

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF ADARE-RATHKEALE HELD AT ÁRAS SEÁN FINN, NEW LINE ROAD, RATHKEALE, CO. LIMERICK ON TUESDAY, 9TH FEBRUARY, 2016, AT 9.00 A.M.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor R. O'Donoghue, An Cathaoirleach.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Keary, McMahon, Neville, O'Brien and Sheahan.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director, Regional Services (Ms. C. Curley), Operations Manager, South and West Division (Mr. B. Kennedy), Senior Executive Engineer (Ms. A. Goggin), Environment Awareness Officer (Ms. S. McDonnell), Meetings Administrator (Mr. T. O'Callaghan), Staff Officer (Ms. K. Butler), Assistant Staff Officer (Ms. E. Buckley).

The following issues were raised by Members, at the commencement of the Meeting, with the consent of the Cathaoirleach.

Members noted that, arising from a high tide and storm surge, flooding had occurred in Askeaton on the previous day. Members indicated that the car park of the swimming pool had flooded and expressed disappointment, given the swimming pool was constructed 10 years previously, that due diligence had not been taken to ensure the facility was built at a level which was safe from the risk of flooding but commended the dedication of council staff and volunteers in saving the pump house of the swimming pool from flooding.

Members sought an update on flooding relief works for Foynes, Askeaton and Ballysteen.

In relation to Foynes, the Operations Manager indicated that following a tender process, Wills Brothers had been selected as contractors. A letter of intent had issued to Wills Brothers, legal agreements were being finalised and it was intended that works would be completed by the end of quarter 3 2016. He noted that the water levels recorded in Foynes on the previous day were the second highest on record with a high tide of 5.2m accompanied by a higher than predicted storm surge. He added that sand bags which were recently replaced in Foynes had not been breached.

The Operations Manager indicated that MHL Consulting Engineers had been appointed to assess and recommend flood alleviation measures for Askeaton. Design works were ongoing, but no funding had been allocated for works.

In relation to Ballysteen the Operations Manager informed Members that any funding would have to await national priorities following the CFRAMS studies by the Office for Public Works (OPW).

Councillor Sheahan noted that insurance companies were refusing to insure properties previously damaged by flooding or charging exorbitant rates for same. He also noted that some insurance companies were refusing to insure properties that had not flooded previously but were deemed at

risk of flooding. He condemned these practices and called on the Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) to petition the Government to take steps to resolve these issues. This was seconded by Councillor O'Brien.

1. Adoption of Minutes

Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of the Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale held on 12th January, 2016.

Proposed by Councillor Keary;
Seconded by Councillor McMahan;
And Resolved:

“That the draft Minutes, as circulated, be taken as read, adopted and signed”.

2. Deputation from Rathkeale Community Council

It was noted that the deputation from Rathkeale Community Council had indicated that, regretfully, they were unable to attend the Meeting and requested that their deputation be met at the next District Meeting.

3. Transportation & Travel / Environment

Team Limerick Clean Up Campaign and Environmental Initiatives

The Environment Awareness Officer gave a presentation on the work of the Environment Awareness Unit. She indicated that the Council advise, promote and support national environmental projects such as Green Schools, Fairtrade, the Local Authority Prevention Network and Tidy Towns work. She advised on workshops and grants that may be available to groups and also links with Development Companies such as West Limerick Resources and Ballyhoura Development.

She highlighted the importance of raising awareness on key messages such as litter, waste prevention and correct waste management and made particular reference to the success of Team Limerick Clean Up Campaign 2015 and the importance of the Members help in raising awareness of Team Limerick Clean Up Campaign 2016, which takes place on Good Friday 25th March.

Members thanked the Environment Awareness Officer for her presentation and voiced their support for the Team Limerick Clean-up Campaign. Members indicated that offering an incentive for the return of glass bottles would help to keep streets clean.

With the Cathaoirleach's permission, it was agreed that Item 6 would be taken at this stage of the Meeting.

6. Maigue Rivers Trust

The Senior Executive Engineer, Environment gave a presentation on the economic importance of good water quality and achieving the objectives of the Water Framework Directive in terms of protecting Ireland's derogation under the Nitrates Directive, avoiding court action and protecting our "Green Image".

