

***Minutes of the Piltown Municipal District Meeting held on Wednesday,
1st February, 2023 at 10.00am in the Meeting Room, Ferrybank Library***

Present: Cllr F. Doherty, Cathaoirleach
Cllrs G. Frisby, P. Dunphy and T. Breathnach

In attendance: D. Malone, A/Director of Services, S. Cullen, Area Engineer, S. Coverdale, Broadband Officer and O. Bannon, Staff Officer

Apologies: Cllr E. Aylward, M. Arthurs, Meetings Administrator

1. **Minutes of Ordinary Statutory Meeting held 4th January, 2023** – proposed by Cllr Frisby, seconded by Cllr Dunphy and agreed.

Cllr Doherty took the opportunity to congratulate the Mullinavat Matters group on winning second place in the village category of the recent Pride of Place Awards. She commended all community groups who do such wonderful work for their local communities.

Cllr Doherty also congratulated Ballyhale Shamrocks on winning the All-Ireland Senior Club Hurling Championship.

Matters Arising

Ferrybank Shopping Centre – in response to Cllr Frisby, D. Malone confirmed that correspondence has been sent to the reputed owners of the centre and response is awaited. D. Malone agreed to follow up on the matter for the next meeting. **Action DM**

Tower Road Scheme – S. Cullen confirmed to Cllr Dunphy that arrangements are underway for an event to mark the commencement of the project, which will be held within the construction compound currently being set up. Formal invites for this occasion will issue in the coming weeks. Cllr Dunphy also asked if it would be possible to erect a memorial plaque to honour those who lost their lives at this location, S. Cullen confirmed that a similar request has been made to the project team and same is under consideration.

2. **Consideration of Reports and Recommendations**

- (a) ***Broadband Update***

Cllr Doherty welcomed Steve Coverdale, who was in attendance to update the members in relation to the broadband rollout. He circulated a report to members and outlined details regarding regional and local exchanges, the rollout status per Kilkenny Deployment Area, covered under the National Broadband Plan and the timelines for completion of same. The members raised concerns about the difficulties experienced by villages covered in the Blue Areas with very poor broadband and who are outside the NBP area.

It was noted that due to the poor broadband in Piltown and Fiddown villages, a group of volunteers in Piltown undertook a community led initiative, with funding from Leader, to provide fibre broadband for local residents in the blue area. This initiative was commended by Cllr Dunphy, which involved huge commitment and a lot of hard work by those involved. He advised that the group now want to expand their efforts to extend the service to others in the village, however funding is an issue for them and he asked if other sources of funding could be examined. S. Coverdale agreed to look into the matter.

S. Coverdale advised that up to date information on the rollout can be found on the NBI website at www.nbi.ie and also advised that there is a dedicated webpage for elected members www.nbi.ie/reps to keep up to date with the work being done in the area. Contact email and phone number for NBI were also noted.

Some queries from members followed, to which S. Coverdale responded.

Cllr Breathnach requested that an annual update on the broadband rollout be provided at the Council meeting, which he said would be due this month, in order to keep in contact with NBI. S. Coverdale agreed to look into this.

In response to Cllr Dunphy, S. Coverdale agreed to check works activity in Mooncoin, particularly in the Comeragh View estate.

The members thanked Steve Coverdale for his presentation and he withdrew from the meeting.

(b) Monthly Roadworks Update

S. Cullen circulated a report outlining works being progressed and completed over the period since the last meeting under discretionary maintenance and other works. Updates with regard to the N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme, N24 Tower Road, N24 Carrick Road and Belmont Link Road were also noted.

The following items were raised and discussed:-

R711 Greyway – Cllr Doherty raised concerns that groups of cyclists were not using this designated cycling track.

Poor Visibility – Cllr Doherty raised issue regarding piece of high ground which is overgrown and affecting visibility and safe use of the junction at Jamestown, near the N25 Glenmore roundabout. S. Cullen agreed to look at this issue.

N24 Carrick Road – Cllr Breathnach asked what will determine if an oral hearing is required. It was noted that the decision in relation to the holding of oral hearings lies with An Bord Pleanála, based on the submissions received and the complexities of the project. Cllr Dunphy asked when An Bord Pleanála's decision for this scheme is due to be announced, S. Cullen agreed to enquire.

Public Light, Polerone Road – in answer to Cllr Dunphy's query, S. Cullen advised that when the footpath was constructed, installation of public lighting was facilitated but was not included as part of the project. S. Cullen agreed to confirm this and revert to Cllr Dunphy. **Action SC**

Mill Road Footpath – Cllr Dunphy asked for update on this and a timeframe for completion. S. Cullen advised that the next step is to agree the options report with the NTA, which is being amended by KCC taking account of the comments received from the NTA. The scheme can proceed once the options report has been finalised and agreed with the NTA.

