

CORRESPONDENCE

MAY 2023 Council Meeting

- Letter received on 27th March, 2023, from the County Secretary & Communications Officer, Wexford County Council, outlining resolution adopted by the Council concerning submissions/observations relating to planning applications.
- Letter addressed to Mr. Darragh O'Brien, TD, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, received on 3rd April, 2023, from the Meetings Administrator, Offaly County Council – and copied to all Local Authorities - outlining resolution adopted by Offaly County Council calling on the Government to extend the Eviction Ban.
- Email received on 4th April, 2023, from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, in reply to resolution adopted by the Council that the tenants of Approved Housing Bodies be given the same rights as local authority housing tenants in the option of purchasing their rented home, should they wish to do so.
- Letter received on 25th April, 2023, from the County Secretary & Communications Officer, Wexford County Council, outlining resolution adopted by the Council affirming its commitment to the Able Disabled (AD) campaign as a means of inclusion and prioritising the needs of those with a disability by companies and utilities, and furthermore calling on various Bodies to engage, promote and sign up to the AD Aware Programme.
- Letter received on 28th April, 2023, from the Meetings Administrator, Westmeath County Council, outlining resolution adopted by the Council calling on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to support and encourage the immediate construction of affordable housing units by temporarily removing the need for local authority contributions and facilitating the designation of affordable units in developments already in the planning system or have a grant of planning.
- Letter received on 9th May, 2023, from the Meetings Administrator, Mayo County Council, in relation to Grant Levels for the Croí Cónaithe Scheme.
- Letter received on 11th May, 2023, from the Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services, Finance and Support Services Directorate, outlining resolution adopted by the Council supporting the Macre na Fairme campaign entitled 'The Rural Revival – Steps for Our Future.'
- Letter received on 15th May, 2023, from Abbeyfeale Community Council seeking the immediate reversal to recent changes implemented in the Rates Scheme with regard to Vacant Commercial Properties specific to the Abbeyfeale Town area.

- Letter received on 16th May, 2023, from the Meetings Administrator, Kerry County Council, outlining resolution adopted by the Council that correspondence with Elected Members be changed to a paperless, electronic system for those wishing to avail of it.
- Letter received on 16th May, 2023, from the Meetings Administrator, Kerry County Council, outlining resolution adopted by the Council calling on the Government to immediately initiate a National Pension Scheme for the State.

County Secretary

MD/ZP

22nd March, 2023

Re: March 2023 Meeting Wexford County Council

Dear Meeting Administrator,

At the March Meeting of Wexford County Council the Members passed the following motion:

(a) Any person or body, on payment of the prescribed fee, may make a submission or observation in writing to a planning authority in relation to a planning application within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

b) Any submission or observation received

Shall—

(i) State the name of the person or body making the submission or observation, and

(ii) Indicate the address to which any correspondence relating to the application should be sent.

(2) Subject to article 26, the planning authority shall acknowledge any submissions or observations as soon as may be after receipt in the form set out at Form No. 3 of Schedule 3, or a form substantially to the like effect.

(3) Where a submission or observation, under this article, is received by the planning authority after the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt of the application, the planning authority shall return to the person or body concerned the submission or observation received and the fee and notify the person or body that their submission or observation cannot be considered by the planning authority.

(4) Where the planning authority so consents, a submission or observation under sub-article (1) may be made in electronic form.



"This council asks the minister to strengthen section 29/b/ sub sections (1) and (2) of the planning and development, (submissions or observations in relation to planning application) to put an end to bogus submissions or objections and that the SPC would look to see if this local authority could change our own policies to avoid this.

If this motion is passed that it would be circulated to all local authorities."

It was agreed to send a copy of this motion to all Councils for their support.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Drea,
County Secretary & Communications Officer
e-mail: michael.drea@wexfordcoco.ie
Phone: 053 9196260





Mr. Darragh O'Brien T.D.
Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Custom House
Dublin 1
D01W6X0

3rd April 2023

RE: Resolution from Offaly County Council

Dear Minister

At the March meeting of Offaly County Council, the Members passed a resolution that Offaly County Council calls on the Government to extend the Eviction Ban for all 'No Fault' tenants who face eviction until meaningful action is taken, to include measures that will ensure that thousands of children and their parents around the country aren't added to the growing Homeless List."

The members requested that all local authorities receive notice of this passed motion requesting support.

The members would welcome your comments on this issue.

Yours sincerely



Mr. Gerard Bruton

Meeting Administrator



From: Minister O'Brien Office
Sent: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 9:41 AM
To: Customer Services
Subject: [EXTERNAL]HPLG-MOBO-01118-2023 FAO: Laura Flannery

4th April 2023

customerservices@limerick.ie

Ref: HPLG-MOBO-01118-2023

Dear Ms. Flannery,

Thank you for your email to Mr. Darragh O'Brien, T.D., Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, in connection with your query.