She indicated that the 2nd cycle of the Water Framework Directive runs from 2015 to 2021 and in this cycle a greater emphasis was placed on developing a bottom up, community led approach to managing our rivers. Prompted by a serious pollution incident, work on developing this community based approach began on the River Loobagh in August 2014. Several projects were undertaken including in-stream works to improve the fish habitat, an education and awareness programme with schools and tidy towns groups and a study trip to Northern Ireland which led to the formation of an informal rivers association on the River Loobagh.

She noted that this group identified priority issues, including the control of giant hogweed in the catchment and an application for funding was made under Local Agenda 21 where €6,000 was secured to provide training to 10 members of a rural social scheme who would start work to control the weed in March 2016.

She pointed out that with guidance from Mark Horton, who co-ordinates Rivers Trusts in Northern Ireland, the group made the decision to form a Rivers Trust on the River Maigue and that nominations for directorships were currently being sought and it was hoped that the trust would be in place in the next few months. She indicated that Rivers Trusts were community initiatives started by local people to care for their local rivers and had environmental charitable status.

Members indicated that every effort should be made to increase salmon stocks and ensure that sewerage treatment plants were working properly and expressed disappointment at not having been consulted earlier in the process to establish a Maigue Rivers Trust.

In response to Members queries, the Senior Executive Engineer indicated that it was hoped to establish a Rivers Trust for the River Deel and Members assistance would be sought in relation to same.

4. Deputation from Adare United AFC

The Cathaoirleach welcomed representatives from Adare United AFC which consisted of John Carey, Andrew Lohan and Greg Lohan. The representatives thanked the Members for receiving their deputation. Mr. Lohan informed the Meeting that Adare United AFC had been established in 1937 and he expressed gratitude to the Council for the lease of their grounds at Deerpark Adare. He outlined the plans for the club which included the development of the pitch and club house and pointed out that there was a substantial slope of 2m in the pitch which would cost in the region of €25,000 to resolve. He noted also that damaged fencing around the grounds would cost €2,500 to repair and that the provision of a cycle path around the pitch would provide a valuable amenity to the nearby planned Council housing development. The deputation requested the Council's assistance with the project.

Members thanked the Deputation for their presentation and indicated that they were fully supportive of the development.

Next District Meeting

It was agreed that the next Meeting would be held on Wednesday, 9th March, 2016 at 9.00 a.m. at Áras Seán Finn, New Line Road, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick.

5. To consider updates from the Fire Department, the Planning Department and the Garda Síochána in relation to the Christmas period in Rathkeale.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Superintendent Tom O'Connor and Sergeant Frank O'Sullivan from Newcastle West District Garda Station to the Meeting and requested to be excused from the Meeting as he had another engagement. Councillor Sheahan took the Chair at this time.

Superintendent O'Connor outlined to Members the Garda Policing Operation Plan in Rathkeale from 11th December, 2015 to 11th January, 2016 and provided details in relation to crime statistics for this period. He also highlighted the challenges encountered by the Gardaí during this period and concerns that arose. He indicated that over this period Gardaí monitored the increased level of traffic in the area, the sale and supply of liquor, the influx of teenagers into the town, some of whom were driving vehicles dangerously, and the increased level of visitors arising from weddings, Christenings and a funeral. He also noted the establishment of the Youth Diversion Programme for Rathkeale/Askeaton. He recommended the installation of CCTV in the town to assist in the prevention and detection of crime; a review of traffic management and that stakeholders meet in October 2016 to plan for the Christmas period.

Members thanked Superintendent O'Connor for his update and commended An Garda Síochána for their excellent work in the Community over the Christmas period. The following points were raised by various Members during discussion.

- That consideration be given to how other towns dealt with an influx of people during festivals / holiday periods.
- That a large number of youths, under the age of fifteen, had driven cars in a dangerous manner around the town and the parents of these youths were then in a position to recover the vehicle used from the Gardaí, having completed the appropriate paper work. There was a lack of appropriate sanction in these cases and legislation should be enacted to deal effectively with this issue.
- Criticism was expressed that the Catholic Church had allowed 25 weddings to take place in Rathkeale over the Christmas period. The apparent wealth and assets of a large number of these visitors was noted and it was suggested that both the Criminal Assets Bureau and the Revenue Commissioners should investigate the source of this apparent wealth.
- The need for effective speed ramps in Askeaton.

