

Minutes of the December Monthly Meeting of Athlone Town Council, which was held in the Civic Centre, Church Street, Athlone at 6.00 p.m. on Monday 5th December 2011.

Attendance:

Mayor: Cllr. A. Shaw

Members: Cllrs. S. Buckley Byrne, M. Cooney, J. Henson, P. Hogan, G. McFadden, K. Molloy & A. O'Rourke.

Officers: Mr. Barry Kehoe, Director of Services
Ms. Edel Martin, A/Town Clerk
Mr. Alan Kelly, Town Engineer
Ms. Anne McNamara, Assistant Staff Officer

Apology: Cllr. Kevin Boxer Moran

Congratulations:

Cllr Hogan wished to congratulate the Garrycastle GAA Club on reaching the Leinster Club Final for the second time in three years.

All the Members wished to be associated with Cllr. Molloy's congratulations to Edel Martin on her appointment as A/Town Clerk and all wished her well in the new post.

Minutes:

It was proposed by Cllr. Cooney,

Seconded by Cllr. Hogan and resolved,

“That we hereby adopt and confirm the Minutes of the November Monthly Meeting which was held on November 7th 2011”.

Matters Arising:

The Town Engineer informed Cllr. Hogan that the footpath at St. Vincent's Hospital had been examined with a view to making it wheelchair friendly and it will be considered in the Budget for 2012.

Cllr Henson enquired about the water logging problem at Ardbrae Park and the Town Engineer advised that the surface water system is being examined. A blockage has been found in one pipe and CCTV will be used as soon as weather conditions permit, to seek out any other problems.

Cllr. Cooney welcomed the commencement of work on O'Connell Street car-park and was advised that it should be completed by February or March of next year.

Cllr Shaw asked that the Minute be amended to include the fact that the pumping station in Woodville Grange is being dealt with and it was agreed to do this.

Coosan Water Issues:

The Director advised the Members that the Mains Rehabilitation Works on the Coosan service had necessitated planned closures and when water was restored, it caused bursts in parts of the old main, leaving some areas without water for long stretches of time. Tankers have been providing water at certain locations in the area and will continue to do so while needed. Unfortunately, it is proving very difficult to find the leaks, because water pressure is very low and in the meantime, there will have to be further planned shut-downs. It is hoped that the Coosan project will be completed by Christmas and it will serve the area for many years to come.

The Members unanimously requested better communication with the public. It is very difficult for people to deal with shut-downs when they are not prepared for them or are not aware of what is happening. Besides radio, newspapers, websites and Mass, Members thought that signs in the affected areas would be the best way of informing people. The Director said Hugh O'Reilly, Director for Water Services has appointed Morgan Cox, SEE to manage the current difficulties in the Coosan area of Athlone and that he will suggest putting up signs to him, in addition to all the other means of communication available. Cllr Cooney expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that an Engineer in Mullingar has been assigned to this, rather than an Engineer in Athlone who would be much more familiar with the area. The Director said that Barry Lennon is based in Athlone all the time and it is more efficient to provide services on a countywide basis. As Director for the Athlone Area, Barry Kehoe said he would take full responsibility and ensure that everything possible is done.

Castle Regeneration Project:

The Director advised the Members that the Civil Works Contract has been signed, the Contractor appointed and on site, working to a seven month contract. The Fit-Out and Audio-Visual Contractors are already working off-site and we will be ready very soon to appoint them formally. The Main Contractor will have to have about 3 months work done before the other two start on site. He assured the Members that a programme of work is in place and there will be meetings every 2 weeks to ensure everything is running on time. It is hoped the Castle will be open towards the end of next summer.

Cllr O'Rourke asked if the OPW could be requested to clean and restore the curtain walls and the plaque, but the Director informed him that this would be an issue for the Council in consultation with the OPW and the Department. It could not be expected that the OPW give funds towards it. He said he would discuss the walls with our Conservation Architect and get back to the Members. Cllr Molloy added that John Walsh, Town Clerk had said the plaque would be dealt with during the regeneration project.

Double Yellow lines at Lissywollen Avenue:

The Town Engineer circulated a map which outlined the location of the proposed double yellow lines at the Gaelscoil in Lissywollen Avenue. He said that this road was never intended for car use, only buses. The double yellow lines would encourage people to use the car-park and the pedestrian access to the school.

It was proposed by Cllr. Shaw,

Seconded by Cllr. Hogan and resolved,

“We hereby approve of the provision of double yellow lines at the Gaelscoil, Lissywollen, Athlone as outlined in the drawings circulated, pursuant to the Road Traffic Acts 1961-2006”

Civic Receptions:

The Town Clerk informed the Members that 3 requests had been received for Civic Receptions: the Samaritans on their 21st anniversary, Sub-Aqua on their 40th anniversary and the RTE All Ireland Drama Festival on their 60th anniversary.

It was proposed by Cllr. Molloy,

Seconded by Cllr. Buckley Byrne and resolved,

“We hereby agree that the sub-committee for Civic Receptions will examine these requests and come back to the Members at the January Meeting”

Managers Orders:

The Members noted the summary of Managers Orders as circulated.

Christmas Lights:

The Mayor invited all the Members to the switching on of the Christmas Lights which will take place in the Civic Square on Friday evening, December 9th 2011 at 6pm.

Conferences:

Cavan AMAI Spring Seminar 2012 10th & 11th February

Correspondence:

Notices of Motions

The Town Clerk advised the Members of 3 Notices of Motions received from Longford, Monaghan and Carlow Town Councils, regarding the re-organisation of Local Government, the proposed increase in VAT and fuel prices and calling on the Government not to allow politicians on a salary to also get a pension, respectively.

January Meeting:

It was agreed to hold the January Monthly Meeting on Tuesday January 10th 2012 at 6pm.

Seasons Greetings:

The Mayor thanked his colleagues, the Executive, staff and the media for their assistance and support during the year and wished all, but particularly the emergency services who will be on duty over the Christmas, the Gardaí, the Defence Forces including those serving overseas, a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

This concluded the business of the meeting.