Your correspondence is currently receiving attention and a further reply will issue as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Niamh Redmond

Private Secretary



County Secretary

MD/ZP

20th April, 2023

Re: April 2023 Meeting Wexford County Council

Dear Meeting Administrator,

At the April Meeting of Wexford County Council the Members passed the following motion:

"That Wexford Council endorses and remains committed to the roll out of the Able Disabled campaign as a means of inclusion and prioritising the needs of those with a disability by companies and utilities.

Furthermore, as part of the evolving nationwide expansion of the AD call sign, this Council calls on all Chambers of Commerce members, County Councils and all utilities to engage, promote, and sign up to the AD Aware Programme as part of their corporate social responsibilities.

Upon passage, this motion is circulated to all Local Authorities, Chambers of Commerce Ireland, Regulators and Government Information Service for dissemination."

I would appreciate if you could note the view of the Members and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,


Michael Drea,
County Secretary & Communications Officer
e-mail: michael.drea@wexfordcoco.ie
Phone: 053 9196260



25 April 2023

To: All Local Authorities

Re: Motion of Westmeath County Council

A Chara,

At the recent meeting of Westmeath County Council held on 24 April 2023, the following resolution was passed, and it was agreed to circulate it to all Local Authorities for your attention:

"That Westmeath County Council would write to the Minister of Housing and request that he support and encourage the immediate construction of affordable housing units by temporarily removing the need for local authority contributions and facilitating the designation of affordable units in developments that are in the planning system or that have a grant of planning."

I would be grateful if you would bring the contents of this letter to the Elected Members at the next meeting of your Local Authority.

Mise le meas,



Anne Galvin,

Meetings Administrator,
Corporate Services.



8th May 2023

To: All Councils

Re. Grant levels for Croí Cónaithe Scheme

Dear Meeting Administrator,

Mayo County Council, at its meeting of 3rd April 2023, passed the following resolution:

"I respectfully seek the support of my colleagues and Management of Mayo County Council to petition the Minister for the Housing, Local Government and Heritage to double the maximum grants for the Croí Cónaithe Scheme from €30,000 for a vacant property and €50,000 for a vacant property confirmed derelict to €60,000 and €100,000 respectively, given the recent unprecedented increases in the price of construction materials and the fact that these increases have not yet stabilised. In addition, I respectfully ask for your support to petition the Minister to expand the Croí Cónaithe Scheme to owners who wish to renovate vacant or vacant homes confirmed derelict, subject to conditions that the property is subsequently used for long term occupancy either through a sale or through a long-term lease. Furthermore, that those approved under the existing scheme be included when the changes have been implemented, if they have not yet drawn down their funding."

I would be grateful if you could circulate to your members.



Yours sincerely,


Martina Hughes
Meetings Administrator
Mayo County Council



COMHAIRLE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | CLARE
COUNTY COUNCIL

9th May, 2023.

Our Ref: May 23 - 29/AR/AC

Mr Michael Curran,
Chief Executive,
Macra na Feirme,
Irish Farm Centre,
Bluebell,
Dublin 12.



Dear Mr Curran,

At the May meeting of the Council the members passed the following resolution and requested that their message of support be forwarded to you:

"That Clare County Council supports the recent Macra na Feirme campaign, entitled "The Rural Revival, Steps for our Future". This campaign was a march that departed Athy, Co. Kildare at 7pm on Tuesday, April 25th, marching through the night, physically carrying their message, before arriving at Government Buildings circa 1pm on Wednesday, April 27th. The message is simple, Macra Na Feirme members want to be able remain at home, working and living in their own communities and the key components of their message are as follows:
Accessing affordable housing and cumbersome housing planning guidelines.
Disjointed and scarce healthcare services for rural communities.
The Government's definition of a family farm as 'average' and 'typical'.
No recognition or engagement by Government on a farming succession scheme.
Lack of planning for the future of our rural communities informed by rural people.
Imposition of quotas on young farmers availing of grant aid support.
Lack of public transport for rural Ireland.
Proposals to rewet large areas of rural Ireland.
I am also requesting that this Notice of Motion be circulated to all other local authorities."

Yours sincerely,

Ann Reynolds

Ann Reynolds,
Senior Executive Officer,
Corporate Services Department,
Finance and Support Services Directorate.

