

**MINUTES  
COMERAGH DISTRICT MEETING**

**DÚICHE AN CHUMARAIGH  
HELD ON 16<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2021 BY ZOOM CALL**

**PRESENT**

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

Roll call carried out by meetings administrator.

**OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE**

Ms. Ivan Grimes, DoS, Housing  
Mr. Gabriel Hynes, SE, Roads.  
Ms. Maria Goff, A/SEE Roads.  
Mr. Raymond Moloney, SEO, Environment.  
Mr. Seamus Doran, AO, Planning  
Mr. Donal Ó Murchadha, SEE, Planning  
Mr. Rupert Maddock, Senior Architect  
Mr. Johnny Brunnock, Trails 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:

- Keith Maher
- Hannah Shanahan
- Margaret Walsh

**1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

Minutes of District Meeting held 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021 proposed by Cllr. Brazil seconded by Cllr. O’Leary and agreed by all.

**2. MATTERS ARISING**

Cllr. Clune requested update on meeting with Coillte and district members, enquired if the water testing has been carried out as requested in Coolfin Woods, noted addition to last month’s minutes that cost of security contractor was in the region of €100,000.

R. Moloney, SEO, confirmed that have been in contact with Coillte, no meeting confirmed and hope to have arranged for July.

I. Grimes, DoS, will follow up on water testing and clarified that maximum annual cost of security contract is €52,000.

Cllr. Clune noted domestic dumping is historically in Coolfin Woods and while there is an issue with illegal dumping the water testing needs to be undertaken.

### **3. REPORTS**

#### **(a) Housing**

Cllr. Clune noted under housing stock that voids units completed for May are zero and units coming available for May are zero and requested additional column in report for any units in district awaiting refurbishment. Enquired about the strategic plan for housing in the Comeragh area for the next 5 years including what houses planned to be built, when and where. Noted example of issue in Portlaw with 5 persons living in 2 bed house where conditions are unsuitable and on transfer list for number of years, need to have this case reviewed noting there is a lack of availability of houses in the Comeragh area and intervention is required.

Cllr. Barron noted a number of reps received on houses regarding dampness in Hillview after works for insulation completed requesting this to be investigated.

Cllr. Brazil requested update on houses in Kilmacthomas and pedestrian walkway that should go through Mill Walk, any update from Irish Water on upgrade on sewerage system in Kilmacomma. Noted that housing grants have a long waiting list which is unfair and works need to be progressed.

Cathaoirleach noted the high number of grant applications that housing staff are dealing with.

Cllr. O'Leary supports issue regarding delays in grants enquiring if there is any mechanism where additional funding can be approved by Department as needs are high in the submitted cases.

I.Grimes, DoS, presentation of information on voids will be included in future reports, currently reviewing housing land stock as part of the housing strategy of the new development plan which will be provided for across all districts. Will revert regarding the overcrowding issue in Portlaw that is currently under investigation. Requested details for houses with reported dampness and will have it investigated. Pedestrian access in Kilmacthomas will be provided for as per the Part VIII, no update regarding Irish Water plans for Kilmacomma but will revert. In relation to the grant's delays, noted there have been some delays due to staff changes in housing and hope this section will have full resource in place and backlog in private grants will be dealt with. Outlined that adaptation to own stock is dependent on level of funding from department, allocation for 2021 was €501k, sought €800k which would have impacted on the delays as referred to. Council have made case to Department that funding should be allocated on the proportion of housing stock in the local authority. Waterford has 3.5% of the local authority housing stock in the country however under this funding stream usually receive less than 2%, would welcome any political support to having this changed.

Cllr. Clune enquired about overall plan for the area in terms of tying into development plan noting there must be an historical plan that can be reviewed and requested detail on when finalised plan will be ready.

I.Grimes, DoS, stated that plan will be finalised this year, working off previous housing strategy and noted that plans evolve for the area.

#### **(b) Planning & Taking in Charge**

Cllr. Brazil noted development plan currently on display enquiring what public should be doing to making submissions on zoning and requested update on Lemybrien from Irish Water regarding upgrade of system.

Cllr. Barron requested update on taking in charge issue with Irish Water and Cruachán View.

Cllr. O'Leary requested clarification on the Fán Glas taking in charge process.

Cllr. Clune noted that status of Cúl Rua in Portlaw remains at same stage for last number of months enquiring as to how this can be progressed along with progress of the associated procurement process.

Cllr. Barron enquired when hard copy of the Draft Development Plan will be issued.

Cllr. Power enquired regarding zoning and will have open approach to planning in villages when land comes available in certain locations.

