

Minutes of Meeting of the Municipal District of Piltown – Area Office, Ferrybank

Date of Meeting: 21st July, 2014 at 10.00am
Cathaoirleach: Cllr. Eamon Aylward
Present: Cllrs. Pat Dunphy, Ger Frisby, Fidelis Doherty, Melissa O’Neill, Tomás Breathnach
In Attendance: John McCormack, DOS, Kevin Hanley, Meetings Administrator, Ian Gardner, Area Engineer, Oonagh Bannon, SO

Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes from meeting of 16th June were proposed by Cllr. Doherty, seconded by Cllr. Frisby and agreed.

Consideration and Adoption of Draft Standing Orders

Following discussion at the meeting of 16th June, amendments were made to the Draft Standing Orders and these were noted and agreed. The Draft Standing Orders, as circulated, were proposed by Cllr. Dunphy, seconded by Cllr. Frisby and formally adopted.

Update on Roadworks Programme 2014

Ian Gardner outlined the current position, as set out in the report circulated to Members.

The following items were discussed:-

- With regard to the recycling scheme being considered for the Bog Road, it was noted that material was currently being tested and a result was expected shortly.
- Cllr. Doherty took the opportunity to pass on thanks from the local residents for recent works completed at Ballinlammy and Ballykenna.
- It was noted that works to improve skid resistance on the Newrath Roundabout were commencing this week.
- Cllr. Doherty enquired about pending schemes on the CIR list. I. Gardner advised the members on this and offers that had been made in the current year. Cllr. Dunphy asked about the possibility of reducing the cost of completing schemes, thereby helping the residents. I. Gardner explained current requirements under the Scheme, but agreed that savings could be made and would again raise this issue at the next Engineers meeting. Following further discussion, it was proposed by Cllr. Dunphy, seconded by Cllr. Frisby and agreed that a Notice of Motion would be prepared for the next County Council Meeting to consider options to reduce the cost of carrying out works under the Community Involvement in Roadworks Schemes. It was also agreed that a copy of the pending Schemes list would be forwarded to the members for their information.
- Cllr. Doherty enquired about budget allocation to The Rower area. I. Gardner advised that the engineering areas would not change over until the end of the year and that the budgets and allocations as agreed would remain in place for 2014.
- Cllr. Aylward asked if improvements could be made to the signage and ramps on the planed out section of the Rockshire Road. It was noted that completion of these works had been delayed due to weather.
- It was noted that works would commence on the Glenmore Bus Stop and Weighbridge at the end of August.
- Cllr. Dunphy asked when outstanding drainage works from 2013 would be completed. I. Gardner advised that there were three schemes outstanding at Bilytarsney, Ballinclar and Graiguenakill, but that at the moment priority had to be given to restoration improvement and maintenance programmes.
- Cllr. Dunphy asked if consideration was given to works being contracted out to complete outstanding works, in light of current staff shortages. I. Gardner gave an overview with regard to staffing levels in the area over recent years, stating that levels had dropped significantly with vacant positions not being filled. He advised that crews could no longer be split to allow smaller jobs to be completed, as numbers had fallen to only five in each crew. John McCormack explained the difficulties with regard to filling of vacancies, stating that a business case had to be made to the Department in order to get approval to fill any vacancy that may arise. It was noted that certain works were contracted out, such as hedge-cutting, jetting, stone masonry works etc, however this made balancing budgets more difficult.
- Cllr. Frisby asked if an improvement in funding could be expected due to the introduction of the Local Property Tax. J. McCormack advised that the funding from the Local Property Tax would replace the

Local Government Fund and would not be in addition to it, so it was likely that funding may decrease as a result.

- Cllr. Doherty asked what the position was with regard to hedge-cutting. I. Gardner outlined the procedure and laws in relation to hedge-cutting, stating that notices are issued on landowners each year between September and February and that cutting outside of this period would be for road safety reasons only. It was noted that hedge-cutting carried out by the Council was on verges and junctions on national and regional routes only and on some local roads where there are safety issues. Cllr. Frisby asked if notices issued on landowners could be followed up, particularly where there are safety concerns. I. Gardner confirmed that where there are safety concerns, these are followed up. He stated that in two test cases in the last two years, we've carried out works seeking to recover costs from the landowner. It was noted that in one case was successful, however the other case was referred to Debt Collection recently and is ongoing. Members were advised to submit details of any hedge-cutting issues in the area, together with landowner details and notices would be issued in September.
- Cllr. Aylward asked why there were delays on completing patching works in the area. It was noted that every effort was being made to clear the backlog of patching issues outstanding.

Public Lighting

Ian Gardner advised that quotations had now been received from Airtricity for the provision of public lighting at locations agreed at the Area Meeting in March. He circulated details to the members for consideration and advised that a decision was required on how to allocate the funding available of €40,000. Following discussion, it was agreed to devise a three year programme to complete the schemes as outlined.

