

**Minutes of the July Monthly Meeting of Athlone Town Council, which was held in the Civic Centre, Church Street, Athlone at 6.00 p.m. on Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2004**

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**Attendance:**

Mayor: Cllr. A. Berry

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

Officers: Mr. J. Walsh, A/Director of Services  
Mr. A. Kelly, Town Engineer  
Mr. A. Bass, Administrative Officer  
Mr. B. Coughlan, Administrative Officer  
Ms. A. McNamara, Asst. Staff Officer

**Apology:**

The Town Clerk apologised for Mr. G. Lambden Director of Services who was unable to attend the meeting as he was away on Council business.

**Minutes:**

It was proposed by Cllr. K. Moran, seconded by Cllr. M. Cooney and resolved, "That we hereby adopt the Minutes of the June Monthly Meeting held on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2004, the Annual Meeting held on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004 and the Special Meetings held on May 7<sup>th</sup> and June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004".

**Matters Arising From the Minutes:**

**Car-parking at A.I.T.**

Cllr. E. Moran requested that leniency be shown to those parking in this area until the problem is resolved with the I.T. The Town Clerk informed him that a meeting had taken place with Dr. P. Mulhern and it was hoped the problem would be resolved in the near future. In the meantime, the Traffic Wardens would have to continue to carry out their duties in the interest of safety.

**Connaught Street Development:**

Cllr. McFadden wished to clarify her position regarding the proposed development at Connaught Street. While she welcomed the development she felt that the developer should be sensitive to the needs and fears of the people of the area. She hoped that the conditions imposed by the planners would satisfy all concerned. The Town Clerk informed her that 50 conditions had been imposed. It was agreed to circulate a copy of the decision to all the Members.

### **The Arts Forum:**

The Town Clerk informed the Members that the Council has one (1 No.) nomination to the Westmeath County Council Arts Forum.

It was proposed by Cllr. M. Cooney,  
Seconded by Cllr. R. Lennon and resolved,  
“That we hereby elect Cllr. McFadden as the Council’s nominees on the Westmeath County Council Arts Forum”.

There were no further nominations and the Mayor confirmed the election of Cllr. McFadden”.

### **The Heritage Forum:**

The Town Clerk informed the Members that the Council has one (1 No.) nomination to the Westmeath County Council Heritage Forum.

It was proposed by Cllr. Molloy,  
Seconded by Cllr. E. Moran and resolved,  
“That we hereby elect Cllr. Hogan as the Council’s nominees on the Westmeath County Council Heritage Forum”.

There were no other nominations and the Mayor confirmed the election of Cllr. Hogan.

### **Disposal of Land:**

It was proposed by Cllr. Molloy,  
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 & Tenant (Ground Rents)(No. 2) Act 1978, we hereby approve of the disposal of property in fee simple as set out in the schedule hereunder:

SCHEDULE		
<u>Description of Property</u>	<u>Name of Purchaser</u>	<u>Purchase Price</u>
0.049 acres of land at Battery Bridge/Magazine Road, Athlone	P.Lyster & Sons	€15,000.00
0.151 ha. Land at Bogganfin, Roscommon Road, Athlone	Westmeath County Council	€1.00
Land at Town Centre/Church Street, Athlone	Trustees/Representatives, Church of Ireland	Land at St. Mary’s Church and accommodation works

### **Budget for Extended Town Area:**

The Members were circulated with a report from the Director of Services and the Town Clerk summarised it's contents. The Report outlined the proposed expenditure and income as agreed when processing the extension.

The Members expressed disappointment with the figures, particularly for roads, which amounted to only €80,000.00. The works they hoped to have been undertaken would cost a lot more, but it was agreed that the Town Engineer would draw up a priority list for road works and present it to the September Monthly Meeting.

The Town Clerk stated that the Block Grant for the Town Council could be much higher next year as the length of roads in the area had increased by 31K.