An Roinn Seirbhísí Corparáideach
Stiúrthóireacht Airgeadais agus Seirbhísí Tacaiochta
Áras Contae an Chláir, Bóthar Nua, Inis, Co. an Chláir, V95 DXP2

Corporate Services Department
Finance and Support Services Directorate
Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare, V95 DXP2



Abbeyfeale Community Council

www.Abbeyfeale.ie

AbbeyfealeCommunityCouncil@gmail.com Fully Compliant with CRA Governance Code

"To continuously look for and effect ways which will enhance the lives and general surroundings of those living within and those visiting the environs of Abbeyfeale"

Registered Address:

Tara House, Killarney Road
Abbeyfeale, Co Limerick V94 K00P

CRO Number 597507

CRA Reg Charity Number 20152192

Revenue Charity Number: CHY 21917

Limerick PPN: LIMPPN-00107

Mayor Cllr Francis Foley

Pat Daly – CEO LCCC

Sean Coughlan – LCCC / Finance

Kieran O'Gorman - LCCC / Town Centre First Plan

Karen Burke - LCCC / Town Centre First Plan

All County Councillors – LCCC / via email sent to corporate@Limerick.ie

15th May 2023

Immediate reversal required to recent changes implemented in the Rates Scheme with regards to Vacant Commercial Properties – specific to the Abbeyfeale Town area.

Following feedback from a number of affected Business owners and Members of the local Town Centre First Plan Committee, along with significant debates at two of our Abbeyfeale Community Council Meetings in April and May of this year, there is now a significant concern with regards to the negative impact that the recently introduced 50% Rates Levy on Vacant Commercial Buildings will have on the future viability of Abbeyfeale Town.

There is growing evidence within the Community that these recently implemented changes will have a significant negative effect on both the owners of the respective buildings and the overall future commercial viability of the Town.

These changes are also seen as a direct contradiction to LCCC's Draft Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan 2023-2029 where it states on Page 31 under Section 4.4 Retail and Commercial;

Policy RL 3: Retail Strategic Policy: It is policy of the Council to:

Support the sustainable long-term retail growth of Abbeyfeale as a Tier 3 Level 1 Small Town, in accordance with the Limerick Development Plan and the Retail Strategy for the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area and County Limerick 2022 – 2028.

Objectives RL 01: Retail Development: It is an objective of the Council to:

Enhance the vitality and viability of Abbeyfeale as a retail service centre and to improve the quantity and quality of retail provision in the town by:



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- a) Emphasising the town centre as the primary shopping location.
- b) Encouraging the upgrade and expansion of existing retail units and the development of new units in the town centre.
- c) Ensuring that proposals with retail development elements comply with the provision of the Retail Strategy for the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area and County Limerick 2022 – 2028 in relation to site suitability and the sequential approach and ensure proposals which would undermine the vitality and viability of Abbeyfeale town centre will not be permitted.
- d) Encourage proposals at ground floor level within the town core for commercial uses.
- e) Prohibit the proliferation of uses in the town centre which would detract from the amenities, or the vitality and viability of the area such as fast-food outlets, amusement

The recent changes made in Limerick City & Council Council's (LCCC) Vacant Property Grant Allowance Scheme which now requires Business owners with up to €11,888 Annual Rate Demand to pay 50% of the Rates on those vacant premises, has become a huge concern to Business owners, locals and Community Groups alike.

The reasoning for LCCC's decision to implement this revised Rates Scheme may have been executed in good faith to encourage owners of Vacant Business Premises to convert to Residential Premises in the overall need for additional Housing Units, but the reality on the ground is that there is growing evidence that this newly revised Rates Scheme will only have an overall detrimental effect on the future viability of Abbeyfeale – both from a Commercial and Residential perspective.

This Scheme needs to be reversed immediately to the Scheme of 2022 and previous years.

The majority of small Business owners in Abbeyfeale are unable to afford residential conversions even with the newly enhanced Government Vacant Property Grants.

The monetary gain to the Council is going to be negligible but the consequences to Abbeyfeale Town and the wider Community has the potential to be huge. Most Business owners in Abbeyfeale with vacant Commercial Units / Premises will be forced to remove the commercial aspect of the Premises but won't be able proceed with residential conversions – so defeating the purpose of trying to attract new Businesses and new Families into Abbeyfeale.



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Notwithstanding the fact that there is growing resentment anyway across the County to the introduction of LCCC's newly revised Rates Scheme, Abbeyfeale is currently struggling more than most to attract both young Families and new Businesses into the Town and wider Community. It is very much seen by Business owners, locals, and Community Groups alike that by targeting struggling Business owners in this manner is only going to force a situation where there will be far less potential to attract new businesses, and especially in the current economic climate in West Limerick.

It is help that is desperately required at this moment in time, and if a reversal of the recently implemented measures is not enacted in the very near future, it will inevitably have a knock-on effect of discouraging the very demographic that we want to see settling in the Town.

The Members and Board of Abbeyfeale Community Council would like the following points to be reflected upon with the utmost sincerity and urgency.

