**Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee 4**

**Environmental Protection, Climate Action & Energy**

**Held on 13th October at 2.15pm**

**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. John Hurley, Mr James Murphy

**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, Ms Bernadette Moloney, Education & Awareness Officer, Ms. Marian Nolan, Assistant Staff Officer, Ms Claire Prendergast, Assistant Staff Officer, Ms Katie Grace, TY Student.

Cllr. David Fitzgerald welcomed Dearbhala Ledwidge to the meeting and wished her well in her new role as Climate Action Officer.

**Item 1 Declaration of interests**

None reported.

**Item 2 Confirmation of Minutes**

Proposed by Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh, seconded by Mr John Hurley and agreed: *“the minutes of SPC4 meeting held on the 28th July, 2022, are hereby adopted,”*

**Item 3Matters Arising**

None

**Item 4 Climate Action Update**

Dearbhala Ledwidge gave a presentation on Climate Action for Kilkenny County Council and the role of the Climate Action Co-ordinator in relation to the preparation of the new five year Climate Action Plan for County Kilkenny.

David Fitzgerald thanked Dearbhala for her presentation. Denis Malone gave details of the additional staff resources that will be put in place as part of the Climate Action Team.

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

Cllr Mary Hilda Cavanagh and James Murphy made contributions in relation to the importance of buy in from agriculture groups as there is huge potential for change in this sector.

**Item 5 RMCEI Update – Air, Water & Noise**

Tom Brennan gave an update on RMCEI figures in relation to Air, Water & Noise Inspections and the work carried out in this area to date this year.

Contributions were received from James Murphy, Cllr. Maria Dollard and Cllr. David Fitzgerald. Denis Malone and Tom Brennan addressed all queries raised.

**Item 6 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 and thanked Bernadette Moloney and all staff in Environment for making the first pilot event of “Team Up to Clean Up” very successful.

Contributions were received from James Murphy, Cllr David Fitzgerald and Cllr Maria Dollard.

Denis Malone addressed all queries and comments raised.

**Item 7 Notices of Motion.**

**Motion 1**

Cllr David Fitzgerald proposed “That Kilkenny County Council undertake a pilot project to take Burnchurch graveyard in charge to assist with ongoing maintenance and insurance”

Anne Marie Shortall advised that this burial ground is not vested in Kilkenny County Council and is in the ownership of the Church of Ireland and therefore it was not possible to take same in charge. She advised that the graveyard committee could apply for funding from Graveyard Grants Scheme.

Cllr. David Fitzgerald thanked Anne Marie for her clarification and enquired about the possibility of Kilkenny County Council commencing a feasibility study to investigate if it was possible to take unvested historic graveyards in charge and to use Burnchurch as a pilot project.

Denis Malone explained the difficulties relating to old graveyards and said the wording of the motion may require to be changed.

The following notice of motion was proposed by Cllr. David Fitzgerald and seconded by Cllr. Joe Lyons:-

***“That Kilkenny County Council undertake a feasibility study of taking unvested graveyards in charge and that Burnchurch would be used as a pilot project”***.

**Motion 2**

Cllr Eugene McGuinness proposed:

“To ask Kilkenny County Council to lower the height of the stone boundary wall on St. Johns Graveyard (Dublin/Carlow road side) by one meter to open up the view of this ancient and historic cemetery and to put in place an all year round cleaning/maintenance programme to ensure the proper and respectful upkeep of such an important part of Kilkenny’s history”.

Anne Marie Shortall advised that this site is not vested in Kilkenny County Council and is in the ownership of St. John’s Parish. It is a recorded monument and this work would need the approval from the National Monuments Office and the Conservation Officer. Kilkenny County Council would not be in a position to carry out this work, however the maintenance of this site would be a matter for discussion at the Kilkenny Municipal District meeting. It was agreed that this committee should write to Cllr. Eugene McGuinness and request that he take this motion to the next Kilkenny Municipal District meeting.

**Item 8 Any other business**

Cllr. Joe Lyons raised the matter of weed spraying and requested that Kilkenny County Council consider the possibility of reinstating spraying of herbicides for weed control in public areas in towns and villages around the county.

Cllr. David Fitzgerald informed the members that a public meeting was being arranged to discuss Climate Action and that he was proposing Kilkenny as a Carbon Neutral city.

**Item 9 Schedule for next meeting.**

It was proposed to hold the next SPC 4 Meeting on 8th December.