, Southern Regional Assembly, who has confirmed that he will attend a meeting of the Piltown MD in January and also to consider attendance at next joint meeting with WCCC. **Action MA**

Ferrybank Shopping Centre – in response to Cllr Frisby, D. Malone confirmed that S. McKeown, A/CEO has written directly to NAMA to again seek clarification regarding ownership and issues around maintenance and security and he agreed to revert to members with update in due course. **Action DM**

2. **Consideration of Reports and Recommendations**

(a) Taking in Charge Update

D. Malone confirmed that two estates have been taken in charge in the Piltown MD during 2022 at The Fairways and Arbourmount, Ferrybank and work will continue to conclude the taking in charge process on two additional estates within the Piltown MD in 2023. Discussion followed noting the time and effort put in by staff to bring difficult cases to a conclusion and acknowledging that the process can take quite a number of years to complete to ensure that all services within an estate are of the required standard before taking them in charge.

Cllr Doherty brought attention to issue at Abbey Road, where the road leading from the roundabout to Mr. Price is unfinished with a step in road level off the roundabout and asked for this to be addressed.

(b) Monthly Roadworks Update

S. Cullen circulated report outlining works being progressed and completed over the period since the last meeting under discretionary maintenance and other works. Updates with regard to the N24 Tower Road, N24 Carrick Road and Belmont Link Road were also noted.

S. Cullen advised of delays in completing paving works at Ballynaboley due to recent weather conditions, this was noted. Cllr Dunphy thanked S. Cullen and staff for all the works completed and asked him to relay thanks to the outdoor staff on behalf of the members for their hard work during recent difficult weather conditions.

The following items were also raised and discussed:-

Gritting of Roads – following query from Cllr Doherty, S. Cullen stated that winter maintenance commenced operation mid-October, noting this week has been the first spell of very cold weather and outlined that decisions with regard to salting are based around Met Eireann forecasts. He also outlined the priority routes, stating that priority 3 routes are treated during prolonged periods of cold weather, including roads in the vicinity of schools and the schedule is reviewed each year.

S. Cullen responded to queries from members and it was agreed that a map of the priority routes be given to members for information.

Speed Limit Review – Cllr Doherty asked for an update with regard to the speed limit review.

Hedge cutting – Cllr Doherty took the opportunity to remind landowners of their responsibility with regard to hedge cutting, which should be carried out before the end of February. In response to Cllr Doherty's query, S. Cullen advised that where there is a safety issue, landowners are issued with a notice under the Roads Act to cut roadside hedges on their lands.

(c) South East Greenway Update

Cllr Doherty welcomed Jill Kelleher, new Business Development Officer, to the meeting.

D. Malone provided update to members as follows:-

Design & Construction: Lots 1 and 3, Glenmore and New Ross, is now substantially completed and during the month of October parapet railings were installed at the railway bridges. The combined length of these two Lots is 8km. Lot 2, Ferrybank, is also substantially completed and the ramp access to the Greenway from the Abbey Road is also complete. The Greenway Project Office are exploring the possibility of opening sections of the Greenway as they are completed. A series of mini-tenders were advertised recently for the installation of public lighting ducting and fencing along with carpark works at Rosbercon and Glenmore to facilitate the opening of Lot 1 & 3 in early Qtr. 2 of next year.

It was decided to split Lot 5 into two sections of equal length comprising Lot 5a (Ferrybank to Luffany) and Lot 5b (Luffany to Aylwardstown South). In early October, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) requested that a third party due diligence check be undertaken on the Lot 5a tender documents prior to the advertisement of same. Tramore House Regional Design Office are currently undertaking this process and it is expected this final check will be completed shortly. The review of the design to rock cutting faces for Lot 5b in accordance with TII specifications is ongoing.

Ferrybank Car Park Option: Following detailed environmental assessments, a Part 10 planning application to An Bord Pleanála will now be progressed for the new South North Link Road from the Abbey Road to Belmont Road. The Ferrybank Car Park will be accessed from the Link Road and will form part of the overall project. Tenders for consultancy services to develop the design and documentation for this scheme were received recently and are currently being assessed by the Council's Road Design Office.