It was proposed by Cllr. Butler, seconded by Cllr. K. Moran and resolved, "That we hereby accept and approve of the report in regard to the provision and financing of services in the added area arising from the Boundary Extension with expenditure and income as follows on the Revenue A/c.

<b><u>Expenditure:</u></b>		<b><u>Income:</u></b>	
Housing	€75,766	Housing Rents	€41,254
Roads/Public Lighting	€135,462	Refuse collection	€293,829
Environmental Protection	€507,338	Rates	€65,520
Recreation/Open Spaces	€7,822	Local Govt. Funding	€574,249
Miscellaneous/Admin.	€248,464		<b>€974,852"</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>€974,852</b>		

The members approved of the other expenditure proposal in the added area by Westmeath County Council.

### **Residential Densities:**

A Report from the County Manager arising from Members concerns over densities in town developments, was circulated to and considered by the Members. The Town Clerk outlined the contents and stated that the Residential Guidelines to Planning Authorities issued by the Minister were incorporated into the Town & County Development Plans. The Guidelines encourage more sustainable urban development and the promotion of higher residential densities in appropriate locations, bringing more affordable houses to the market close to town centres, and making better use of urban land and infrastructure.

The Members discussed the Report and found it to be unsatisfactory. Some felt the County manager should be there to present it to them, and answer their queries and define some of the terms used in the Report. Others felt that densities should be restricted to a maximum of 14 per acre and that a Variation should be made to both the County and Town Development Plans.

The Town Clerk requested the members to accept the report and advice of the Co. Manager as increased densities were essential in all areas particularly in the town centre where maximum flexibility was required and any limit would be restrictive to the planning process. He also stated that the County Manager had taken on board the views and concerns of the members by limiting the density in suburban areas to 14 no. houses per acre and there was no need to amend the Town Development Plan as her proposal was within the Density Guidelines.

Cllr. John Butler proposed that the Council vary the Town Development Plan to allow a maximum density of 14 houses per acre listing some exceptions, but there was no seconder to this proposal.

It was proposed by Cllr. K. Moran,  
and seconded by Cllr. E. Moran,  
“That we accept and approve of the Report from the County Manager on Residential Densities in Athlone”.

This was counter proposed by Cllr. McFadden,  
And seconded by Cllr. Cooney,  
“That we defer any further discussion or decision on the Report until the County Manager is present to clarify certain aspects”.

A vote was taken on the counter proposal which resulted as follows:

In Favour: Cllrs. Berry, Butler, Cooney, Hogan, Lennon, McFadden and  
Molloy (7 No.)

Against: Cllrs. E. Moran and K. Moran (2 No.)

The proposal of Cllrs. McFadden/Cooney was declared adopted and it was agreed to defer the issue until such time as the County Manager could attend a meeting.

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

The Members welcomed the Report and complimented the Town Engineer and Padraic Joyce on it's comprehensiveness. It summarised the exact status of each estate.

The Members felt that there should be a legal obligation imposed on all developers, to complete their development satisfactorily before being allowed to begin another. It was regrettable that the same names seemed to appear again and again. They felt enforcement should be made a major issue, as some estates had been years waiting for completion.

### **Planning:**

The Town Clerk informed the Members that a planning application had been received from Mr. Niall Fox in respect of a commercial development consisting of the demolition of existing shop and house and the construction of a shop, ATM, 2 No. apartments, car wash, fuel storage tanks, the relocation of existing petrol pumps and canopy, together with signage, car-parking and associated works of approximately 446m<sup>2</sup> at Ballymahon Road, Cornamagh, Athlone, which development would materially contravene the County Development Plan, as the shop at 185m<sup>2</sup> exceeds the Plan limit of 100m<sup>2</sup>.

He added that the statutory requirements for a material contravention of the Plan had been complied with and that the Council was amenable to deciding to grant a planning permission for the proposed development. There were no submissions/observations received in respect of this application.