S. Doran, AO, outlined that public can submit proposals on the current draft Development Plan from 21<sup>st</sup> June for a 10 week period, preference for submissions to be made through online portal at [consult.waterfordcouncil.ie](http://consult.waterfordcouncil.ie) and will also take submissions by post and email. Confirmed that council has prioritised Lemybrien for small villages capital programme with Irish Water and hope it will be included in future announcements for the scheme. Confirmed that hard copy of draft Development Plan is due to be provided to all elected members along with other supporting documentation. Development of villages discussed at recent workshops noting there are limits in how much land can be zoned for development as projections have to meet terms of population growth projections as outlined in the National Planning Framework, in terms of looking at smaller settlements may consider looking at circle around village which will have certain designation for residential zoning.

Cllr. Brazil enquired if any village in Waterford received funding from Irish Water for upgrade of system S. Doran, AO noted that Lemybrien only village submitted as part of the specific fund for small towns and villages.

Cllr. Clune enquired if multiple submissions can be made and process to get set up.

S. Doran, AO outlined that people need to set up account noting can revisit anytime and make submission.

Cllr. O'Leary noted that application in Dunhill for 40 houses was refused on basis of supply of water by Irish Water and no progress to date and needs to be tackled to resolve situation.

D. Ó Murchadha, SEE, outlined that interactions with Irish Water are structured on direction with government guidance and need agree on how to evoke a bond a bond is spent. Initial response is documenting and proposing site resolution plan which is then reviewed and need to reach agreement on what to spent on water infrastructure and roads/lighting expenditure. Noted that with Cruachán View still in negotiations with the developer to get to a standard for taking in charge and the process has been heavily affected by the pandemic. The commencement notice as issued for Fan Glás is the start of statutory process, currently aggregating submission received with next step to revert back to council for approval to take in charge, any issues raised by public have to be dealt with by the relevant authority. Envisage this will be dealt with at next council meeting. Site resolution plan for Cois Cille in place noting that unusual in that the public water supply is taken in charge and currently agreeing on wastewater infrastructure.

Cllr. Clune enquired when site resolution plan for Cúl Rua in Portlaw was sent to Irish Water.

D. Ó Murchadha will revert directly with this information.

### **(c) Environment**

Cllr. Brazil noted illegal dumping ongoing on rural roads and while noted in report that roadside dumping is decreasing, he disagrees outlining that it seems to be increasing, requested additional signage to be erected in the district.

Cllr. O'Leary noted new single use plastic directive where items of plastic to be banned such as food containers and beverage containers with a range of measures to deal with common use items enquiring how the council will deal with this. Welcomed the development outlining that there is an onus on manufacturers to be more responsible with their packaging.

Cathaoirleach agreed and supported Cllr. O'Leary.

Cllr. Clune outlined issue of fast-food establishments and their generation of waste enquiring about the option of contacting these outlets for them to voluntarily add customer details on packaging so that it can

be traced if dumped. Enquired if council have a list of all the fast-food outlets to issue letter to see if they are interested in undertaking this.

R. Moloney, SEO, outlined that illegal dumping graphs in monthly reports are based on complaints received by public and are reflection of what is seen on the ground noting that council is getting message out to public about dumping. Council has signed up to the leave no trace campaign and will be actively pursuing this over the summer. Outlined that single use plastics under European Law being disposed into Irish Law at the moment and will result in a levy if producers don't reduce their plastic usage. Council adopted own single use plastic policy through the Environment SPC which has resulted in the removal of use of plastic bottles at council meetings, also rolled out in canteen facilities and use of caterers and in council activities. Groups that get grants need to adopt single use plastic policy and also part of the casual trading byelaws. Inclusion of car registration details on packaging from fast food outlets was referred to Southern Regional Waste Management office, their advice received from Data Protection Commissioner is that this data cannot be included on packaging under data protection regulations. Currently establishing a database of all fast-food outlets so that can advise of their obligations under the Waste Pollution Act, also engage regarding inclusion of leave no trace branding on their packaging.

Cathaoirleach outlined councillors can assist on social media regarding the leave no trace message.

**(d) Roads**

Cllr. Clune enquired when public consultation for Carrick Road in Portlaw to be launched, noted Bunmahon had incident at weekend where lifeboat crew unable to exit due to blockages by vehicles. Issue that traffic at standstill and with emergency on beach there were difficulties to get out to the incident, noted additional lining etc put in place but when cars parked on both side the access is curtailed. Highlights the need to find additional car parking spaces in the location as it will happen again when the beach is busy. Requested signage outlining risk of rip currents and need to alert people about the danger of these in Bunmahon, requesting details on the signage. Raised concern that lifeguards not on Bunmahon beach until start of July enquiring why this the case and if there is any way that can recruit for weekends for cover until full lifeguard service is in place.

Cllr. Barron supported issues regarding Bunmahon, acknowledged the work carried out in the location but it is a serious situation that needs to be addressed, need to look at the extension of the season with necessary supports in place. Time to reassess the requirements of the tourism season and co-ordinate efforts to deal with the issues as being raised.