Links to Slieverue and Glenmore: Following confirmation of the preferred routes in July 2022, the preliminary design and initial environmental assessments proceeded. The consultants have recently submitted updated design information for comment and a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit will also be undertaken. The Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) was undertaken in August 2022; the conclusion the ecologist reached was that an Appropriate Assessment is not required. The next step is for the competent Authority, the Planning Authority, to review same and subject to this review it is anticipated that proposals will proceed to design without an application of specific environmental mitigation measures. The preliminary design of the route includes for the assessment of all interfaces

between the route and existing roadways, footways and private lands to determine the specific and appropriate measures to be implemented.

Woodstock Estate and the South East Greenway Recreational Connectivity Link between: In a joint initiative, Kilkenny Co. Council with Kilkenny LEADER Partnership and Trail Kilkenny, engaged the services of Punch Consulting Engineers to prepare a Feasibility Study & Route Selection Report to develop a Link between the South East Greenway (SEG) and Woodstock Estate, Inistioge. The Feasibility Study for the proposal was completed in October and the consultants concluded that the Woodstock SEG Link was feasible in meeting the objectives of the brief. The council have since engaged with Transport Infrastructure Ireland to determine if same could be considered within their current Greenway project portfolio as an extension to the SEG.

Jill Kelleher introduced herself to the members and gave a brief outline of her background and previous experience in finance, tourism and marketing, her most recent post being Marketing Manager with Stena Line. She went on to outline what her focus will be as Business Development Officer, engaging with local businesses, developing new business ideas and looking at all funding options available to them. It was noted that the Local Enterprise Office will also be supporting businesses with regard to setting up and securing funding. She advised that she will also be working on putting together a Business Development Plan and working with Failte Ireland on how to develop and showcase the South East Greenway at its best.

D. Malone responded to queries from members.

Cllr Doherty noted the recent acquisition of a vacant property in Glenmore for use as a community shop and café through funding received from Minister Heather Humphreys, which is very welcome in the village and will link in with the Greenway development.

In response to Cllr Doherty, D. Malone confirmed that the National Rail Review is ongoing and the proposed Rosslare to Waterford Greenway will remain on hold until such time as this review concludes.

Cllr Breathnach noted the many benefits of the Greenway for local residents and children going to school. He also noted the importance of the heritage aspects of the Greenway, the history of the railway and all the places which it passes through and felt that a regional approach should be taken to promote this aspect of the Greenway.

(d) RSES 2 Year Progress Report

D. Malone advised members that the Southern Regional Assembly has published its 2 year progress report. He gave a brief outline of the report and objectives of the RSES, which includes a commitment in relation to the establishment and implementation of the MASP structures. It was noted that proposals with regard to these structures, prepared by the Assembly in consultation with CEOs of both Waterford and Kilkenny, have been submitted to the Department, but no further progress has been made on this.

A discussion followed with contributions from all members, each expressing their disappointment at the delay in progress. The very high level of cooperation with Waterford CCC was noted, including joint MD meetings, URDF funded projects and regular steering group meetings in relation to the North Quays.

Cllr Dunphy proposed that a letter issue to the Department outlining the urgency of this matter and seeking an update. D. Malone noted the proposal and suggested waiting until after the meeting with David Kelly at the January MD meeting. This was agreed.

3. Business prescribed by Statute, Standing Order or Resolution of the Municipal District Members for transaction at such meetings

None

4. Other business set forth in the Notice convening the meeting

None

5. Notice of Motion

None

6. Correspondence

None

7. AOB:

Cllr Doherty took the opportunity to thank S. Cullen and the outdoor staff for all their work, in all weathers and all the work they do on behalf of the public. She thanked M. Arthurs for his help and guidance and O. Bannon for providing support at meetings and wished everyone present a happy Christmas and all the best for 2023.

Cllr Doherty also noted all the upcoming events and activities taking place as part of Yulefest Kilkenny, which is supported by KCC.

Cllr Dunphy asked for an updated list of staff contacts in KCC, noting some recent changes to staffing. **Action MA**

In response to Cllr Dunphy re staffing, M. Arthurs confirmed there is an agreed Workforce Plan in place which is constantly under review, however there is significant turnover of staff across all sections. It was also noted that sanction from the Department is required for a number of posts, which cannot be filled without prior approval from the Dept.

Cllr Doherty thanked all for their attendance. This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: Fidelis Doherty
Cathaoirleach

Dated: 04/01/23