It was proposed by Cllr. K. Moran, seconded by Cllr. Cooney and resolved, “Pursuant to the provisions of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 – 2002 and in particular Section 34 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 and having considered the planning application from Mr. Niall Fox and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and the County Development Plan, we hereby direct and order the County Manager to decide to grant planning permission to Mr. Niall Fox for the demolition of existing shop and house and the construction of a shop, 2 No. apartments, A.T.M. car wash, fuel storage tanks, the relocation of petrol pumps and canopy, together with signage, car parking and associated works of approx. 446m<sup>2</sup> at Ballymahon Road, Cornamagh, Athlone Planning Ref. P.D. No. 02/647 which development will contravene the County Development Plan”.

All 9 No. Members unanimously indicated their support for the resolution.

### **Manager's Orders:**

The Members noted the summary of Managers Orders circulated.

### **Questions:**

Question 1. Cllr. E. Moran:

“When is roundabout at Killyon Hill to start?”

**Answer: September/October 2004.**

Question 2. Cllr. E. Moran:

“What plans have been drawn up for the Kilmacoo area?”

**Answer: A road realignment scheme has been designed and land acquisition maps are being prepared for the lands which must be acquired for the scheme. Capital funding is available.**

Question 3. Cllr. K. Moran:

“Is this Council satisfied that the walkway down to the river at the back of the Radisson SAS Hotel be reopened and if so when?”

**Answer: This walkway will be opened but some works at this site are still ongoing and when complete the walkway will be opened.**

Question 4. Cllr. N. McFadden:

“Can this Council make safe the wall dividing Auburn Heights and Retreat Park?”

**Answer: This section of wall has not been identified but can be inspected by the Town Engineer with Cllr. McFadden.**

Question 5. Cllr. M. Cooney:

“Has any response been received from the Department of Environment & Local Government and/or Department of Education agreeing to meet a deputation from this Council regarding funding for the Mixed National School?”

**Answer: A meeting has been sought between the Executive of the Council and the Department of Education and a response is awaited. The Department considered the acquisition of the School by the Council to be an issue between the Council and the School Authority.**

### **P.R.S.I. Contributions:**

The Members noted a letter from the Department of Social & Family Affairs outlining their Unemployment Payments’ Schemes. It was agreed to circulate the letter to all Members.

### **The Hanly Report:**

The Members noted an acknowledgement from the Minister for Health and Children regarding the status of the Hanly Report.

**An Post:**

The Members noted a letter from An Post indicating that they were reviewing collection times in general, for the town and that the new box on the Dublin Road would retain a collection time of 7.30 p.m. regardless of the review outcome. The Members were dissatisfied with the possibility of collection times for boxes in the town being changed as all the businesses used the services and worked up until 5.30 p.m. or 6.00 p.m.

It was agreed to write to An Post again requesting that all the boxes in town have a collection time of 7.30 p.m.

**Fire Alarms for the Elderly:**

The Members noted an acknowledgement of their letter from the office of the Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

**Conferences:**

Ballaghaderreen	Dr. D. Hyde	16 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> July, 2004
Ballina	Humbert School	20 <sup>th</sup> – 25 <sup>th</sup> July, 2004
Athlone	L.A.M.A.	4 <sup>th</sup> September, 2004
Greystones	La Touche Seminar	1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup> October, 2004
Dundalk	National Environment Conference	20 <sup>th</sup> & 21 <sup>st</sup> October, 2004

The members noted these conferences and the cost thereof.

**Footpaths at Garrycastle:**

The Town Clerk informed Cllr. E. Moran that proposals for the expenditure of the road budget for the extended Town Area will be presented to the next Council Meeting and the needs of Altown/Garrycastle will then be considered.

**Paths at Auburn Heights:**

The Town Clerk confirmed that the needs of this area will also be considered at the next Council Meeting, when dealing with expenditure in the extended area.

**Steps at Iona Park/Canal:**

The Town Clerk informed Cllr. K. Moran that the replacement of these steps is part of the contract for the Iona Park Housing Scheme and will be undertaken by the Contractor.

**Pedestrian Crossing – Assumption Road:**

The Town Clerk stated that a pedestrian crossing was not warranted at this location but alternative traffic calming measures would be examined for inclusion in next year's Road Programme.

