

Minutes of the February Monthly Meeting of Athlone Town Council, which was held in the Civic Centre, Church Street, Athlone at 6.00p.m. on Monday 2nd February, 2009.

Attendance:

Mayor: Cllr. E. Moran

Members: Cllrs. A. Berry, J. Butler, M. Cooney, R. Lennon, P. Hogan, K. Molloy, K. Moran and and M. O'Connell

Officers: Mr. Danny McLoughlin, Co. Manager
Mr. Barry Kehoe, Director of Services
Mr. John Walsh, Town Clerk
Mr. Alan Kelly, Town Engineer
Ms. Anne McNamara, Assistant Staff Officer

Votes of Sympathy:

All the Members extended their sympathy to the families of the recently deceased Una Lydon, Michael Hanley, Mick Allen and Philip Russell.

Minutes:

It was proposed by Cllr. K. Moran,

Seconded by Cllr. Molloy and resolved,

“That we hereby confirm and adopt the Minutes of the January Monthly Meeting held on January 5th 2009 and the Statutory Budge Meeting held on December 19th 2008.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Cllr. Lennon requested that the plans for the Fr. Matthew Hall be on public display on Saturdays and Sundays as well as week days and the Town Clerk agreed to place some drawings inside the window to the front of the Civic Centre. However he pointed out that the plans etc. are available 24 hours, seven days a week on the Council website.

The Town Engineer informed Cllr. O'Connell that the ESB had been contacted about lighting the underpass at Coosan and he was awaiting their response.

Disposal of Land:

It was proposed by Cllr. K. Moran,

Seconded by Cllr. Cooney and resolved,

“Pursuant to the provision of the Local Government Act 2001, the Housing Act 1966, Section 90 of the Housing Act 1966 and the Landlord and Tenant (Ground Rents) No.2 Act

1978, we hereby approve of the disposal of the fee simple interest in the properties as set out in the schedule hereunder:

Schedule:

<u>Description of Property</u>	<u>Name of Purchaser</u>	<u>Purchase Price</u>
8 Griffith Street	Gerard & Mary Reilly	€20.00
45 Beechapark West	Mary Fallon	€39.30
56 Assumption Road	Richard Fogarty	€45.40

Audit Report:

The Report of the Local Government Auditor in respect of the year ending December 31st 2007 was considered by the Members and was unanimously adopted.

Joint Policing Committees:

The Town Clerk informed the Members that a county wide launch of the J.P.C.'s was going to take place in Mullingar on February 20th 2009 and they were requested to attend. He said they could have a local launch themselves later. He added that he had most of the nominations, and awaited representatives from the Community & Voluntary Sector. The Members agreed that RAPID be requested to nominate one person, Willow Park Residents Association to nominate a second and Westmeath Community and Voluntary Forum to nominate the third. All then agreed to place the J.P.C. on the March Agenda.

Lissywollen South Local Area Plan:

The Mayor welcomed Mr. Terry McCague, Senior Planner to the Meeting to present the Manager's Report on the amendments to the proposed Plan.

Mr. McCague stated that the revised Draft Plan had been on public display until December 9th 2008 and that 9 submissions had been received. He outlined the submissions as set out in the Managers Report hereunder:

3.0 Report of submissions received

3.1 A total number of nine submissions were received in response to the proposed material variations.

4.0 Submission reference:

4.1 Each submission has been given a reference number and the name of the person/organisation making the submission specified in table format. Each submission has been summarised and the County Manager's response and recommendation to same given.

Submission Ref: LWMV/01	
Submitted By: Bill Coleman on behalf of An Bord Pleanála, 64 Marlborough St, Dublin 1	
Summary of Submission 1. Acknowledged receipt of letter. No further comment.	Manager Response 1. Noted.
Managers Recommendation 1. No change.	