Councillor Keary called for a report to be produced showing appropriate locations for speed ramps in Rathkeale and that the Gardaí should be consulted in relation to same. Councillor Sheahan suggested that pedestrian crossings should be included in such a report.

Councillor Neville noted that considerable investment had been made by the Council in Limerick City and stressed the need for funding to be made available to upgrade Rathkeale which was the

capital of the District. Councillor Sheahan highlighted the need for a similar investment in Askeaton.

7. Deputation from Foynes Flying Boat and Maritime Museum

The Leas-Chathaoirleach welcomed representatives from Foynes Flying Boat & Maritime Museum which consist of Margaret O'Shaughnessy, Director, Foynes Flying Boat & Maritime Museum, Tadgh Moriarty and Brid Moriarty, Approved Productions.

Ms. O'Shaughnessy thanked the District for its contribution towards the event last year and indicated that the 2015 Foynes Air Show had attracted 12,000 spectators. She noted that figures were down due to the very inclement weather conditions, an Air Show in Shannon the previous week and the tragic death of pilot Howard Cox in a plane crash the previous day. She thanked the many volunteers, An Garda Síochána and emergency services for their help and assistance the previous year.

Ms. O'Shaughnessy pointed out that the Foynes Air Show was planned for Sunday, 17th July, 2016 and that a total of three air shows were planned for the whole country, with two air shows planned for southern Ireland in Foynes and Bray. She indicated that the Air Show for 2016 would cost approximately €120,000.

Members indicated that they had enjoyed the 2015 Foynes Air Show and that the event should be funded by the full Council, and not solely the Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale, as it was an event that drew visitors from every part of Ireland. Members expressed disappointment that this had not been agreed by full Council.

8. Economic Development & Planning

(a) To note update on two thatched cottages in Adare damaged by fire.

Circulated, report of the Senior Executive Planner, Economic Development and Planning dated 1st February, 2016 setting out update on the status of two thatched cottages in Adare damaged by fire.

The report was noted by the Members.

(b) To note update on the Taking in Charge of Ballyvareen Estate.

Circulated, report of the Director of Service, Economic Development and Planning dated February, 2016 setting out update on the status of the Taking in Charge of Ballyvareen Estate.

Members requested that they be informed of the shortfall in this case between the cost of the required works and the amount of the bond recovered and what plans were in place to deal with outstanding issues.

9. Flooding Issues

To receive update on proposals to address the flooding issues in Foynes, Askeaton and Ballysteen.

It was noted that this item was discussed at the commencement of the Meeting.

10. Sewerage Treatment Plant in Askeaton

Members noted that positive progress was being made on this project.

11. Footpaths in Adare

To receive update on request to provide footpaths from Adare village to the GAA grounds in Adare.

The Operations Manager, South and West Division indicated that the existing road width would not cater for the provision of a footpath. He stated that the requirement of a 1.2m footpath would lead to the roadway being reduced to one way traffic, therefore, the inclusion of a footpath would require the removal of the hedgerow and works would involve negotiation with landowners along the route. He added that approximate costings for the works were in the region of €400,000 to €500,000 and currently the Council has no funding for this project.

Members indicated that these works could be provided in conjunction with the Proposed N21 Adare Western Approach Improvement Scheme.

12. Correspondence

Correspondence was noted.

The following items were discussed at the conclusion of the Agenda with the consent of the Cathaoirleach.

Councillor Keary raised the issue of overlay works at Killeheen / Reens Pike and expressed disappointment that safety improvements works had not been carried out in conjunction with same. The Operations Manager, South and West Division indicated that this issue had been raised with the Road Design Team.

Councillor Sheahan requested that Limerick City and County Council take possession and restore a thatched cottage known as Hartes Cottage located on the western side of the River Deel near the Franciscan Friary.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Dated: _____