However, all the Members supported the motion to provide a pedestrian crossing here.

**Altown Roads & Footpaths:**

The Town Clerk informed Cllr. K. Moran that the Town Engineer had met with the residents of the area and that the level of works to be undertaken in the area is dependent on the level of funds available. He added that the area will be considered in the allocation of the road budget for the extended area in the current year.

**Willow Park/Kilmacuagh Area:**

In response to Cllr. Butler's motion requesting a feasibility study for the area, the Town Clerk stated that the Senior Planner will be requested to examine recent planning histories in this area and to indicate whether any studies are required and to establish development patterns and pressures on the use of land in the area.

**Roundabout at Gallows Hill:**

The Town Clerk informed Cllr. Butler that the Road Design Office has been requested to prepare a proposal for a roundabout at this location and when completed the planning Part 8 process will commence and funding will be sought.

**Traffic Calming at Hallsbridge:**

The Town Clerk informed Cllr. Butler that it is considered that the future relocation of a commercial enterprise in this area will significantly reduce the volumes of heavy goods vehicles using this bridge and it is best to defer consideration of any measures at this time. He added that the traffic movements would be monitored after the relocation.

Cllr. Butler felt that relocation of one business would not make any difference. It is the restriction on the railway bridges that cause the heavy goods vehicles to use Hallsbridge and safety issues there, will have to be addressed as soon as possible.

**Orwell Grove - Taking in Charge:**

In response to Cllr. McFadden's motion, the Town Clerk stated that this estate is included in the Town Engineer's report. The current position is that the Developer is co-operating with the Council and has submitted proposals for evaluation. However, he added, the estate cannot be taken in charge until the necessary works have been undertaken to the satisfaction of the Council.

### **Priory Park/Abbey Road:**

The Town Clerk informed Cllr. McFadden that the existing road markings on the Abbey Road will be upgraded and the junction will also be monitored over the coming months. Some of the Members felt that the pillars at the entrance to Priory Park are an obstruction and should be removed.

### **Street Naming Signs:**

In response to Cllr. McFadden's motion, the Town Clerk stated that the road at Garden Vale is formally known as Ballymahon Road and a sign has already been erected. A "Garden Vale" sign can be erected on the buildings for information purposes, he added, if the residents so require and a sign at Abbey Road outer will be erected next year subject to funding.

### **Woodville Housing Estate:**

In answer to Cllr. Cooney's motion the Town Clerk stated that this estate is still under construction but the developer will be written to requesting a certificate of compliance with his planning permission and this will be followed up by an inspection of the Council's engineering staff.

### **Traffic Calming:**

The Town Clerk informed Cllr. Cooney that traffic calming measures at Cartrontrouy will be considered in the current year in the context of the budget for the extended area and Sarsfield Square will be considered in the context of next year's budget.

### **Country Markets:**

Cllr. Cooney requested that the Council make it's property around the Castle available for regular Country Markets and the Town Clerk informed him that the Council have no objection to markets taking place in designated casual trading areas. He added that new Casual Trading Bye-Laws are currently being prepared and locations for such trading can be considered for designation, in that review. The Regeneration Plan for the Westside would also be revisiting the area of casual trading.

All the Members were in favour of country markets being restored.

### **Festival of Europe:**

The Mayor wished the Irish group who were travelling to the Festival, a successful and enjoyable trip. Cllr. E. Moran wished our twin town Chateaubriant success with the visit of the Tour de France.

### **Special Meeting:**

It was proposed by Cllr. Butler,  
seconded by Cllr. E. Moran and resolved,

“That we agree to hold a special meeting at 5.00 p.m. on Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2004 in the Civic Centre to receive a presentation on the proposals for the St. Mel’s Tce., area by the consultants ”

**Civic Reception:**

The Members agreed to host a Civic Reception for the Midland Vintage and Classic Car Club on August 27<sup>th</sup> 2004.

**This concluded the business of the meeting.**

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