

**Minutes of the April Monthly Meeting of Athlone Town Council, which was held in the Civic Centre, Church Street, Athlone at 6.00 p.m. on Monday April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006**

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**Attendance:**

Mayor: Cllr. K. Molloy

Members: Cllrs. A. Berry, J. Butler, M. Cooney, P. Hogan, R. Lennon, N. McFadden, E. Moran and K. Moran

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

**County Manager:**

The Mayor and each Member welcomed the County Manager, Mr. Danny McLoughlin to the meeting and to his new post. They wished him well and said they looked forward to working with him.

The Town Clerk welcomed him on behalf of the staff, saying he had known him for about 20 years and that the County is fortunate to have him, as he has a wealth of experience and ability.

The County Manager said he was delighted to be here and said he intended to allocate his time evenly across the County. He said Athlone town reflected great confidence from locals and investors with retail, industry and education playing significant roles. He added that he hoped to make a contribution to the future development of the town.

**Minutes:**

It was proposed by Cllr. K. Moran,

Seconded by Cllr. Cooney and resolved,

“That we hereby adopt the Minutes of the March Monthly Meeting and the Special Meeting held on March 6<sup>th</sup> 2006”.

**Vote of Sympathy:**

All the Members wished to be associated with Cllr. McFaddens expression of sympathy to the McCormack and Devaney families on the tragic deaths of Declan and Kathryn.

## **Matters Arising from the Minutes:**

### **Dean Crowe Theatre:**

Cllrs. Hogan proposed that Cllr. Cooney's motion at the last meeting, be deemed invalid and contrary to Standing Orders.

The Town Clerk said however that Cllr. Hogan's proposal at the last meeting, had been taken on its own merits and was defeated 5 to 2 in a vote.

He added that the business involved did not relate to a statutory duty or function of the Council and had no legal consequences. The Members he said, without any dissent and with the approval of the Mayor, discussed, voted and adopted Cllr. Cooney's proposal.

The Mayor accepted this explanation and there would be no further discussion on the matter.

### **Disposal of Land:**

It was proposed by Cllr. Butler,

Seconded by Cllr. Cooney and resolved,

"Pursuant to the provisions 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.

#### **Schedule:**

<b>Description of Property</b>	<b>Name of Purchaser</b>	<b>Purchase Price</b>
4 St. Peter's Tce	Fintan Kenny	€39.30
9 St. Peter's Tce	Donagh McCormack	€45.40
45 Beechpark	Mary Lough	€39.30
1 Ardnaree	John & Betty McHugh	€39.30

### **New Road and Bridge at Garrycastle:**

The Director informed the Members that following a period of non-statutory public consultation, the staff in Road Design had made alterations to the proposals, moving the northern end of the road further away from the existing house and realigning the southern end to the best possible line. He requested the Members to approve of the second non-statutory public consultation period following which another report would come back to the Members of both Councils.

It was proposed by Cllr. Molloy,  
 Seconded by Cllr. Berry and resolved,  
 “That we hereby approve of the proposals for the new road and bridge at Garrycastle being placed informally on public display”.

Cllr. E. Moran said this is a very busy road and bridge which is extremely dangerous for pedestrians, especially with the large volume of buses and lorries using it and he requested that a cantilevered bridge be attached to the existing bridge.

Cllr. Hogan asked if the Council team had met with the residents of the area and the Director confirmed that the residents had been met with and that Road Design will look at the possibilities for a pedestrian bridge.

### **Urban Renewal Projects:**

The Town Engineer confirmed that proposals had been submitted to the Department of the Environment for funding under Urban & Village Renewal, for three projects: -

- |                                 |   |             |
|---------------------------------|---|-------------|
| 1) Canal Improvement Works      | - | €400,000.00 |
| 2) Promenade Regeneration Works | - | €100,000.00 |
| 3) Town Park Extension          | - | €250,000.00 |

Plans to define the works were presented and explained to the Members by the Town Engineer and the Director of Services recommended that the Part 8 planning process be commenced and that the schemes be placed on public display.

It was proposed by Cllr. McFadden,  
 Seconded by Cllr. Molloy and resolved,  
 “Pursuant to the provisions of Section 179 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 and Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 we hereby approve of the commencement of the statutory planning process in regard to the following works/projects”;

- 1) Canal Improvement Works
- 2) Promenade Regeneration Works
- 3) Town Park Extension

### **Roundabout at the Glen:**

The Town Engineer circulated drawings and explained the proposals for the construction of a roundabout at the Glen, Clonbrusk and the Director of Services recommended that they be placed on public display to commence the Part 8 Planning process.