Submission Ref: LWMV/02	
Submitted By: Professor Ciarán O Catháin on behalf of Athlone Institute of Technology, Dublin Road, Athlone	
Summary of Submission 1. Proposed modifications are welcomed, in particular the development of a best practice guidance document and the requirement for pre-planning for mixed use live-work areas. 2. In relation to Section 5.5.5 Self Build Plots, consideration should be given to allotment provision as part of a sustainability agenda and also as an addition to active learning. 3. Provision should be made for active recreation for young people and retired persons within Sarsfield Square Community Park. 4. Consideration should be given to lighting provision along the Garrycastle Road. 5. Consideration should also be given to the visual appearance of development adjoining the bypass (N6)	Manager Response (1)Noted (2)The term self build plots relates to individual plots suitable for residential development, within an overall agreed framework. It is not the intention of the plan to provide allotments within the plan area. (3)The aim of the plan is to create an attractive, functional and safe community open space which is well integrated with the surrounding development and which provides appropriate recreational and community facilities to meet the needs of the local residential population including youths and retired persons. (4)Lighting provision will be included in any proposals for significant development in this area. (5)The visual impact of development along the bypass (N6) will be assessed at development management stage.

Managers Recommendation

1. No change
2. No change
3. No change
4. No change
5. No change

Submission Ref: LWMV/03**Submitted By:** Cllr. Frankie Keena on behalf of Garrycastle GAA Club, The Lady's Walk, Moydrum, Athlone**Summary of Submission**

1. Requests that the landlocked plot to the rear of FAS facility which is zoned for future expansion to Fas, should be zoned sporting recreational.
2. The Council should honour a commitment given to Garrycastle GAA Club a number of years ago, whereby it was agreed that lands would be disposed to the club for a nominal sum.

Manager Response

1. The zoning of the Fas Facility site and the landlocked plot to the rear (north) and other lands to the east of R916, which are currently zoned in the Athlone Town Development Plan 2008-2014, cannot be changed without a separate variation to the Athlone Town Development Plan 2008-2014. Therefore this zoning proposal cannot be addressed at this time. These lands lie outside the Lissywollen South Local Area Plan.
2. The Council will honour written agreements entered into with Garrycastle GAA Club.

Managers Recommendation

1. Omit zoning changes and objectives with respect to lands to the east of the R916, in the interest of clarity.
2. As Above.

Submission Ref: LWMV/04**Submitted By:** Michael McCormack on behalf of the National Roads Authority, St. Martins House, Waterloo Road, Dublin 4**Summary of Submission**

1. Recommendation for a strategic transport assessment to be undertaken still valid.
2. Supports Material Variation No. 8 and 10.

Manager Response

1. The plan does not contain a strategic transport assessment. The Council as part of the ongoing transportation planning agenda for the greater Athlone Area, intends to undertake a land use and

<p>3. Requests that the provision of pedestrian and cycle bridges over the N6 to be undertaken in accordance with best practice and consultation with the NRA.</p> <p>4. Consideration should be given to the proposed motorway declaration for the N6 Athlone bypass and its implications on the LAP.</p>	<p>transportation study. The plan does contain a requirement at development management stage for Traffic Transportation Assessment and Road Safety Audit, for development proposals in Character Area 5, resulting from its proximity to the junction on the N6.</p> <p>2. Noted</p> <p>3. These facilities will be provided in consultation with the NRA.</p> <p>4. The Council will correspond directly with the NRA in relation to the proposed motorway declaration for the N6 Athlone bypass. This is a proposed declaration and it is considered that the implication of the declaration if made, on the Lissywollen Local Area Plan would be minimal.</p>
--	--

<p>Managers Recommendation</p> <p>1. No change</p> <p>2. No change</p> <p>3. No change</p> <p>4. No change.</p>
--

<p>Submission Ref: LWMV 05 & 06 (2 submissions)</p>	
<p>Submitted By: John Henson on behalf of Garrycastle GAA Club, 50 Cartron Drive, Athlone</p>	
<p>Summary of Submission</p> <p>1. Objects to the zoning for industrial use of an area of land immediately to the rear of Garrycastle GAA clubhouse and to the rear of the FAS Training Centre. Reference is made in this regard to an agreement entered into in 2003 by the Town Council, agreeing to the sale of this plot of land to Garrycastle GAA Club.</p> <p>2. Submission includes map depicting minimum area required by the club to make the development feasible.</p>	<p>Manager Response</p> <p>1. The Council will honour written agreements entered into with Garrycastle GAA Club.</p> <p>2. As Above.</p>

Managers Recommendation

1. Insert statement of clarification in the plan, to the effect that lands to the east of the R916 may be subject to a separate variation and initiate said variation
2. No change.

