

**MINUTES  
COMERAGH DISTRICT MEETING**

**DÚICHE AN CHUMARAIGH  
HELD ON 16<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2022 BY MS TEAMS**

**PRESENT**

Cllr. John O’Leary, Cathaoirleach
Cllr. Liam Brazil
Cllr. Seanie Power
Cllr. Ger Barron
Cllr. Declan Clune

Roll call carried out by meetings administrator.

**OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE**

Ms. Claire Hartley, SEO, Housing  
Mr. Gabriel Hynes, SE, Roads  
Ms. Maria Goff, A/SEE Roads  
Mr. Luke O’Brien, AO, Environment.  
Mr. Aisling O’Sullivan, SEP, Planning  
Mr. Richie Walsh, Head of LEO  
Mr. Conan Power, Communications  
Ms. Honor Dunphy, Meetings Administrator

**VOTES OF SYMPATHY**

It was unanimously resolved that this Council extends its sympathy to the families of the late:

- Jim Cunningham
- Helen Casey
- Anne Marie Burns
- Martin McCarthy
- Breda Flynn
- Bridget Casey
- Mark Hayes

**1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

Minutes of District Meeting held 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022 proposed by Cllr. Brazil, seconded by Cllr. Barron and agreed by all.

Minutes of Special District Meeting for the 2022 Roads Work Programme held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 proposed by Cllr. Power, seconded by Cllr. Brazil and agreed by all.

**2. MATTERS ARISING**

None

### 3. REPORTS

#### (a) Planning

Cllr. Power enquired about requirement for pre planning meetings for farm buildings over 100sqmetres, currently delays in getting a pre planning meeting which can impact on grant application. Supported by Cllr. Brazil.

A. O'Sullivan, SEP, noted that there is no requirement for a pre planning meeting for agricultural buildings unless it is over 1,000 square metres. Outlined that there is currently a back log with pre planning meetings due to increased statutory functions and limited resources, planning is currently reviewing structures and systems to address the issue.

Cllr. Barron noted a specific case where land sterilised over 20 years ago enquiring then this can be lifted.

A. O'Sullivan, SEP, noted that would need to review the sterilisation agreement and revert offline.

#### (b) Roads

Cllr. Clune requested details on the bridge rehabilitation works for Fiddown bridge, enquired about the timeframe for the Carrick Road works and allocation of €100k funding for the R680 High Road junction. Cllr. Brazil requested update on car park development at Mahon Falls and Mahon Bridge and when expect commencement of work on traffic calming scheme in Lemybrien.

Cllr. Barron noted €100k funding for viaduct in Kilmacthomas enquiring about proposed works and if it includes painting of the bridge in the village and if it will tackle stonework on viaduct.

Cllr. O'Leary noted representation from Ardnahoe area behind the Dunhill GAA centre where there has been an increase in traffic on narrow road enquiring if issue can be reviewed. Also noted need to review issue of dangerous trees enquiring how this will be carried out.

Cllr. Power agreed with need to carry out survey on dangerous trees and if tree felling can be subsidised.

G. Hynes, SE, outlined that dangerous trees are the responsibility of the landowner who need to assess the risk, not for the local authority to carry out. Noted that Ardnahoe road in Dunhill is narrow suggesting that it might favour a CIS where landowners make land available for passing bays installed, plan should be driven by the community. The High Road junction submission has been made to the NTA for funding, currently liaising with them for allocation for the necessary works to address the issue at junction, it will involve a traffic calming scheme in region of €400k and will revert with details. Currently working on finalising design and tender documents for Lemybrien and in discussions with landowners.

M. Goff, A/SEE, noted that Fiddown bridge rehabilitation works involved repair to damaged parapet wall and also looking to improve sightlines onto R680 and some pointing work at junction. Carrick Road tender documents being prepared, CCTV of existing drainage system carried out, hope to put out to tender in April with construction commencing in the summertime to September. Mahon falls and Mahon bridge tied in with economic development, preparing tender documents for Mahon Falls and looking for extension of funding for project, Mahon Bridge aiming to commence in September. Bridge in Kilmacthomas include works to clear vegetation, inspect works required, pointing, and replacing of stonework and repainting of the bridge.

Cllr. Power raised issue of rescues from mountain enquiring if could erect signage in carpark at Kilclooney in relation to the dangers of mountains and fog.

G. Hynes, SE, outlined that would need to take advice from search and rescue and speak to other stakeholders in relation to appropriate signage.

Cllr. Clune enquired if construction inflation will have an impact on Comeragh projects.

G. Hynes, SE, outlined that there are significant risks at the moment, increase in bitumen and asphalt, diesel increase, supply issues with machinery parts and delivery delays along with availability of material. There is a requirement to stay within budget, unknown impact now and will keep under review.