Cllr. Brazil supports issues as raised in relation to Bunmahon noting that traffic users have to adhere to the rules of the road and agrees with need for signage about the prevalence of rip currents on the beach. Outlined the need for lifeguards on Bunmahon beach for the same duration as other beaches due to the dangers at the location. Requested update on development of Lemybrien and Mahon Falls carpark, noted that 13 submissions received on Mahon Falls carpark enquiring if submissions can be viewed. Outlined that hedgerow on road from Mahon Bridge to Mahon Falls needs to be cut, enquired if work on water works completed by Kilmacthomas school and when will roads work programme commence in the district.

Cllr. O'Leary noted lucky that the situation in Bunmahon didn't end tragically and supported need to review tourism requirements in the district. Requested update on Newtown Road, increased traffic and safety measures needed by Newtown school and requested driver feedback signs at the location.

Cathaoirleach supported issues raised in relation to Bunmahon beach noting drivers need to respect the rules of the road and need to respect the emergency services and the role they play in our community.

Cllr. Barron noted the courage and bravery of local man involved in the rescue at Bunmahon beach.

M. Goff, SEE, noted that will continue to review the road lining in Bunmahon. Currently looking for potential additional car parking but will need to design and source necessary funding. Signage manufacturing currently developing rip current signs that will go on entrance to beach. Public consultation

on Carrick Road expected to commence in July and design finalised to bring footpath down to GAA grounds. Lemybrien at detailed design and due out to tender in 6 weeks. Received 13 submissions on Mahon Falls and will be made available to councillors, drainage works at Kilmacthomas almost complete, roads work commenced has commenced in parts in the district and commencing surface dressing in coming weeks and strengthening works to commence in August. Informed members that Newtown school have been in contact with council about driver feedback signs, currently speed limit of 60km and will refresh lining and driver feedback signs are dependent on funding at end of year.

I.Grimes, DoS, concurred with members regarding efforts of people involved in recent rescue at Bunmahon. He outlined that local authorities are only required to provide lifeguards for blue flag beaches in June and Bunmahon doesn't hold this designation. Noted that lifeguard service commenced at the five blue flag beaches at the start of June and is a service that will operate full time until the end of August and has been widely publicised on local radio and website. Outlined that lifeguards are recruited through open competition and all applicants need to hold accreditation from Water Safety Ireland. Most applicants are students with a proportion that are leaving certificate students and not available for work in June. Intended that full service will be in place from 28<sup>th</sup> June and looking at options to bring service forward. Noted additional signage is on order for Bunmahon beach.

Cllr. Clune enquired about timeline on knowing if the lifeguard service can be brought forward and will it include Bunmahon.

I.Grimes, DoS, currently contacting people recruited for end of June to see if can commence earlier start but need to ensure adequate supervision is also in place.

Extension of standing orders of 15 minutes proposed by Cllr. Clune, seconded by Cllr. O'Leary and agreed by all.

#### **4. PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000, as amended Planning & Development Regulations 2001 as amended Part VIII – Completion of Process**

##### **a) Development of trail works at the Anne Valley**

J. Brunnock, Trails Officer, outlined details of Part V111, screening for both Appropriate Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment was carried out. Screening concluded that an EIAR or NIS was not required. Ecological Impact Assessment and flood risk carried out and concluded no negative environmental impacts on flooding or environment as a result of works. Received 1 submission from Irish Water with no objection to development. Positive contribution to the amenity of the local area, tourism and health promotion and recommended approval by the members

Proposed by Cllr. Brazil, seconded by Cllr. O'Leary and agreed by all.

##### **b) Mount Congreve**

R. Maddock, Architect, outlined details of the Part V111, public display until 28<sup>th</sup> May, 11<sup>th</sup> June for submissions. Three main components including development of part of the main house, carpark and integrated constructed wetlands. Proposed works involve alterations and refurbishments to main house to allow for visitors, ticketing and also to eastern courtyard for food and toilet facilities. Will develop the house in stages and this is the first stage and will be a welcomed improvement to the visitors' facilities at Mount Congreve and will improve visitor experience. Appropriate assessments carried out and architectural assessments. 1 submission from Failte Ireland supporting the scheme. Recommending approval and is in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Team working to progress the scheme and have open for next summer season.

Proposed by Cllr. O'Leary, seconded by Cllr. Power and agreed by all.  
Cathaoirleach welcomed the project and the development of the amenity and credited all those working on the project.

**5. CORRESPONDENCE**

Noted

**6. NOTICE OF MOTION**

None

**7. AOB**

Cllr. Barron requested provision of defibrillator on the Greenway, understand that Crough Wood will have one shortly. Also outlined welcome news of the Spraoi announcement for plans for the summer in the city and at various locations in the Comeragh district.

J. Brunnock, Trails Officer, informed members that there will be meetings to develop the proposals and requirements of the Spraoi festival on the Greenway. Worked with emergency services as regards the planning of the Greenway with numbering of access points and signage for users. Will investigate options for defibrillators while noting challenge of the extent of the Greenway.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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

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