It was proposed by Cllr. Butler,

Seconded by Cllr. E. Moran and resolved,

“Pursuant to the provisions of Section 179 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 and Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 we hereby approve of the commencement of the statutory planning process in regard to the provision of a roundabout at The Glen, Clonbrusk, Athlone”.

The Town Engineer informed Cllr. McFadden that there would not be much advantage to Clonbrusk, but through traffic on the Two Mile Road would be slowed.

Cllr. K. Moran said that the Ballymahon Road was much more urgently in need of traffic lights/traffic calming measures and the Director confirmed that Road Design are currently formulating proposals for that road, treating it as a priority.

### **Public Lighting 2006:**

The Members consider a report on new public lighting presented by the Town Engineer.

It was proposed by Cllr. E. Moran,

Seconded by Cllr. K. Molloy and resolved,

“Having regard to the Roads Act 1993 and the Local Government Act 2001 we hereby approve of the programme for new public lights in 2006 as set out in the report of the Town Engineer in the sum of €37,700.

### **Taking in Charge of Housing Estates:**

The Director informed the Members that proposals to take in charge the road in Retreat Ridge and Caislean Riada, had been advertised and no objections or representations had been received. He added that the Town Engineers report indicated that these roads are finished to a satisfactory standard and recommended that the Members declare these roads, public roads in accordance with the provisions of the Roads Act 1993.

It was proposed by Cllr. K. Moran,

Seconded by Cllr. Molloy and resolved,

“Having regard to the report of the Town Engineer indicating that the roads were completed to a satisfactory standard and the recommendation of the Director of Services to declare the roads public roads we hereby approve pursuant to Section 11 of the Roads Act

1993 that the statutory processes be initiated to declare the roads at Caislean Riada , Clonbrusk and Retreat Ridge off Retreat Road, to be public roads”.

### **Mayor’s Reception:**

It was unanimously agreed to grant a Mayor’s Reception to the All-Ireland Drama Festival to launch the Festival, the reception to be held in the Castle at 4p.m. on Thursday April 20<sup>th</sup> 2006.

### **Questions:**

Question 1. Cllr. P. Hogan:

“Can this Council inform Westmeath County Council that the road surface improvements are required on both sides of the speed ramp on Retreat Road between Auburn Heights and Retreat Heights?”

**Answer:**

**Design and construction proposals are awaited for a separate surface water disposal system at this location. PH McCarthy & Partners are currently examining this matter and it would be intended that the road would be resurfaced after the construction of such a scheme.**

Question 2. Cllr. P. Hogan:

“Can this Council explore the possibility of providing additional official bus stops between Wellmount and Willow Park?”

**Answer:**

**This matter will be referred to the Bus Operators who have the primary function to provide these facilities.**

Question 3. Cllr. R. Lennon:

“On what site is the proposed playing area for Millbank?”

**Answer:**

**Between the Battery Bridge and College Park in the filled in section of the Canal.**

Question 4. Cllr. R. Lennon:

“What is the update on the recent meeting with the Town Engineer and the Woodville developer with the view of the Council taking over this estate?”

**Answer:** The developer has made a written submission in respect of compliance with the planning permission to Athlone Town Council. This submission is being examined by the engineering department and a further submission is awaited in respect of compliance criteria in relation to sewers and watermains for examination by Sanitary Services. The road structures will be tested in the coming weeks and it is expected that a programme of remedial works will be made available within the next month for immediate implementation.

Question 5. Cllr. Boxer Moran:  
 “When will the Council be able to deal with the flooding outside Mrs. Brennan's house in Northgate Street?”

**Answer:** The matter is being investigated by Westmeath County Council.

Question 6. Cllr. E. Moran:  
 “What is the progress with Garrycastle Bridge in relation to making it safe for pedestrians?”

**Answer:** Pedestrian facilities in this area will be improved in the new Garrycastle Bridge arrangements.

Question 7. Cllr. M. Cooney:  
 “Have the investigations into the Safety/Residue of the Town Dump in Athlone been finalised and if so, what are the results?”

**Answer:** A Code of Practice relating to the carrying out of environment risk assessments for waste disposal sites is being prepared by the E.P.A. for publication this summer and when received the appropriate

assessments will be undertaken by the County Council on the former land fill site at Goldenisland.

