

Minutes of Council Meeting July 2020

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Louth County Council held in St. Gerard's Hall, St. Alphonsus Road, County Hall, Dundalk on Monday 20th July 2020

In attendance:

Cathaoirleach: Cllr. Dolores Minogue

Members: Councillors James Byrne, Joanna Byrne, Kevin Callan, Emma Coffey, Hugh Conlon, Edel Corrigan, Tom Cunningham, Maria Doyle, Michelle Hall, Conor Keelan, Seán Kelly, Colm Markey, Pearse McGeough, Andrea McKevitt, Paddy McQuillan, Kevin Meenan, Declan Power, John Reilly, Liam Reilly, Tomás Sharkey, John Sheridan, Jim Tenanty, Eileen Tully, Antoin Watters, Maeve Yore

Officials: J. Martin, Chief Executive
F. Pentony, Director of Services
C. Duff, Director of Services
J. McGuinness, Director of Services
P. Donnelly, Director of Services
B. Woods, Head of Finance
A. Sherry, Meetings Administrator

Apologies: Cllrs. M. Butler, Pio Smith

Minute No. 86/20

Confirmation of Minutes

Proposed by: Cllr. L. Reilly
Seconded by: Cllr. A. Watters
And resolved:

That the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 15th June 2020 be confirmed

Minute No. 87/20

Confirmation of Minutes

Proposed by: Cllr. L. Reilly
Seconded by: Cllr. S. Kelly
And resolved:

That the minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 15th June 2020 be confirmed

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Minute No. 88/20

Minutes for noting

Corporate Policy Group 3rd June 2020

Borough District of Drogheda & Annual Meeting 8th June 2020

Municipal District of Dundalk & Annual Meeting 2nd June 2020

Municipal District of Ardee & Annual Meeting 4th June 2020

Minute No. 89/20

Casual Vacancy – Cllr. Erin McGreehan

In accordance with the provisions of Section 19 (2) of the Local Government Act 2001, a casual vacancy has occurred in the membership of Louth County Council by reason of Cllr. E. McGreehan being appointed to Seanad Éireann.

Proposed by Cllr. L. Reilly
Seconded by Cllr. E. Coffey
And resolved:

That Andrea McKeivitt shall fill the casual vacancy on Louth County Council arising from the appointment of Cllr. Erin McGreehan to Seanad Éireann.

Minute No. 90/20

Casual Vacancy – Cllr. John McGahon

In accordance with the provisions of Section 19 (2) of the Local Government Act 2001, a casual vacancy has occurred in the membership of Louth County Council by reason of Cllr. J. McGahon being elected to Seanad Éireann.

Proposed by Cllr. M. Doyle
Seconded by Cllr. E. Tully
And resolved:

That John Reilly shall fill the Casual Vacancy on Louth County Council arising from the election of Cllr. John McGahon to Seanad Éireann.

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Minute No. 91/20

Report on CPG Meeting

The Cathaoirleach informed the members that the meeting of the CPG was held remotely on Wednesday 8th July 2020 at 9.30.am and the members agreed the Agenda for the July monthly meeting. It was pointed out to the CPG that the national deadlines for the preparation of the annual financial statements and the NOAC performance indicators had been pushed out and as a result could not be included in the annual report. Following a discussion it was generally agreed that only items that were county wide or that could not be raised at municipal or borough district level should be discussed at the monthly Council meeting as part of the monthly CE report. The members discussed the options in relation to holding civic award ceremonies with physical distancing guidelines still in place and it was agreed to discuss it further at the next CPG meeting.

One member raised a concern that the Cathaoirleach was reporting more information about the Corporate Policy Group meeting than was contained in the actual minutes of the CPG meeting.

Minute No. 92/20

Reports by Strategic Policy Committee Chairpersons

The Chairs of the Housing and Climate Action & Energy Strategic Policy Committees gave verbal reports in relation to the most recent meetings of the committees.

Minute No. 93/20

Monthly Management Report

The need to ensure that there were adequate resources made available by Irish Water to flushing water supply systems throughout the county was raised.

A query was raised in relation to the timing of closures of the M1 at night as working hours had changed as a result of COVID-19.

The need to review the Strategic Housing Development Legislation was highlighted in light of the recent court case in relation to the development of 255 housing units in Ardee

It was agreed to update members in relation to the repair work to be carried out at Annagassan Harbour.

It was also agreed to update members in relation to the Ardee rural regeneration project.