Submission Ref: LWMV/07**Submitted By:** John McGrath on behalf of MMKDA Engineers & Architects, 7 Main St, Athlone**Summary of Submission**

1. With regard to Variation 3(b) and the provision of local shops, consideration should be given to listing the criteria for such shops.
2. With regard to Variation 4(c), consideration should be given to the identification of the types of uses permitted within this area.
3. Requests that the zoning matrix be amended to permit a greater number of uses within the Business Quarter.

Manager Response

1. It is the intention of the plan that the predominant use mix in this area (Character 4) will be housing and enterprise and employment uses, to be supported by local shops and services. The scale of permissible shopping in this area, will be such as required to serve solely the local catchment.
2. As Above
In the interest of clarity, the reference to “up to 25,000 sq m” relates to the quantum of floorspace to be devoted to enterprise uses.
3. The classification “open to consideration” would not preclude the establishment within the Business Quarter Area, of the uses listed in the matrix. The intention of the matrix is to allow consideration of proposals and their compatibility with the residential and business function proposed for this area.

Managers Recommendation

1. Insert in plan statement with regard to the scale of permissible shopping in the area. The scale of shopping is to be limited to serve the local catchment only.
2. No change.
3. No change.

Submission Ref: LWMV/08	
Submitted By: Cllr. Frankie Keena, The Lady's Walk, Moydrum, Athlone	
<p>Summary of Submission</p> <p>1. With regard to Variation 3 and the provision of local shopping, consideration should be given to listing the criteria for such shops.</p> <p>2. Consideration should be given to amending the zoning matrix to facilitate a greater number of uses within the Business Quarter.</p>	<p>Manager Response</p> <p>1. 1. It is the intention of the plan that the predominant use mix in this area (Character 4) will be housing and enterprise and employment uses, to be supported by local shops and services. The scale of permissible shopping in this area, will be such as required to serve solely the local catchment.</p> <p>2. The objective of the plan for Character Area 4, is to provide for the development of a residential and enterprise quarter in this area and to facilitate compatibility of uses in this regard. The classification "open to consideration" would not preclude the establishment within the Business Quarter Area, of the uses listed in the matrix. The intention of the matrix is to allow consideration of proposals and their compatibility with the residential and business function proposed for this area.</p>
<p>Managers Recommendation</p> <p>1. Insert in plan statement with regard to the scale of permissible shopping in the area. The scale of shopping is to be limited to serve the local catchment only.</p> <p>2. No change.</p>	

Submission Ref: LWMV/09	
Submitted By: Cllr. Frankie Keena, The Lady's Walk, Moydrum, Athlone	
<p>Summary of Submission</p> <p>1. Reference is made to Section 4.7 in the variations, however there is no Section 4.7 in the text.</p> <p>2. Objection to provision of residential development on the</p>	<p>Manager Response</p> <p>1. The proposed variation represents an addition to the plan and concerns existing open space at Sarsfield Square, which will be redefined as a new community</p>

<p>open space amenity area in Sarsfield.</p> <p>3. Consideration should be given to inclusion of an objective in the LAP to maximise the use of all open space for amenity, recreation or sporting usage.</p>	<p>park.</p> <p>2. The design of the park will be based on best practice urban design principles for the design and management of open space. It will aim to create an attractive, functional and safe community open space which is well integrated with the surrounding development and provides appropriate recreational and community facilities to meet the needs of the local residential population. This will include consideration of proposals to develop new housing on the edge of the open space in order to improve perceptions of safety and security for park users through the provision of passive surveillance and reduced opportunities for anti-social behaviour. The scale of the housing will respect the existing scale of housing in Sarsfield Square.</p> <p>An appropriate design proposal will be developed within the first two years of the adoption of this LAP, based on close consultation with the local community”.</p> <p>3. As Above.</p> <p>The plan recognises the potential of this area for recreational use and puts forward a proposal to undertake detailed design of the area, which will address the needs of the local population, safety and security for park users through the provision of passive surveillance and reduced opportunities for anti-social behaviour.</p>
<p>Managers Recommendation</p> <p>1. No change</p> <p>2. No change</p> <p>3. No change</p>	

Mr. McCague informed the Members that the Draft Plan including the variations, would not have significant environmental effects and therefore an SEA was not required. He added that the Managers recommendation to the Members, having considered the Report, was to make the Plan.