- (i) Abbeyfeale has one of the worst Commercial Vacancy Rates in the Country, with the owners of these respective Buildings already under enormous strain just to try and survive, along with the added difficulty of trying to continuously maintain their respective Buildings. The recently revised Commercial Rates Scheme which by default focuses on the most vulnerable of Businesses is the kind of added pressure that will only hinder any chance of potential progress.
- (ii) Even in the unlikely event that this Scheme may succeed in getting 33% of Business Premises changed over into Residential Units, that in itself would by default create a shortage of Business opportunities at a time of population growth – again having a long-term detrimental effect on the Town Centre.
- (iii) The new Abbeyfeale Traffic Management Scheme which is shortly being implemented and which is specifically designed to encourage the increase in footfall and growth within the Town, is going to be pointless if on the other hand there is a parallel Scheme hampering the establishment of new Businesses in the Town. Add to this the unlikelihood of any new Business wanting to set up in Abbeyfeale during a major Public Realm Project which will most likely take approx. two years to complete.
- (iv) The Members and Board of Abbeyfeale Community Council along with local Members of the Town Centre First Plan Committee cannot see the merit in hindering the most



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vulnerable of Business owners in this manner, especially after Abbeyfeale was chosen as the first Town in Limerick to be part of the nationwide Town Centre First Plan initiative. Very much defeating the purpose of this Government backed initiative to try and improve Towns such as Abbeyfeale.

(v) The Town Centre First Plan is also about fresh thinking in helping the People, Businesses and Community Groups within these chosen Towns and Communities to be able "think outside the norm" and implement creative ways in which Businesses can thrive, and where young Families will feel attracted to.

.... Both the Town Centre First Plan initiative and the Traffic Management Scheme will not be able realise their full potential unless the revised Rates Scheme on Vacant Commercial Buildings in Abbeyfeale is reversed, and the owners given the freedom and opportunity to invest their hard-earned income in the critical aspects of ongoing maintenance and promotion of their Buildings / Businesses.

(vi) Recent research by owners of vacant Business Premises to see what it would cost to properly repurpose such Buildings into Residential Units while trying to comply with Residential Building Regulations has shown that even the recently enhanced Government Grants would not come anyway near the actual cost the Business owner would have to impart for such a conversion.

.... Again, forcing a scenario where there will be reduced availability of Commercial Premises and little or no additional Housing Units in the Town.

(vii) Bearing in mind the overall proactive reasoning and huge amount of effort and funding that has gone into the development and implementation of the Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan 2023-2029, the Abbeyfeale Traffic Management Scheme, and the Abbeyfeale Town Centre First Plan, to ensure the long-term viability of Abbeyfeale Town and its surrounding environs, it is extremely difficult to understand why changes to a parallel Scheme such as Commercial Rates that goes against the collective proactive efforts of all the other Schemes and is deemed completely contradictory in terms to those Schemes, would then be adapted.

.... Again defeating the purpose, and an urgent need for its immediate reversal.

It is for the above reasons, and the future survival of our Town and Community, that the reversal of the recent changes to the Rates Scheme on Vacant Commercial Buildings in the Abbeyfeale Area needs to be implemented as soon as possible.



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On behalf of the Members and Board of Abbeyfeale Community Council

Signed:

Maurice O'Connell - Chairperson

Aoife Keogh - Secretary

Frank Dennison - Joint Treasurer

James Harnett - Joint Treasurer

15 / 05 / 2023



16 May 2023

To/ Each Local Authority

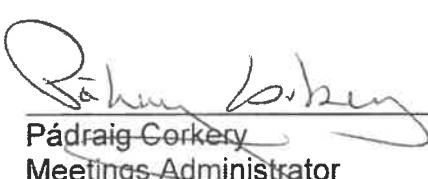
A Chairde,

I write to inform you that the members of Kerry County Council at their recent meeting adopted the following resolution.

"That we as a Council would lead by example and change our correspondence with elected members to a paperless, electronic system for those who wish to avail of it, as it would greatly reduce our paper trail, and would also make it easier from a GDPR perspective as we would not have to worry about the disposal of said correspondence when it is no longer required."

It was agreed to circulate this motion to all local authorities for their attention and consideration.

Mise le meas,


Pádraig Corkery
Meetings Administrator



16 May 2023

To/ Each Local Authority

A Chairde,

I write to inform you that the members of Kerry County Council at their recent meeting adopted the following resolution.

"That Kerry County Council calls on the Government to immediately initiate a National Pension Scheme for the State. That this motion would be circulated to all Local Authorities."

It was agreed to circulate this motion to all local authorities for their attention and consideration.

Mise le meas,


Pádraig Corkery
Meetings Administrator