It was agreed to try and streamline the situation for members trying to have vermin infestations addressed.

It was agreed to review the issue of road safety measures in relation to Collon village and who was responsible for them.

It was agreed to circulate the freedom of Information Act to the members.

The issue of cars being parked on double yellow lines at beaches and the implications for emergency vehicle access was highlighted.

It was agreed to examine the possible use of the homeswapper.ie website for Council tenants seeking a transfer.

The need for the library service to promote social media etiquette was raised and it was pointed out by a member that Councillors should provide leadership on this issue.

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Minute No. 94/20

Publicly Funded Housing Loans – for approval

Proposed by: Cllr. Joanna Byrne

Seconded by: Cllr. E. Coffey

And resolved:

That this Council, through the provisions of the Local Government Act 2001, agrees to the drawdown of €5,237,714 from the Housing Finance Agency for the funding of Housing Loans for Private House Purchases/Constructions and for Housing Loans under the Tenant Incremental Purchase Scheme

Minute No. 95/20

2019 Unaudited Annual Financial Statement

To consider the Draft Annual Financial Statements for 2019 and to approve, in accordance with S104 (7) of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended)

Proposed by: Cllr. L. Reilly

Seconded by: Cllr. K. Callan

And resolved:

To Approve:-

(i) the revised expenditure for the financial year ended 31st December 2019 as set out in Note 16 to the Account

Proposed by: Cllr. M. Hall

Seconded by: Cllr. K. Callan

And resolved

To Approve:-

(ii) the transfers to and from Capital as per the report

Minute No. 96/20

Variation No. 2 of the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021

Chief Executives Report on Submissions and Observations to the Proposed Variation to the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021: Variation No. 2

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Following the discussion of the proposal a roll call vote was taken as follows:

For: Cllrs. J. Reilly, James Byrne, Joanna Byrne, K. Callan, E. Coffey, E. Corrigan, M. Hall, C. Keelan, S. Kelly, C. Markey, A. McKeivitt, P. McGeough, P. McQuillan, K. Meenan, D. Power, L. Reilly, T. Sharkey, J. Sheridan, J. Tenanty, E. Tully, A. Watters, M. Yore **(22)**

Against: Cllrs. H. Conlon, D. Minogue **(2)**

Absent: Cllrs. M. Butler, T. Cunningham, M. Doyle, P. Smith **(4)**

Proposed by: Cllr. J. Tenanty

Seconded by: Cllr. K. Callan

And resolved

That in accordance with the provisions of Section 13(4) (a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), to approve the CE Report on submissions to the proposed Variation of the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021.

Minute No. 97/20

Casual Vacancy – Cllr. Paul Bell

In accordance with the provisions of Section 19 (2) of the Local Government Act 2001, a casual vacancy has occurred in the membership of Louth County Council by reason of the resignation of Cllr. P. Bell

This matter was deferred to the September Meeting

Minute No. 98/20

Vacancy – Housing Strategic Policy Committee

Proposed by: Cllr. C. Markey

Seconded by: Cllr. E. Tully

And resolved

That Cllr. J. Reilly shall fill the vacancy on the Housing SPC which has occurred by reason of Cllr. J. McGahon being elected to Seanad Éireann.

Minute No. 99/20

Vacancy – Housing Strategic Policy Committee

Proposed by: Cllr. A. Watters

Seconded by: Cllr. E. Coffey

And resolved

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That Cllr. Kevin Meenan shall fill the vacancy on the Housing SPC which has occurred by reason of Cllr. R. O Murchu being elected to Dáil Éireann

Minute No. 100/20

Vacancy – Housing Strategic Policy Committee – Cllr. Paul Bell (resignation)

This matter was deferred to the September Meeting

Minute No. 101/20

Vacancy – Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC

Proposed by: Cllr. L. Reilly
Seconded by: Cllr. J. Sheridan
And resolved

That Cllr. A. McKeivitt shall fill the vacancy on the Housing SPC which has occurred by reason of Cllr. E. McGreehan being appointed to Seanad Éireann.

Minute No. 102/20

Vacancy – Association of Irish Local Government

Proposed by: Cllr. C. Markey
Seconded by: Cllr. E. Tully
And resolved

That Cllr. J. Reilly shall fill the vacancy on the Association of Irish Local Government which has occurred by reason of Cllr. John McGahon being elected to Seanad Éireann.