It was proposed by Cllr. Molloy,

Seconded by Cllr. Cooney and resolved,

“Pursuant to the provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006 and in particular Section 20 of the Planning & Development Act 2000, we hereby adopt and make the Local Area Plan for South Lissycowen as amended by the Reports of the County Manager”.

Special Meeting:

The Members agreed to hold a Special Meeting on February 19th 2009 at 5p.m. to consider the Draft Local Area Plans for Cornamagh and Loughandonning.

RAPID Works Programme for 2009:

The Mayor welcomed Ms. Anne Galvin, RAPID Co-ordinator to the Meeting to inform the Members of the proposed Programme of works for 2009. Ms. Galvin stated that Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs have allocated €131,500 this year for schemes in the Athlone area and she circulated a copy of proposed programme of works for their consideration. The Members welcomed the programme and complimented RAPID on the good works it does in the different estates around the town. Ms. Galvin thanked the Council for their assistance and in particular Mr. Liam Ledwith, Clerk of Works.

It was proposed by Cllr. Butler,

Seconded by Cllr. O’Connell and resolved,

“We hereby approve of the Programme of Works for 2009 under the RAPID Physical Environment Improvement Scheme as presented by the Rapid Co-ordinator”.

Managers Orders:

The Members noted the summary of Managers Orders as circulated.

Questions:

Question 1

Cllr. A. Berry:

“Will Athlone Town Council be proceeding to put in place as suggested in 2008 a proper safety crossing on the junction of Assumption Road and Beechpark in 2009?”

Answer:

This work will be put forward for inclusion in the Block Grant expenditure when the funding level is received.

Supplementary Question:

Will the work be done this year?

Response: The expenditure of the Block Grant will be presented to the Members next month for their consideration and it is up to them to select it.

Question 2 Cllr. K. Molloy:

“What is position regarding report on regeneration at Battery Heights, that Department are looking for?”

Answer: A submission has been made to the DOE proposing some changes in response to their concerns. A meeting to discuss the changes has been requested and it is expected to take place in the coming weeks.

Question 3 Cllr. K. Molloy:

“When will work on regeneration at rear of Castle commence?”

Answer: The Town Engineer has met with the Left Bank Traders and it is intended to recommence work on the slit trenching next week. This will allow the Archaeologist to complete their report and the Preliminary Safety and Health Plan to be prepared. A further meeting will be held with the Traders after completion of the slit trenching to agree programming and a start date to the main works.

Question 4. Cllr. P. Hogan:

“Will Athlone Town Council maintain Senior Persons Dwellings at John Paul Park with particular emphasis on facia, soffits and guttering?”

Answer: The OPD’s at John Paul Park are part of the Council’s housing stock and as such they are maintained by the Council. The replacement of facia and soffit boards and guttering will be considered in the context of priorities and the housing budgetary limitations.

Supplementary Question:

“When will they be examined?”

Response: The Town Engineer will have them inspected this week.

Question 5. Cllr. P. Hogan:
“Can Athlone Town Council, in conjunction with Westmeath County Council, investigate the need for additional public lighting approaching slipways on the dual carriageway?”

Answer: This matter will be examined as part of the expected motorway designation for this road.

Question 6. Cllr. R. Lennon:
“What is the update on the Woodville Estate?”

Answer: Legal proceedings are currently underway and the case will be heard on February 18th next.

Question 7. Cllr. M. O’Connell:
“What is the status of the taking in charge of Orwell Grove?”

Answer: Two issues remain outstanding as follows:

- (i) The matter of a legal right-of-way to facilitate maintenance of the open space area.
- (ii) The ongoing freezing of water supply pipes to a number of the houses during periods of freezing temperatures.