**Supplementary Question:**

“Has the County Council ever carried out a study on the Town Dump?”

**Answer:** No. They are waiting for the E.P.A. guidelines.

Question 8. Cllr N. McFadden:

"Can this Council continue to provide residents associations grants in the new extended boundary area?"

**Answer:** **The Town Council has not provided funding for Residents Associations but in view of the tradition in the extended town area the previous programme of the County Council will be examined with a view to re-establishing the allocations.**

**Supplementary Question:**

"Will Arcadia be included now in funding for residents associations?"

**Answer:** **Yes, they will be included.**

### **Managers Orders:**

The Members noted the summary of Managers Orders circulated.

### **Cleaning the River Shannon:**

The Members noted a letter from Mr. Tom Parlon TD Minister of State stating that Waterways Ireland is responsible for the Shannon at the Strand area and Ray Dunne is the contact person.

It was agreed to write to him.

### **M.S.A.:**

The Members noted a letter from the office of the Minister for Defence in which it stated that the M.S.A. was made payable to personnel retiring on or after August 1<sup>st</sup> 1990 and not to existing pensioners. This was consistent with all public service pensions policy. It said that the Commission on Public Service Pensions also reviewed the MSA and no change was recommended. Therefore it regretted that there is no scope for departing from settled pension policy in the case of the M.S.A.

Cllr. Berry was not satisfied with this answer and said he would revisit this problem as approximately 3,600 ex-servicemen were affected. Cllr. McFadden supported him.

### **Refuse Collection Schedule:**

The Members noted a letter from Westmeath County Council stating that the impact of the bin collection on traffic at schools in Athlone will be assessed and the current collection schedules will then be examined, with a view to minimising traffic disruption in the town.

**Acknowledgements:**

The Members noted acknowledgements from the Ministers for Justice and the Environment.

**C.P.R. Training:**

The Members unanimously supported a resolution from Cobh Town Council calling on the Departments of Health and Education to train students in the life saving skill of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation in our second level schools.

**Stardust Victims:**

The Members unanimously supported a resolution from Edenderry Town Council calling on the government to support the Stardust Victims in every way possible.

**Conferences:**

The Members noted the forthcoming conferences and the cost thereof:

Kilkenny	Local Government Issues	20 <sup>th</sup> & 21 <sup>st</sup> April 2006
Letterkenny	Local & Regional Tourism	12 <sup>th</sup> May 2006
Westport	L.A.'s Service Providers on Regulators	18 <sup>th</sup> & 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2006
Ennis	The role of Local Authorities	25 <sup>th</sup> & 26 <sup>th</sup> May 2006

**E.S.B. Maintenance Programme:**

The Town Clerk informed Cllr. Hogan that the E.S.B. do have a maintenance arrangement in operation and the public are encouraged to contact them on 1850 372 772 to report lights which are out of order. It was agreed to request a copy of the agreement from them.

**Irish Immigrants in Britain:**

All supported Cllr. Hogan's motion that the Council write to the Minister for Foreign Affairs requesting him to address the plight of many Irish Immigrants in Britain.

**Flooding at Bloomfield Drive:**

In response to Cllr. Hogan's motion the Town Clerk stated that the Council is unaware of flooding problems at Bloomfield Drive, but that there is an area on the Coosan Point Road at its entrance, where ponding occurs due to normal wear and tear of the road surface and this area is included for restoration under the Block Grant expenditure proposals for 2006.

**Extra Gardaí:**

Cllr. Lennon requested that the Council write to the Minister for Justice requesting extra Gardaí for Athlone and it was agreed to do so.

**Flooding at Iona Park:**

Cllr. Lennon requested that the Council rectify the flooding problem in Iona Park and the Director confirmed that the Town Engineer and Area Engineer would liaise to find an immediate solution to the problem.

**Part 5 Implementation:**

In response to Cllr. Lennon's motion the Town Clerk stated that the Council is implementing Part 5 in respect of all relevant permissions granted and commenced in the town. He added that it is anticipated that 10-12 social housing units and 12-15 affordable housing units will be delivered under Part 5 in 2006.

Cllr. Lennon said he felt developers were paying money to avoid Part 5 requirements and he requested a list of all Planning Permissions granted since 2002 and their Part 5 requirements.

Cllr. McFadden agreed with Cllr. Lennon and requested the Council write to the Minister asking that the legislation governing levies be strengthened.

The Director confirmed that the Council is implementing Part 5 to its full extent but in some cases, it is more appropriate to accept land or money, instead of the type of residential unit being built.