The agreed programme would be completed as follows, subject to funding:-

2014

- Kilmacow Sports Complex – Option 1
- Tullogher Church Car Park
- Mill Road, Mullinavat
- Piltown NS to Kildalton – Part of the Scheme

2015

- Piltown NS to Kildalton – Remainder of Scheme
- Milepost, Slieverue

2016

- Narabane to Tiermore, Kilmacow

Provision of Footpaths

It was agreed at a previous meeting to discuss this item at the earliest opportunity, with a view to putting a programme in place for the provision of footpaths. Ian Gardner suggested that a similar programme to public lighting be put in place where the members put forward schemes for consideration, following which costings would be drawn up and a programme agreed.

Cllr. O'Neill asked that a footpath linking the Schools at Dangan, Kilmacow be considered as a priority. Cllr. Dunphy also asked that consideration be given to provision of a footpath at the Tower Road, Piltown. It was noted that both of these schemes would likely cost in excess of €100,000, due to land acquisition costs. Following discussion, it was agreed that members would submit proposals to I. Gardner by 31st July and a report on costings could be prepared for the September meeting.

Ferrybank Community Development Initiative

John McCormack gave an update to the members regarding the Hillsfield Community building and the Development Plan for the Ferrybank Area. He advised that the Draft Plan was now nearing completion and would shortly be signed off by the Steering Committee. It was noted that a presentation would be given to the members on the Plan at their September meeting.

With regard to the Hillfield Building, Cllr. O'Neill who was on the Working Group, stated that space had been secured in the building for community use. She advised that a Committee will be formed and will

operate a booking system for the space, which can be used by a wide range of community groups and organisations operating in the Ferrybank area.

Granny Castle

Ian Gardner advised that the area had been surveyed and a basic design had been completed for the Granny Castle Amenity Area, which he circulated to the members. He advised that an additional budget of €13,000 had been allocated for the enhancement of this area, which required matching funding of 25% from Council's own resources. I. Gardner advised that if agreed, arrangements could be made to complete kerbing and parking areas initially, to commence towards the end of August.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr. Doherty seconded by Cllr. Breathnach and agreed to proceed with this scheme.

Derelict Sites

Cllr. Dunphy raised this item and concerns regarding some properties in the area, particularly on the Main Street in Piltown. He asked what the Council could do to have these sites dealt with where the owners were not willing or in a position to do so.

J. McCormack outlined the current position to the members, stating that while the Council had powers to deal with derelict sites, there was no provision in the budget to do so. He advised that the ultimate power was to carry out a C.P.O., however the Council must have use for the property. Going forward, he stated that the Housing Department could perhaps look at some of these properties and arrangements could be put in place to arrange C.P.O. on certain sites for housing purposes and the Council will proactively look at this measure in the future.

Cllr. O'Neill suggested using UCasadh to assist the owners of properties to maintain them. It was noted that this group provided assistance to elderly people or people not in a position to do so themselves, to carry out minor maintenance works on their properties. It was agreed to explore this option.

Any Other Business

Cllr. Dunphy asked if there was any progress with regard to the Ferrybank Shopping Centre and asked if contact could be made with NAMA in this regard. It was noted that Dunnes Stores owned part of the building, with the rest in NAMA ownership. Cllr. Aylward wondered if they might be willing to make space available to community or other groups at low rent. Cllr. Frisby stated that the Ferrybank area lacked any kind of leisure or gym facility also. Cllr. Breathnach felt that if small enterprise could be encouraged to occupy the plaza area it would put some life into that area, create a sense of activity and give viability to the centre. J. McCormack suggested that the building also lent itself to use for a farmers market, with the underground parking area providing cover.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr. Breathnach, seconded by Cllr. O'Neill and agreed that contact be made with Dunnes Stores and NAMA to explore possible uses for the building.

With regard to making representations, I. Gardner advised that going forward, all representations submitted by Councillors should be made through the e-direct system, rather than raising individual items at monthly meetings. This was agreed.

A list of the e-direct email addresses for each department would be circulated to members.

Cllr. Frisby asked about provision of ramps and children at play signs in housing estates. I. Gardner advised that in genuine cases, if the residents were to provide the pole and sign, the Council would consider erecting same. With regard to ramps, it was noted that the cost to provide a ramp was in the region of €3,000. I. Gardner advised that while funding was not available for this at present, perhaps consideration could be given to a programme whereby residents could make a contribution towards same.

Kevin Hanley advised that Martin Prendiville would be giving the members a briefing later today and it was noted that the Special Budgetary Meeting for the Municipal District should be held before 10th October.

Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would take place at 10am on Wednesday, 3rd September.

This concluded the business of the meeting.