Question 8. Cllr. M. O’Connell:
“Who is responsible for the green space badly littered beside No.6 Westlodge Park?”

Answer: It is understood that this area is in private ownership and the owner will be establish

Mayor’s Reception:

It was agreed to host the Mayor’s Reception for St. Francis F.C. on Thursday 26th February, 2009 at 7.30p.m.

New Year’s Wishes:

The Members noted New Years Best Wishes from the Mayor of Chateaubriant to the people town of Athlone.

Energy Costs:

The Members noted an acknowledgement from the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources regarding their request for a price review immediately.

Housing Rent Allowances:

The Members noted a letter from Mr. Finbar Murphy Supt. C.W.O. in which he agreed to meet with the Council and Gardai, in order to devise the best method for assessing applicants for rent allowances. It was agreed that the Housing Officer would meet with the Gardai and the H.S.E. and advise the Council of the outcome in due course.

Provision of webcast technology:

The Members noted a letter from the office of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in connection with the grant aid for the provision of webcast technology for Council Meetings. It stated that the general purpose grant from the L.G. Fund is the Ministers contribution to local authorities towards the cost of providing their day to day services and it is a matter for each individual authority to apply the funds whatever way they wish.

Yellow box at the Moorings:

The Town Clerk informed Cllr. Berry that this section of the Ballymahon Road is due for resurfacing in the current year and it is intended to provide a yellow box at the entrance to the Moorings. Cllr. Berry welcomed this response.

Cut in Allowances:

Cllr. Berry asked that the Council write to the Minister for Social & Family Affairs requesting her not to proceed with the proposed cuts in Carers or Lone Parent Allowances as it would have a devastating effect on the most vulnerable in our society. All the Members supported the motion and it was agreed to write to the Minister.

Right of Way at Rindoon:

Cllr. Berry requested the Town Engineer to examine the right of way leading off the Old Coosan Road to Rindoon with a view to repairing/resurfacing, but the Town Clerk stated that this right of way is not in the ownership of the Council and therefore could not expend any funds on its maintenance. Cllr. Berry said that 5 people own the laneway and it is unfair to them, that the Council will not allow them to do anything to control its use while they could be sued for accidents there. The Director said it was their responsibility to maintain it to protect themselves, but the Town Engineer would have the litter there removed, to clean it up.

O'Connell Street Project:

The Town Clerk stated that significant progress has been made on legal issues and a C.P.O. will be made to clear the title in this instance. Cllr. Molloy asked what the timeframe might be and the Director responded stating that it would be impossible to say, as it will be a public-private partnership.

Storage facilities for Garda Water Support Unit:

Cllr. Hogan requested that the Council write to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform requesting the identification of a site in conjunction with the Garda Commissioner and the O.P.W. and all associated agencies suitable for accommodation and storage facilities for the Garda Water Support Unit in Athlone, which offers a great service to the town. Currently he said, their storage facilities are sub-standard and this is causing corrosion and damage to their equipment. Cllr. Butler suggested the O.P.W. shed at the Docks be refurbished for this purpose. All the Members supported the motion and it was agreed to write to the Minister.

Turning bay at John Paul Park:

The Town Clerk stated in response to Cllr. Hogan's motion that the Town Engineer will examine the area at the O.P.D.'s and report back to the Council at the March meeting regarding a turning bay.

Upgrading of Bower View:

In response to Cllr Hogan's motion the Town Clerk stated that these dwellings because of their architectural character are included in an Architectural Conservation Area in the Town Development Plan and in this regard, a Guidance Document is being prepared in regard to the conservation and development of these properties. He added that their maintenance and development are a matter for the owners.

Restrictions on Garrycastle Bridge:

Cllr. E. Moran requested that buses and articulated lorries be prohibited from using Garrycastle Bridge but the Director said vehicles cannot be prohibited if they are alright on weight for the Bridge. The Town Clerk informed Cllr. E. Moran that Consulting Engineers have been appointed to carry out the detailed design of a replacement and realigned bridge at this location and it is expected that the project will go to tender in the current year with a view to construction in 2010. Cllr. K. Moran suggested the provision of traffic lights here, but the Town Clerk stated that given the lack of an accident history at this location and the proposed upgrade works, it is considered that the current arrangements should remain until the commencement of the construction.

