

***Minutes of the Piltown Municipal District Meeting held on Wednesday,
1st May, 2024 at 10:00am at Ferrybank Library Meeting Room.***

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

In attendance: S. McKeown, Director of Services, M. Phelan, Meetings Administrator, R. McGarvey, Broadband Officer and O. Bannon, Staff Officer

Apologies: S. Cullen, Area Engineer

Condolences

The members all joined with the Cathaoirleach in extending a vote of sympathy to Stan Cullen, following the sad passing of his brother Jim. The members extended their deepest sympathy to Stan and the Cullen family. As a mark of respect, the meeting was adjourned for fifteen minutes.

1. **Minutes of Ordinary Statutory Meeting held 3rd April, 2024** – proposed by Cllr Doherty, seconded by Cllr Breathnach and agreed.

Matters Arising

Tower Road Junction – Cllr Dunphy sought update regarding the concerns raised by locals in relation to the new arrangements and exits onto the N24 at the Tower Junction. It was agreed to defer this matter to the next MD meeting.

Joint Meeting with Carrick on Suir MD – Cllr Breathnach wished to acknowledge the recent meeting held with Carrick-on-Suir MD, which was very worthwhile and all present gave full support to the bringing forward of a plan for Lingaun Valley.

2. **Consideration of Reports and Recommendations**

- (a) ***National Broadband Plan Update***

Cllr Frisby welcomed Rita McGarvey, Broadband Officer, who was in attendance to provide update to members in relation to the National Broadband Plan (NBP) rollout and in particular the status in the Piltown MD. She circulated reports to members in this regard. The following was noted:-

- Locations of Exchanges across the County, relevant to Piltown MD noted
- Rollout status per Deployment Area – Fibre Broadband is available to order/pre-order in 3 of the 4 Deployment Areas (DA) in the Piltown MD, with the network installation works still in progress in the Ballynabola DA.
- Up to date information can be found on the NBI website, a dedicated webpage for elected members and an email for direct contact with NBI was also noted.
- Other Schemes – Open Eir have confirmed that fibre will be available in areas with poor broadband, which are outside the NBP, by 2026/2027 via their Ireland Fibre Network (IFN) Scheme.
- A community led scheme is providing FTTH for local residents in the blue area in Piltown village and they are looking to extend coverage. They were winners of the European wide ‘Rural Inspiration Awards’ in 2022.

The members thanked Ms. McGarvey for her update. She responded to queries from members, including the following:-

- The members noted some anomalies with regard to coverage under the NBP – where queries arise, members were advised to submit Eircodes to Ms. McGarvey, so that status may be checked. Email broadbandofficer@kilkennycoco.ie
- It was noted that a National Broadband Ireland (NBI) representative has requested to attend the Plenary meeting in Sept/Oct to provide an update on the NBP.
- Ms. McGarvey to seek more information in relation to the IFN and revert to members.

It was noted that Ms. McGarvey was also involved in developing a digital strategy for the Council, which is not only about digitising services, but also improving customer services. An internal digital audit has recently been completed across sections and services. Ms. McGarvey will be liaising with members as part of the Digital Strategy consultation process.

(b) Draft Kilmacow Masterplan

S. McKeown advised that this item is to be deferred and that the Draft Kilmacow Masterplan was not yet ready for public consultation.

Following discussion, it was agreed that a workshop will be arranged for Piltown MD members to give them an opportunity to comment on the draft Masterplan, before it is finalised for public consultation.

S. McKeown also advised that a workshop will be arranged in relation to the Belview-Ferrybank Local Area Plan and that an issues paper on key issues is currently being prepared. It is envisaged that a Draft LAP will be completed and ready for public consultation shortly. The LAP is scheduled to be finalised for adoption by May 2025.

The importance of public consultation and robust engagement with local communities was noted, S. McKeown provided clarification in relation to the issues paper being prepared.

(c) Monthly Roadworks Update

In the absence of S. Cullen, Area Engineer, it was agreed that this item be deferred.

(d) Greenway Update

S. McKeown provided the following update to members.

Mainline Works

- Works are continuing on Lot 5A (c.5.5km section from Ferrybank to Curraghmore) to schedule with c. 90% of the sub-base completed. Works at a number of agricultural crossing locations are also underway.
- The Project Landowner Liaison Officer is continuing to engage with landowners adjoining the Greenway in relation to boundary treatment and crossing points, as per the Charter for Accommodation Works.
- Three tenders were received following the tender process for the provision of Technical Services for a multi-disciplinary engineering consultancy team to complete all remaining phases of the Greenway. The Tender Assessment and Recommendation Report has been finalised and issued to TII for approval and it is expected to have this appointment process concluded in May.
- The proposed trailhead car park at Ferrybank will be accessed from the new Link Road between the Belmont Road and Abbey Road. Following AA screening, it has been established that a Part 8 planning application can be progressed for the Link Road.

Land Acquisition from Córas Iompair Éireann (CIE)

- Legal contracts have now been signed by both the Local Authority and CIE and the final conveyance works are progressing to conclude the acquisition of the lands along the abandoned rail corridor.

Related Schemes

- **Greenway Link to Glenmore:** We await a decision on the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) funding application, submitted in February, to advance this project.
- **Greenway Link to Slieverue:** The Feasibility and Route Selection Report are completed. Consultation is ongoing with the TII Structures Section prior to commencing the planning process.
- **Woodstock (Inistioge) to South East Greenway Link:** RPS Consulting Engineers Ltd., were awarded the technical consultancy services contract in February. This contract provides for feasibility, route selection and the progression of the preferred option through planning.

S. McKeown confirmed that it is not intended to provide bins for dog foul on the Greenway and that dog owners are responsible in this regard. Additional signage to be considered as an alternative.