It was agreed to issue a list to the Members of all developments in the town that are subject to Part 5 requirements.

**Council painter and painting of O.P.D.'s:**

The Town Clerk stated in response to Cllr. K. Moran's motion, that the Council carries out minor painting works using its current staff compliment and major works are carried out by contractors. He added that the number of outdoor staff are currently capped.

Cllr. K. Moran felt we should keep our own housing stock painted especially our O.P.D.'s.

The Town Clerk confirmed for Cllr. McFadden that the cost of painting the ten O.P.D.'s in Marine View can be determined and considered for funding from the housing repairs budget and that any rubbish in the back road, will be removed.

**Christmas Lights:**

In response to Cllr. K. Moran's motion the Town Clerk stated that the Chamber of Commerce have already been verbally requested to take down the Christmas lights and they will now be formally written to in this regard.

**Housing for the Disabled:**

In response to Cllr. K. Moran's motion, the Town Clerk stated that it is the policy of the Council to integrate people with all types of disabilities into our general housing schemes and where particular facilities or alterations are required appropriate adaptations are made to their residences.

Cllr. K. Moran felt that the houses should be in a single scheme, with a caretaker there on site to assist tenants, but agreed later that integration was the best policy, with a caretaker to assist being essential.

**Incubator Units:**

The Town Clerk stated in response to Cllr. E. Moran's motion that the provision of incubator units for young entrepreneurs to start up small business is a worthwhile objective and the Council will refer the request to Director of Community and Enterprise in Westmeath County Council for his attention.

**Naming of Housing Estates:**

In response to Cllr. Butler's motion, the Town Clerk stated that all developers, by means of planning conditions are now required to submit new estate names, for the approval of the Council. These submissions are considered by a Committee consisting of the Mayor, Member, Town Clerk, Planner, Town Librarian and he added, a representative of An Post is now also recommended.

He said the estate names should preferably have a connection with the area, should not duplicate an existing name and Irish names should also be prominent.

**Road Sign opposite Caislean Riada:**

The Town Clerk stated in response to Cllr. Butler's motion that the Gardaí will be consulted about the sign at the junction of Coosan Road opposite Caislean Riada and subject to agreement, a 'stop' sign will be erected instead of a 'yield right of way' sign.

Cllr. Butler welcomed this response.

**Double Yellow Lines:**

In response to Cllr. Butler's motion the Town Clerk stated that double yellow lines could be placed at both entrances to Tormey Villas to protect visibility and road safety, subject to the approval of the Members.

It was proposed by Cllr. Butler,

Seconded by Cllr. Berry and resolved,

“Pursuant to the Roads Acts 1925-1983 and the Road Traffic Acts 1961-1994 we hereby approve of the provision of double yellow lines at the entrances to Tormey Villas Athlone”.

Cllr. E. Moran thanked the Town Engineer for the installation of the yellow box at Loughloe House.

**Seating on Public Streets:**

The Town Clerk informed Cllr. Cooney that chairs and tables on public streets and footpaths are subject to a licence and annual fee, under the Planning and Development Act 2001. He added that an application form and layout of facilities is required which is examined by the Planner, Town Engineer and the Gardaí and approval is generally granted provided there are no safety or visual amenity factors. The fee is €160 per set of table and chairs.

The Town Clerk also confirmed for Cllr. Lennon that it is illegal to drink alcohol in public areas.

Cllr. E. Moran said he felt the fees for furniture on the streets is very high and considering the rates payable by business owners there should be no fees.

**Review of the Castle:**

In response to Cllr. Cooney's motion, the Town Clerk stated that the Council has provided funding in the current year to commence the examination and upgrading of the Castle facilities, including the Museum.

He said that the Committee has already met last month and will be meeting monthly throughout the year to develop proposals and seek funding. He added that the Members will be advised on the progress and must approve any developments required.

**Damaged Fence at St. Joseph's Villas:**

In response to Cllr. McFadden's motion, the Town Clerk stated that the three damaged concrete posts along the boundary of St. Joseph's Villas with the Roscommon Road, will be replaced in the current year.

**Prevention of Flooding:**

The Town Clerk stated that the annual gully cleaning maintenance programme is ongoing and all gullies will be monitored to ensure their service ability into the future.

Cllr. McFadden said that some people had suffered terrible flooding problems and she requested that the Area Engineer might attend to these problems.

*This concluded the business of the meeting.*

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