

**MINUTES
COMERAGH DISTRICT MEETING**

**DÚICHE AN CHUMARAIGH
HELD ON 19TH JANUARY 2022 BY MS TEAMS**

PRESENT

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| 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

Mr. Ivan Grimes, DoS, Housing
Mr. Gabriel Hynes, SE, Roads
Ms. Maria Goff, A/SEE Roads
Mr. Luke O’Brien, AO, Environment.
Mr. Richie Walsh, Head of LEO
Ms. Melanie Cunningham, AO Planning
Mr. Niall Curtin, Chief Fire Officer
Ms. Honor Dunphy, Meetings Administrator

VOTES OF SYMPATHY

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

- Aishling Murphy
- Dolores Welsh
- Dolores O’Sullivan, Mother of Cllr. O’Sullivan
- Johnny Hennebry
- John Power – Dowling
- Francis Quinlan
- Paddy Long
- James Sonny Maher
- Jackie Phelan

Cathaoirleach called on Oireachtas members to tackle the issue of violence against women and the need to have a wider based conversation on gender violence, sentiments shared by all members. All members extended their condolence to Cllr. Lola O’Sullivan on the death of her mother Dolores.

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Minutes of District Meeting held 15th December 2022 proposed by Cllr. Brazil, seconded by Cllr. Power and agreed by all.

2. MATTERS ARISING

None

3. REPORTS

(a) Planning

Cllr. Clune requested details on lead time for pre planning meetings, if these meetings remain virtual and if turnaround time for planning applications remains the same.

Cllr. Brazil noted that there continues to be a delay in getting pre planning meetings and requested they are provided within 30 days of request, enquired if there was an increase in applications for 2021. Outlined issue of rural housing need for the new Development Plan and the need to ensure proper provision is made for it along with adequate definition in the plan. Outlined that camper van parking is an issue in the district for the summer months and needs to be addressed.

M. Cunningham, AO, rural housing issue raised with senior planner and each planning application assessed on its own merits with all submissions taken into account as part of the assessment. Rural housing in terms of the development plan will be raised with planners for the Development Plan. Will revert regarding camper van parking along coast. 2021 figures for district will be provided. Currently addressing the backlog of requests for pre planning meetings and looking at additional systems to address. Timeline for planning applications still stands.

Cllr. Power noted that agriculture buildings are grant aided and delays on planning applications can result in loss of grants.

(b) Environment

Cllr. Clune welcomed funding received from EPA to install water fountains on the blue flag beaches but not provided at any beaches in Comeragh districts, enquiring if council can look at installing them at other beaches.

Cllr. Brazil noted issue of illegal dumping in district continues to be an issue enquiring on prosecutions and sourcing of evidence in bags collected and if all plans in place to assist communities in carrying out clean ups.

L. O'Brien, AO, funding obtained for water refill stations on blue flag from EPA, early stages and not commissioned yet, proposed to roll out to other locations dependent on funding and suitability of other locations across the county. Aim to reduce plastics and avail of the facility. Dumping in the Comeragh area in the winter provides for cover of darkness to carry out illegal dumping. Increased patrols in rural areas and increased fines, continuing to issue fines where we have evidence. Support for the Comeragh clean up will continue as per previous years, in provision of equipment and disposal of the waste collected.

Cllr. Power noted the need to continue to highlight issue of illegal dumping and the fines and prosecutions are happening.

(c) Roads

Cllr. Clune enquired as to when will see the 2022 Roads Work Programme, noted active travel funding of €1.6m in 2021 and can see positive changes for areas and recognise works by roads section. Requested update on Carrick Road tender, commencement date and duration of work. Raised issue of traffic control in Bunmahon/Kilmurrin for summer and if additional areas could be sourced as temporary car parks in

these areas to assist with traffic control and parking. Highlighted issue with use of the High Road as a diversion route, need to find solution to the problem as road not designed for the heavier traffic.

Cllr. O'Leary noted issue with quality of roads in Kilmeaden due to works carried out by Irish Water, needs to be urgently addressed and ongoing issue that needs to be brought to a conclusion as is unsightly and dangerous. Junction at Kilmeaden off the High Road to Carrick Road needs to be upgraded and enquired if any works carried out on it. Supports issue of High Road not being used as a diversion route.

Cllr. Brazil requested update on commencement of works at Carroll's Cross, the Mahon Falls car park, Mahon Bridge car park and provision of additional parking at Coumshinguan. Noted that hedge cutting season coming to an end and need to highlight that a number of weeks left before closure of the season, need for Coillte to address also. Requested update on Lemybrien traffic calming scheme, noted that sightline difficult at Mahon Bridge from Few's direction and needs to be addressed.

Cllr. Power supported need to highlight closure of hedge cutting season noting need for high branches to also be addressed.

G. Hynes, SE, outlined that RWP workshop is dependent on getting allocation from Department and hopeful that will have details for February meeting for approval. Outlined that a significant number of Active Travel schemes commenced last year and have applied to NTA for significant funding for the district and hopeful that will have programme to present at February meeting for the coming year. Agree that have significant demands along the coast for parking and would welcome working with landowners to provide a solution and can address insurance issue with IPB and agree now is the time to work on this and welcome contacts and working with communities. Acknowledge issue on High Road and have communicated issues to An Garda Síochána and preference is that diversion is through Portlaoise and onto Carrick cross, it is a matter for An Garda Síochána and hope to have further discussion to reach a solution as High Road is not suitable for the heavier traffic. Agree with issues raised in relation to Ballyduff/Kilmeaden and works by Irish Water, have raised it with water services and making necessary enquiries to have it addressed. Reviewed issue in relation to junction at High Road at railway station, have preliminary designs completed and applied for funding under active travel, intention is to proceed to consultation in coming weeks as regards a design and proceed to statutory process.