Minute No. 103/20

Vacancy – East Border Region Forum

Proposed by: Cllr. J. Sheridan
Seconded by: Cllr. E. Coffey
And resolved

That Cllr. A. McKeivitt shall fill the vacancy on the East Border Region Forum which has occurred by reason of Cllr. E. McGreehan being appointed to Seanad Éireann

Minute No. 104/20

Vacancy – Rural Water Programme – Local County Monitoring Committee

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Proposed by: Cllr. L. Reilly
Seconded by: Cllr. S. Kelly
And resolved

That Cllr. A. McKeivitt shall fill the vacancy on the East Border Region Forum which has occurred by reason of Cllr. E. McGreehan being appointed to Seanad Éireann

Minute No. 105/20

Vacancy – Louth & Meath Education and Training Board

Proposed by: Cllr. L. Reilly
Seconded by: Cllr. S. Kelly
And resolved

That Cllr. A. McKeivitt shall fill the vacancy on the East Border Region Forum which has occurred by reason of Cllr. Erin McGreehan being appointed to Seanad Éireann

Minute No. 106/20

Nomination to LCDC

Proposed by: Cllr. L. Reilly
Seconded by: Cllr. C. Markey
And resolved

To confirm the nomination of Mr. John Carroll to replace Mr. Matthew McGreehan as the Irish Farmer's Association representative on the LCDC

Minute No. 107/20

Allocation of Members Community Grants

Proposed by: Cllr. M. Yore
Seconded by: Cllr. M. Hall
And resolved:

To approve Members Community Grant Allocations as circulated with the agenda

Minute No. 108/20

Arts Act Grants – Round 1 - 2020

The Arts Act Grants were noted by the members

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Several members expressed the dissatisfaction at the lack of a vote at Council in relation to the allocation of the grants. Differing views were expressed in relation to whether or not the available funding should be divided geographically. The need to ensure the scheme was promoted was raised. The senior management team undertook to review the issues raised by the members.

Minute No. 109/20

Proposal to Suspend Standing Orders

It was proposed by Cllr. C. Markey and seconded by Cllr. J. Sheridan that standing orders should be suspended in order to allow the members discuss the closing of Scallywags crèche.

A roll call vote was called:-

For: Cllrs. J. Reilly, James Byrne, Joanna Byrne, K. Callan, E. Coffey, H. Conlon, E. Corrigan, M. Hall, C. Keelan, S. Kelly, C. Markey, A. McKevitt, P. McGeough, D. Minogue, K. Meenan, D. Power, L. Reilly, T. Sharkey, J. Sheridan, J. Tenanty, E. Tully, A. Watters, M. Yore **(23)**

Absent: Cllrs. M. Butler, T. Cunningham, M. Doyle, P. McQuillan
P. Smith **(5)**

Several members expressed their opposition to the closure and their concerns in relation to governance at the crèche. Members expressed their support for the parents and children affected by the closure.

Minute No. 110/20

Votes of Sympathy

Tributes were paid to former Councillor and Senator, Terry Brennan & to the families of the following:-

Jimmy Faulkner
Ruth Morrissey
Mary Kirk
May Lally
Maureen Mohan
Joe Mulholland

Minute No. 111/20

Votes of Congratulations

Dundalk Credit Union on the merger with Cuchulainn Credit Union

Minute No. 112/20

Notice of Motion

Proposed by Cllr. E. Coffey

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Seconded by Cllr. C. Keelan

Calling on Louth County Council to request that the Government urgently adopt and implement SME Recovery Ireland "National Small Business Recovery Plan"

The motion was agreed by the members

Minute No. 113/20

Notice of Motion

Proposed by Cllr. J. Tenanty

Seconded by Cllr. D. Power

As part of the anti-dumping initiative funding, Ardee Mid Louth area should be included as a collection centre for the Mattress amnesty and Sofa collection as travel and transportation is a major problem for many of the residents. Dundalk and Drogheda have benefited in past year. With funding of €66k a collection point can be sourced as with the plastic and electrical recycling. I feel some some agreeable solution can be found with no Recycling centres in the area

Reply:

Any site in Ardee procured for this purpose would need to be large enough to accommodate the necessary traffic control and social distancing requirements to facilitate current public health guidance and would also be subject to approval by the EPA for a Certificate of Authorisation under the "Waste Management (Licensing) Regulations 2004 to 2011 & Waste Management (Facility Permit & Registration) Regulations 2007, as amended" Given the uncertainty around the availability of a suitable site and its certification by the EPA within the required time period, the mattress and sofa amnesty can only be accommodated this year within the two civic amenity sites serving the County from Dundalk and Drogheda, both sites already designed, custom built and staffed to cater for this type of activity.