It was noted that the Link Road and Trailhead car park will be two separate Part 8 planning applications and projects and will be funded separately.

It was noted that a meeting was held recently between Planning and Department officials in relation to the 4 URDF projects in Kilkenny. It was also noted that approval has been given by the Department to recruit technical staff to deliver these projects.

(e) Ferrybank Shopping Centre

S. McKeown confirmed that a meeting between the Management of Dunnes Stores and the executive of Kilkenny County Council has been arranged and will take place in the coming weeks.

(f) Clover Centre

S. McKeown confirmed that it is intended to prepare a Masterplan for the Clover Centre and the Council's ambition is that these lands remain as active open space. It had been the intention to make an application for ORIS funding later this year, however it has been agreed to prepare a design brief to bring the Masterplan process forward, which will be funded under the Council's capital programme. It was noted an extensive public consultation process to engage with the local community will form part of this process. This was welcomed by members.

(g) Glenmore Bus Stop

In the absence of S. Cullen, Area Engineer, it was agreed that this item be deferred.

Cllr Doherty noted that public consultation is currently underway in relation to proposals to increase services on the Waterford to Wexford bus route, including Glenmore, which will run until 20th May and she encouraged people to engage with this process.

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 Dunphy raised the matter of staffing in the Ferrybank Area Office. S. McKeown noted ongoing efforts in relation to recruitment of technical staff. Staffing is a matter which can be considered by elected members during budgetary discussions later in the year.

Cllr Doherty seeking assistance for creation of hard surface areas to facilitate parking near roundabouts servicing the motorway, particularly R704.

Cllr Doherty also raised the issue of litter along national routes and asked what provisions there are for litter picking along these routes.

Cllr Doherty noted the softening of the criteria in relation to the Local Improvement Scheme. She welcomed this development and asked if some further information and clarification could be provided on the Scheme.

S. McKeown advised that the Parks Department are currently engaging with some companies who may be interested in sponsoring 3 of the roundabouts on the approaches to Waterford City and discussions are ongoing in this regard.

In relation to litter picking, it was noted that Tidy Towns and local community groups that undertake this work through the Spring Clean programme are only insured within the 60kph limits. S. McKeown agreed to raise the matter with Ms. Margaret Whelan, Environmental Awareness Officer. It was noted that the Prison Service have undertaken litter picking initiatives in the past beyond the 60kph zones.

Cllr Breathnach referred to litter pick undertaken on the R448, acknowledging that while litter picking is needed along many of these routes, safety is also a priority consideration.

Cllr Frisby raised the need for public lighting at the Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park, due to anti-social behaviour incidents occurring there. S. McKeown confirmed that the Parks Department are currently in discussions with An Garda Síochána to find the right solution to this issue.

As this was the last meeting before the upcoming local elections, Cllr Frisby took the opportunity to thank all staff, press and all those who have attended and contributed to the Piltown MD meetings. He thanked his fellow elected members for their courtesy, attendance and engagement, for bringing all the local issues to attention and making every effort to address same. All the members joined in thanking all staff of the local area, both past and present, for their work, help and support and acknowledged the

good working relationships within the Piltown District, enabling them to achieve the best for their local communities.

Cllr Frisby also acknowledged that this will be Cllr Eamon Aylward's last meeting after 15 years serving as an elected representative in the Piltown District, noting that this was a very hard decision for him, particularly given his strong family tradition in politics. He thanked Cllr Aylward for his service over the last 15 years to the people of Kilkenny, Piltown District and local communities and wished him every success going forward and happiness for the future. Cllr Frisby made a small presentation to Cllr Aylward on behalf of the elected members, as a token of appreciation and recognition of his dedicated service to Kilkenny County Council.

Cllrs Dunphy, Doherty and Breathnach all wished to be associated with Cllr Frisby's comments, each reflecting on their good working relationship and friendship built over the years with Cllr Aylward and acknowledging the many projects he has been involved in during his time on the Council, including Poulanssy Waterfall, the lane linking St. Beacon's N.S. to Main Street, Mullinavat, ongoing efforts to progress the Mill Road footpath and his involvement in the Mullinavat Matters group in recent years. They each wished him and his family every success and happiness for the future.

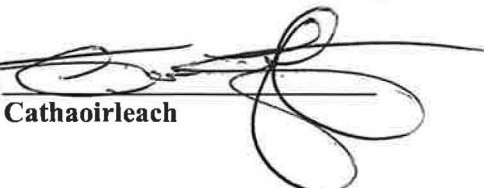
S. McKeown on his own behalf and on behalf of staff wished all members the very best of luck in the forthcoming local elections. He also acknowledged the tough decision Cllr Aylward has made, noting his family's proud legacy and tradition in politics. He noted Cllr Aylward's fairness and strong commitment in keeping matters on the agenda and the many projects he has been involved in bringing to fruition. He wished Cllr Aylward and his family all the best for the future.

Cllr Aylward spoke of what is an emotional time for him after many years on the Council. He took the opportunity to thank all Council staff, both in the local Area and Co Hall, acknowledging the good open relationship between elected members and staff of Kilkenny County Council. He thanked his fellow members for their kind words and noted the great working relationship they have with each other, the primary focus always being the betterment of the Piltown Municipal District and the people in the area, always in support of each other and providing a united voice for South Kilkenny. He stated that it has been a great privilege to be elected and serve the people of South Kilkenny for the past 15 years and to carry on a family tradition since 1947. He acknowledged what has been a difficult decision, that he has enjoyed his time and will miss serving on the Council. He again thanked all for their help and support over the last 15 years.

Next Meeting

The date for the AGM and June Meeting to be confirmed in due course.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: 
Cathaoirleach

Dated: 03/08/24