Cllr. Barron raised request for marshals/bicycle wardens on the Greenway that would provide additional security and also act in a PR roll for tourists.

G. Hynes, SE, outlined that NTA and active travel funding doesn't need council approval but will outline details for new footpaths and widening of footpaths for consideration. In relation to the Greenway noted that there are two permanent staff members on the Greenway whose responsibility it is to maintain the Greenway, no staff resources for permanent marshalling but open to community groups being involved. The Mahon falls car park application is with An Bord Pleanála, additional information requested and submitted and waiting on response from them on their decision. Currently working on tender documents for the Mahon Bridge carpark, funding in place and anticipate works to commence in Q3. Contracted awarded for the Lemybrien N25 scheme at Carroll's Cross, due to commence work in February and will be a 6-month programme. Noted that Carrick Road roundabout raised previous concerns, outlining that feasibility and options report nearly finalised and TII to send to Celtic roads groups to address issues, which include reducing approach lanes to 1, landscaping works with intention to reduce speed. Lemybrien as previously advised, intention is to get design and land acquisition completed and go to tender and construction early this year. Agree that sightlines at the Few's direction at Mahon Bridge are compromised, not an easy solution but will look at options. Hedge cutting season will cease shortly on 1st March, there is a responsibility to ensure no encroachment or overhanging branches noting that getting good co-operation from landowners and requested notification of any areas of issue.

M. Goff, A/SEE, Carrick Road carrying out detailed design for drainage, road accommodation works, out to tender in Feb and expect construction over summer months. Mahon falls carpark informed last week that decision is pending.

Cllr. Power supports Cllr. Barron regarding the Greenway marshals.

(d) Housing

Cllr. Clune outlined that huge progress in housing in City areas, enquired about additional housing units for the district and plans for the district and if anything, members can do to support.

Cllr. Brazil requested update on house in Stradbally that was burned. Enquired if disability grants funding in 2021 spent, requested update on repair works for social housing and improvements on waiting time and if additional funding could be sourced.

Cllr. Power noted issue of open drain at Coolfin with need for railing that needed to be raised with Coillte.

Cllr. O'Leary asked if issue regarding lack of water supply to Dunhill which resulted in planning application being refused as IW cannot provide water supply could be raised with Department and making submission to have water supply for Dunhill.

I.Grimes, DoS, informed the members that capital delivery plan submitted to Department of Housing for planned delivery for next 5 years and is based on the need in each of the district, expecting feedback shortly and will meet with district to bring members through the proposals. Requested elected members and members of public to notify the office of any properties in local areas that could bring under repair and lease scheme. Noted that in relation to the house in Stradbally, where properties are burnt there is a need to get insurance assessor to identify cause, remediation costs and need to apply for additional funding. Outlined that grant for own stock is fully spent, private housing grants is demand led and dependent of number of applications and will have details for Plenary in coming weeks. Noted that continually discussing the issue of increased grant need for own stock. No update on Coolfin Woods but will follow up on again. Will raise issue with Irish Water but have no influence on their funding decisions.

(e) Economic Development

Cllr. Clune acknowledged the town centre first plan and funding for Portlaw and enquired what format this will take and if opportunity for communities to be involved in the process.

Cllr. Brazil asked about the closure of Crough Wood and disappointment that this has occurred, acknowledge works need to happen and requested update on works and when it will reopen.

Cllr. O'Leary requested update on Kilmeaden Greenway connection to Suir Valley railway asking option for funding to have the improvement works to take place on the connection.

R. Walsh, Head of LEO, noted that Portlaw is the only Waterford town to get the funding, awaiting confirmation on details but community engagement will be paramount. Will bring a work programme to next meeting and outline critical priorities and how project to be delivered. Crough Wood closure resulted from audit by Sport Ireland which found significant risk element and need to address the risk before it can reopen. Working with Coillte to address the issue and they are significant associated costs. Council can contact Coillte to proceed with works and have continued cooperation. Kilmeaden included in set of projects sent to the TII for funding under Greenway funding, awaiting result of this application.

(f) Emergency

Cllr. Barron requested update on the provision of new fire station for Kilmacthomas.

Cllr. Brazil supported Cllr. Barron and need to progress

N. Curtin, CFO, carried out work on design and delayed due to redesign needed. Completed end of November and expect to have Part 8 application in next two months and get to site this year.

Cathaoirleach concurred with members on need for the new fire station and welcome update on progress of the project. Complimented the work of the full fire service for the City and County.

4. TAKING IN CHARGE – Fan Glas, Kilmeaden – Completion of the Process

G. Hynes, SE outlined details, one submission reviewed and met with residents to resolve issues. Recommending to members that housing scheme in Fan Glas is Taken in Charge.

Cllr. O’Leary proposed and acknowledged and thanked engineers meeting with residents, seconded by Cllr. Barron and agreed by all.

Cllr. Barron enquired on update for Taking in Charge of Comeragh View.

G. Hynes, SE, informed that working on this and will have Donal provide update and timeline to bring to council for Taking in Charge.

I.Grimes, DoS, noted that TIC reports on rotational basis and full update will be before the members shortly.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

Noted

6. NOTICE OF MOTION

None

7. AOB

G. Hynes, DoS, updated members that works by Irish Water in Ballyduff/Kilmeaden will be completed by end of February and the delays are as a result of connection issues.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Dated: _____