Several members emphasised the need for recycling facilities in mid-Louth. It was suggested that retailers should be responsible for recycling mattresses and furniture similar to electrical retailers and their products. The reply was noted by the members.

Minute No. 114/20

Suspension of Standing Orders

Proposed by Cllr. M. Yore

Seconded by Cllr. E. Coffey

And resolved:-

That standing orders be suspended as per Standing Order number 24 to permit the business of the meeting to continue until 2.00 p.m.

Minute No. 115/20

Notice of Motion

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Proposed by Cllr. M. Hall

Seconded by Cllr. M. Yore

That Louth County Council apply for NTA funding from the Sustainable Mobility Investment Programme to increase the numbers of people walking and cycling in County Louth, to facilitate active travel as a preferred mode of transport and to keep them safe while doing so.

(Healthy Ireland Goal 1; SDG GOAL 3: Good health & Well-being; SDG 7: Affordable & Clean Energy; SDG 10: Reduced Inequality; SDG GOAL 11; Sustainable Cities & Communities; SDG 13: Climate Action)

Reply:

The STMG programme aims to improve transport options for those choosing alternatives to the private car. The funding has become an important driver of change within the urban centres across the country.

With the collaboration of the local authorities and other state agencies, however, it appears to be limited to the areas mentioned in grant particulars below:

In 2017, the National Transport Authority (NTA) merged the Sustainable Transport Measures Grant (STMG) programme (previously dedicated to the Greater Dublin Area) with the Regional Cities Grant (supporting projects in Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford) into one overall STMG fund, Delivered through the Transport Development Division of the NTA.

The reply was noted by the members

Minute No. 116/20

Notice of Motion

Proposed by Cllr. C. Keelan

Seconded by Cllr. J. Sheridan

"In light of the increasing prevalence of Japanese Knotweed and Rhododendron that this Council calls on the Minister for Agriculture and the Marine to introduce an Invasive Species scheme for farmers that will help in the eradication and control of such species similar to REPS, AEOS or GLAS. In addition Louth County Council should take all necessary steps to help address the major problem of Knotweed, Rhododendron and other species such as Ragwort in public areas and Giant Hogweed on river catchments throughout the county."

The motion to be sent to the Minister for Agriculture and the Marine for comment.

Reply:

The control of *Japanese Knotweed* and other invasive species growing on private property is the *responsibility* of the property owners. This is accordance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) and Sections 52(7) and (8) of the Wildlife Act, 1976, as amended.

Louth County Council has been treating and controlling the spread of Japanese knotweed and Giant hog weed (where reported) on various sites throughout the county in the last four years .

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Other species that are noted as noxious weeds such as ragwort are treated and controlled on an ongoing basis. Currently there are no LCC sites known to have invasive Rhododendron species.

The reply was noted by the members

Minute No. 117/20

Notice of Motion

Proposed by Cllr. S. Kelly

Seconded by Cllr. E. Coffey

That Louth County Council establishes a special taskforce with the relevant stakeholders and the local community in light of the impact COVID-19 is having and will continue to have on peoples mental health and well being'

Reply:

A group has been established and its work is reported on the Louth Children Young People Services Committee. (CYPSC)

It was agreed to circulate the membership of CYPSC to the members. It was suggested that the motion should be circulated to all councils in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The motion was agreed by the members.

Minute No. 118/20

Notice of Motion

Proposed by Cllr. D. Power

Seconded by Cllr. J. Sheridan

"Calling on Louth County Council to convey the importance to the new government of Cocos Law - The Harassment and Harmful Communications Bill, and the need to have this legislation passed in an expedited fashion - This new law to crack down on online bullying and harassment is set to be named Coco's Law after a young woman, Nicole 'Coco' Fox who took her own life following constant online bullying and abuse."

The motion was agreed by the members

Minute No. 119/20

Motions from other Councils

Motions from other Councils as listed with the Agenda were noted by the members

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Minute No. 120/20

Correspondence

Correspondence as listed with the Agenda was noted by the members

That concluded the business of the meeting

The Minutes were confirmed at a meeting of Council held on:-

Date: _____

Cathaoirleach: _____

Meetings Administrator: _____