**Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee 4**

**Environmental Protection, Climate Action & Energy**

**Held on 8th December at 11.00 am**

**Remotely by MS Teams**

**In the Chair:** Cllr. David Fitzgerald

**In Attendance:** Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Cllr Deirdre Cullen, Cllr. Joe Lyons, Cllr. Maria Dollard, Cllr Denis Hynes, Mr James Murphy, Mr. Aidan Fitzpatrick

**Also Present:** Mr. Denis Malone, A/Director of Service; Ms. Anne Marie Shortall, Senior Executive Officer; Mr. Tom Brennan, Executive Engineer, Ms Dearbhala Ledwidge, Climate Action Officer, Mr. Francis Brophy, Acting Executive Engineer, Ms Claire Prendergast, Assistant Staff Officer, Ms. Deirdre Trait, Assistant Staff Officer.

**Item 1 Declaration of interests**

None reported.

**Item 2 Confirmation of Minutes**

Proposed by Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh, seconded by Mr. James Murphy and agreed: *“the minutes of SPC4 meeting held on the 13th October, 2022, are hereby adopted,”*

**Item 3Matters Arising**

None

**Item 4 SPC 4 Membership – PPN Representation**

Cllr. David Fitzgerald noted the resignation of Mr. Shem Caulfield, PPN Representative from the committee and thanked him for his participation and involvement. He welcomed Mr. Aidan Fitzpatrick, new PPN Representative to the committee. Proposed by Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh, seconded by Mr. James Murphy.

**Item 5 Climate Action**

Dearbhala Ledwidge updated the committee on Kilkenny County Council’s Climate Action Plan, to include the following:

* The advance planning stage of preparation of the Kilkenny Climate Action Plan has commenced
* The new Communities Climate Action Officer Post is due to be filled early 2023
* The Climate Action Steering Committee has been established
* RPS Consultants have been appointed to undertake a Climate Change Risk Assessment for Kilkenny County Council as part of our preparation work for the Climate Action Plan. Funding is provided by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communication.
* A Decarbonising Zone (DZ) will form part of the Climate Action Plan and has yet to be identified.
* The Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications has until 6th March, 2023 to issue Direction to Local Authorities to start the 12-month statutory phase of the preparation of the Climate Action Plan.

Denis Malone advised the DZ may be the Kilkenny City area. However, this has not yet been finalised and there will be due process for same. He informed the committee that with the amount of policy changes coming through that work for SPC 4 Committee will heighten.

Denis Malone welcomed Mr. Aidan Fitzpatrick to the committee.

Mr. Aidan Fitzpatrick introduced himself and gave a brief description of his background.

Contributions and queries were received from Mr. James Murphy, Mr. Aidan Fitzpatrick, Cllr. Maria Dollard, Cllr. Joe Lyons and Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh.

Dearbhala Ledwidge and Denis Malone addressed all queries raised.

**Item 6 Burial Grounds**

Denis Malone addressed the motion that was proposed at the previous SPC Meeting in relation to Burnchurch graveyard. He advised that taking in charge of Burnchurch is not appropriate as it is vested in the Church of Ireland and it is a recorded monument and a protected structure. It would not be in order to set precedence for other historic graveyards. He advised that representative church bodies can undertake works and apply for funding through the Community Monuments Fund.

Anne Marie Shortall informed the committee that the Graveyard Grant scheme is also available to Burnchurch and that they were allocated a grant under this scheme in 2022.

Tom Brennan noted that he visited Burnchurch graveyard recently and it is well maintained. He also noted there are two monuments across the road that are vested in the State. He will enquire if the burial ground could be taken in charge by the State also.

Contributions were received by Cllr. David Fitzgerald, Cllr. Joe Lyons and Anne Marie Shortall.

**Item 7 Progress Report by Director of Services.**

It was noted that the Director of Services progress report was circulated to all members prior to the meeting. Denis Malone gave a summary of the report.

Contributions were received from Cllr. Joe Lyons, James Murphy, Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh and Aidan Fitzpatrick.

Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh complimented and praised Tom Brennan and Thomas Dillon on the excellent works recently completed to Clomantagh Church.

Anne Marie Shortall and Denis Malone addressed all queries and comments raised.

**Item 8 Any other business**

James Murphy welcomed Aidan Fitzpatrick to the committee. He informed the committee he will be finished in his role in representing the IFA on the committee shortly. Cllr. David Fitzgerald acknowledged James’ representation and his contributions. Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh re-iterated Cllr. David Fitzgerald’s comments and stated his contributions were invaluable and unbiased and asked if he could stay on the committee on an individual basis. Denis Malone advised he would enquire as to what the Standing Orders allow in this regard.

**Item 9 Schedule of meetings for 2023**

The following dates were suggested for the coming year:

* 9th March 2023
* 8th June 2023
* 7th September 2023
* 7th December 2023

Tom Brennan informed the committee that this is his last meeting as he is taking up a new role in the Roads Department and that Francis Brophy will be replacing him.

The committee thanked Tom Brennan for his contributions and wished him luck in his new role.

Cllr. David Fitzgerald concluded the meeting, wishing the committee, fellow Members and the Environment Team a Happy Christmas.