Esker Glen:

The Town Clerk stated in response to Cllr. E. Moran's motion that there are no works currently programmed for this location, but the matter will be referred to Westmeath County Council for their Area Meeting.

Tourist services at the Fr. Matthew Hall:

In response to Cllr. Lennon's motion the Town Clerk stated that all of the floor space within the Fr. Matthew Hall has been assigned to and will be used for the purposes of the Gallery, while tourist attractions and other services with which the Council is involved, will be provided within the Civic Centre and Athlone Castle. Cllr. Lennon wanted the Tourist Office moved but all the other Members agreed that the Council has no jurisdiction over it and that Bord Failte had no interest in moving. They are providing Information Points throughout the country now rather than relying on offices and Cllr. Cooney suggested one such point be placed in the new Gallery. He added that the Part 8 process now is about the design of the building not the function.

Presentation on water charges:

Cllr. Cooney requested that a presentation be made to Athlone Chamber of Commerce and traders/rate payers, on the effect of and reason for non-domestic water service charges. Even though water charges are a matter for W.C.C. He said that it would be beneficial to the Town Members and public, to have a similar presentation. It was agreed to ask Westmeath County Council to give separate presentations in Athlone, first to Members and then to those concerned about water charges.

Maintenance of bypass:

Cllr. Bulter requested that Westmeath County Council be asked to purchase the necessary safe trucks to allow for staff to maintain the bypass and motorway and the Town Clerk said the matter is currently under consideration by Westmeath County Council.

Hedge cutting notice for Department of Education:

In response to Cllr. Butlers motion, the Town Clerk stated that the matter will be examined and a hedge cutting notice will be issued where necessary.

A.I.T. Railings, Northgate Street:

The Town Clerk informed Cllr. Butler that the Council will write to the A.I.T. and request them to paint the railings at their premises in Northgate Street.

Communications Plan for Triathlon 2009:

In response to Cllr. O'Connell's motion, the Town Clerk stated that meetings between Traithlone, the Council and Gardai will be arranged early next month and when draft proposals have been developed, they will be jointly discussed with the Street Traders Association and the Chamber of Commerce. He added that final proposals will be publicly advertised and submissions invited before road closure decisions are made and media publicity will also be given to the closures. All the Members agreed that the Triathlon was

a great event for the town and that there had to be disruptions, they just hoped that these could be kept to a minimum this year.

Door replacement in Millbank:

The Town Clerk stated in response to Cllr. O’Connell’s motion that these doors are of timber construction and some of them have proved somewhat unsatisfactory due to their exposure to the prevailing westerly aspect and the associated adverse weather. He said that there are approximately 10no. of a total of 15no. front doors in the housing scheme which face west and their replacement could be considered as part of the Council’s “windows and doors replacement programme” at a cost of €15,000 approx. Cllr. O’Connell welcomed the response but asked that they all be replaced in the current year.

Drainage in Iona Park:

The Town Clerk informed Cllr. O’Connell that this matter was raised before and as a result, these works were intended to be carried out in 2008, but were rendered impossible due to the inclement weather experienced then. He added that it is intended to undertake the necessary works as soon as the grassed areas at this location reach a satisfactory condition to allow the works to progress.

Provision of Double Yellow Lines:

The Town Engineer circulated drawings showing the proposed location of double yellow lines in Parnell Square and Willow Park which the Members considered.

It was proposed by Cllr. Molloy,

Seconded by Cllr. K. Moran and resolved,

“We hereby approve of the provision of double yellow lines in Parnell Square and Willow Park as outlined on the drawings circulated, pursuant to the Road Traffic Acts 1961-2006”.

Crossing at Cornamaddy N.S.:

Cllr. K. Moran requested that a pedestrian crossing be reinstated at this location, but the Director pointed out that there never was a formal pedestrian crossing there and that Stage 3 of the Safety Audit is being awaited, before anything further will be undertaken.

Cllr. K. Moran requested that this item be placed on the Agenda for the March meeting, for further consideration.

This concluded the business of the meeting.