**(c) Housing**

Cllr. Clune requested update on housing plan as presented to the Minister.

Cllr. Brazil enquired if the houses in Kilmacthomas are allocated and when will be occupied and extended his congratulations to all involved in the project.

C. Hartley, SEO, outlined that the pre tenancy training meeting is taking place today with tenants, once completed keys handed over and will be moving in imminently. No detail from Department regarding the housing plan, working on basis that figures are accepted and once confirmed will inform members.

**(d) Environment**

Cllr. Brazil noted the continued success of community groups doing local clean ups and if there will be support to the upcoming Comeragh clean up.

Cllr. Clune requested details on the grant assistance for landfill remediation works for Coolfin and appointment of consultants for the Tannery site.

Cllr. O'Leary requested update on new legislation to allow the use of CCTV drones and automated number plate recognition technology which will assist local authorities on tackling illegal dumping.

L. O'Brien, AO, noted that Comeragh clean-up is main one in the area and environment in contact with organisers and providing assistance as done in the past. Advise groups to contact environment for assistance where needed. In relation to grant support allocation initially for Coolfin to provide additional boreholes for landfill area and allow to carry out additional monitoring, allocation to appoint consultants for Tannery to do capping design and associated documents to carry out works. New legislation enabling CCTV welcomed by Local Authorities, waiting on details to allow enforcement and implementation.

Cllr. Clune enquired about works involved in capping design.

L. O'Brien, AO, noted that capping involves covering of existing landfill waste body, Niall Kane can provide additional details.

Cllr. Brazil enquired if anyone from water services in attendance and asked for staff from section to attend and mediate with Irish Water to get action. Supported by all councillors

G. Hynes advised that local authority operates as a contractor for Irish Water, Irish Water have indicated that they will not attend in public forums and councillors log issues on portal, can request Irish Water to send a representative to the district meetings.

C. Hartley, SEO, stated that the Director of Service had sent request to Irish Water previously and have confirmed that they don't have resources to attend district meetings and can communicate concerns of the members.

Cllr. Barron noted concerns of the members, requested parties in government to pursue the issue nationally.

Cllr. Clune requested that Irish Water are requested to attend district meetings online.

C. Hartley, SEO confirmed that can issue correspondence to Irish Water noting the concerns of the members.

(e) **Economic Development**

Cllr. Clune enquired how the town centre first plan will be progressed for Portlaw and how community get involved and how the bioremediation technologies will impact on the Tannery site.

Cllr. Barron enquired about timeframe for reopening of playground in Durrow on the Greenway.

Cllr. Brazil enquired about progress in getting Crough Wood walk progressed from Greenway to Mahon Falls. Temporary block on Crough Wood walkway and any update from Coillte.

Cllr. O’Leary requested update on retail strategy for Mount Congreve with Bord Failte.

R. Walsh, Head of LEO, noted that the town centre first project will be community centred and driven through existing structures and will be commencing soon. Bioremediation to be procured and developed in conjunction with Carlow IT and intention to see if biological solutions available to the issues on the landfill and due to commence shortly. Durrow playground being reopened in conjunction with the Mahony family, provided new location and will be in place for summer season. Agreement with Coillte in respect to doing the works on the risk factors as identified at Crough Wood, works to be done to stabilise the embankments and need to be procured and will be open for summer season. Meeting with LEADER regarding Kilclooney, a major recreational plan needed for the whole of the Comeragh mountains, will be the strategy that will dictate the major access points and maintain the integrity of it. Retail element of Mount Congreve to be a high-end visitor attraction similar to Avoca and Arboretum in Carlow.

**4. CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**5. NOTICE OF MOTION**

None

**6. AOB**

Cllr. O’Leary outlined that currently in troubled times an on behalf of the Comeragh district condemned the reckless action of the Russian government on the people of the Ukraine, impact on people and cutting off what is basic to life, need to defeat the dictator Putin and the district will do all it can help in arranging provisions and refuge. Hope a solution can be realised as speedily as possible and that democracy will maintain. Supported by all the members.

Cllr. Brazil informed members that the mental health charity cycle is being held on 17<sup>th</sup> April, starting from Lemybrien, and raising funds for charity SOS.

Cllr. Clune acknowledged work of Cllr. Brazil for increasing awareness of mental health.

Members were advised that Safe Talk training is being arranged for the members, details to be advised.

Cathaoirleach wished Portlaw St. Patricks Day parade good luck and complemented committee involved and Cllr. Clune as chairperson of committee and wished everyone a Lá Fhéile Pádraig.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cathaoirleach

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_