

Minutes of the January Monthly Meeting of Athlone Town Council, which was held in the Civic Centre, Church Street, Athlone at 6.00p.m. on Monday 5th January, 2009.

Attendance:

Mayor: Cllr. E. Moran

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

Officers: Mr. Michael Connolly, A/Director of Services
Mr. John Walsh, Town Clerk
Mr. Alan Kelly, Town Engineer
Ms. Anne McNamara, Assistant Staff Officer

Apology: An apology was received from Cllr. Ray Lennon who was unable to attend the meeting.

Minutes:

It was proposed by Cllr. K. Moran,

Seconded by Cllr. Cooney and resolved,

“That we hereby adopt the Minutes of the December Monthly Meeting held on December 1st 2008”.

Votes of Sympathy:

All the Members joined together to express their condolences to the families of the following recently deceased members of the community: Joe Creaven, Chrissy Fennell, Billy Hughes, Derek McVeigh, Mike Temple and Joe Duce.

Matters Arising from the Minutes:

The Town Clerk informed Cllr. Hogan that he had written to the relevant people regarding the Joint Policing Committee, but he was still awaiting responses. He hoped it would be possible to hold the first meeting in February.

Cllr. O'Connell thanked the Council for the installation of the Pelican Crossing at Gleeson Street.

The Control of Dogs:

The Mayor welcomed to the Meeting Mr. Sean O’Laoide, Veterinary Officer, Westmeath County Council. Mr. O’Laoide circulated statistics to the Members which showed the situation throughout Ireland, for the seizure/surrender and collection of stray dogs. He said that Ireland has a poor record with 23,000 strays collected in 2007 and approximately 50% of these were put down. This is due to irresponsible ownership. The Government is trying to improve this by making owners more responsible through micro chipping, having all non breeding dogs spayed and through education. Cllr. Butler asked what is the situation regarding restricted breeds and Mr. O’Laoide said that Westmeath County Council is proactive in putting down dogs from the 11 restricted breeds, but the main problem lies with the owners and we need more primary legislation to deal with them. As regards tendering the Pound, Mr. O’Laoide informed Cllr. O’Connell that this would need double the current budget and is therefore not an option. He assured the Members that the Dog Wardens presence was felt in Athlone and that he visits once or twice a week. He added that the Community Wardens will try and enforce the licensing of dogs and go into the schools to educate the young people, which hopefully will result eventually in more responsible ownership.

The Members thanked Mr. O’Laoide for his presence at the Meeting.

Part 8 planning process for Art Gallery:

The Town Clerk presented the final drawings for the proposed Art Gallery to the Members and they welcomed them. The proposal was for two galleries, one in the old building and one in the extension, together with storage space, offices, meeting rooms, toilets and a glazed corridor on the river side. The plan also includes a boardwalk along the length of the entire building and Cllr. K. Moran requested that this might be extended to the Boat Club, when it is being done. The Town Clerk agreed this could be considered.

He then recommended the commencement of the Part 8 planning process, whereby the plans/drawings would be on public display for a period of 4 weeks and a further 2 weeks would be allowed for submissions/observations. The Managers Report on the submissions would then be presented to the Members for their consideration.

It was proposed by Cllr. K. Moran,

Seconded by Cllr. Butler and resolved,

“Pursuant to the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006 we hereby approve of the commencement of the Part 8 planning process for the development and extension of the Fr. Matthew Hall, as an Art Gallery with associated works.

Civic Reception:

It was proposed by Cllr. K. Moran,

Seconded by Cllr. Hogan and resolved,

“That we host a Civic Reception for Community Games Association to honour the opening and holding of the games in Athlone”.

Managers Orders:

The Members noted the summary of Managers Orders as circulated.

Questions:

Question 1

Cllr. M. O’Connell:

“What is the status of the taking in charge of Coolevin Park?”

Answer:

There are a number of outstanding items which the developer has been advised of and which the Council are awaiting action on.

Question 2

Cllr. M. O’Connell:

“When are we expecting the proposal back for replacing the gate at the Children’s playground installed in Parnell Square?”

Answer:

A cost has been requested and is awaited from the contractor. On approval of this cost it is expected that work will then be carried out.

Cllr. Molloy added that he deferred a question in the absence of Mr. Barry Kehoe, Director of Services on the regeneration of Battery Heights and requested that he have a report on the situation at the February Meeting.

Webcast technology:

The Members noted an acknowledgement from the Minister for the Environment concerning the use of webcast technology at Council Meetings.

Lighting of underpass, Old Coosan Road:

In response to Cllr. O’Connell’s motion, the Town Clerk stated that the ESB will be asked to examine this matter and the works will be put forward for inclusion in the 2009 Public Lighting revenue expenditure.

Footpaths at Iona Park:

The Town Clerk stated in response to Cllr. O’Connell’s motion to install footpaths linking the houses in Iona Park (in the 40’s) to the footpath, that the matter will be examined and costed and brought back before the Members at the February Meeting.

Trees in Retreat Park:

Cllr. O’Connell requested that the trees on the main road in Retreat Park be cut back and the Town Clerk said the matter will be examined and costed and a report will be brought back before the Council at the February Meeting.

Commission for Energy Regulation:

The Mayor stated that Commissioner had announced that he would not be reviewing prices until next October and he felt this is a disgrace with the current fall in energy prices. He felt they as a Council should write to all other Councils requesting their support in a request to the Minister, to ask the Commissioner to review energy prices immediately. The Members all supported the Mayor and it was agreed to write to other Councils and the Minister.

The Mayor wished everyone a Happy New Year and this concluded the business of the meeting.