Kilmogue Dolmen – S. Cullen advised Cllr Dunphy that works to complete the car park were deferred until 2023, however the archaeologist has been requested to progress with their work to allow completion of works and draw down of funding in the summer.

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme – Cllr Dunphy asked that an invitation be extended to Thomas Brennan to the next meeting to provide an update on the scheme. **Action SC**

A discussion took place regarding major road schemes pending and possible implications around climate action targets. Cllr Breathnach suggested an invitation be extended to Dearbhala Ledwidge, Climate Action Officer, to provide an update with regard to the preparation of the Climate Action Plan and giving an opportunity for a wider discussion around practical measures for the climate change agenda, including public transport for South Kilkenny. D. Malone advised that an update will be given to members at forthcoming Council Meetings in relation to the Climate Action Plan, following which updates can be provided at Municipal District level.

The recent rollout of a new EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy was noted, to make public charging facilities more accessible and encourage more people to use EVs. Cllr Dunphy noted measures taken so far under active travel, which are welcome but raised concerns about the ability to provide sufficient transport options to cater for the rural population. Cllr Frisby also noted a scheme for sports clubs to avail of funding to install charge points in their communities which will further encourage use of EVs and stated that KCC should be active in that initiative and that this could form part of Kilkenny's Climate Action Plan.

Hedgecutting – Cllr Doherty took the opportunity to remind landowners to take responsibility for their hedgerows and to make sure to undertake any cutting required before the end of the month.

(c) South East Greenway Update

D. Malone provided update to members as follows:-

The construction of the South East Greenway over a length of 24km has been divided into a number of lots so as to allow progress, lots 1 and 3 (from New Ross boatyard to Glenmore), are now substantially completed.

The Greenway Project Office are exploring the possibility of opening section of the Greenway as they are completed. The initial main focus is on lots 1(Part of) & 3 Rosbercon to Glenmore, the combined length of which is 8km.

In late 2022 a tender competition for two contracts was advertised for the installation of (a) public lighting ducting and (b) carpark works to facilitate advance opening of lots 1 & 3. These works are about to commence and the programme target for same is 8-10 weeks.

During 2022 the decision was taken to split lot 5 into two sections of equal length comprising lot 5a(Ferrybank to Luffany) and lot 5b(Luffany to Aylwardstown South). In early October 2022, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) requested a third party due diligence check be undertaken on lot 5a tender documents prior to advertising for tenderers. Tramore House Regional Design Office undertook this process and the tender documents are in the process of being altered. It is now anticipated that the tender for lot 5a will be advertised in Q1 2023.

D. Malone responded to queries from members, including the following.

Cllr Doherty raised a query in relation to the green area at Belfield Estate and proposed removal of hedgerow. S. Cullen confirmed that he will meet with residents to discuss proposals, which form part of security measures to prevent access and anti-social behaviour on the greenway.

D. Malone confirmed to Cllr Dunphy that permanent fencing will be erected along at Ard Glas estate, before the opening of the greenway.

In answer to Cllr Breathnach, D. Malone confirmed that the greenway is regarded as a transport project, with a tourism element to it and funding being provided by TII.

With regard to links to Slieverue and Glenmore, D. Malone confirmed to Cllr Frisby that commencement of the planning process is imminent and no issues with regard to funding is anticipated.

(d) North Quays Update

D. Malone advised members that BAM have been announced as the main Contractors for the North Quays infrastructure project, with expected to commence by the end of March 2023 and will be completed by the end of 2025.

He confirmed that land transfers have been completed between WCCC and Harcourt Developments and CIE to enable the contract to proceed.

The contract for the Ferrybank pumping station is progressing, to increase capacity and enabling works on the South Quays are completed. The Rock Stabilization Works adjacent to the railway station are now nearing completion and Abbey Road footpath works are expected to finish towards the end of the month.

Decision is awaited from An Bord Pleanála on the Part 10 application for the Flood Defence works in order to limit any further flood events. Official opening event being arranged for this towards the end of March.

3. Business prescribed by Statute, Standing Order or Resolution of the Municipal District Members for transaction at such meetings

None

4. Other business set forth in the Notice convening the meeting

None

5. Notice of Motion

None

6. Correspondence

None

7. AOB:

(a) Salting of Roads

Cllr Doherty raised this item, noting the great work being carried out by Council staff and the plan in place at present, however she referred to other routes which were not included on the current plan, but were a cause of concern for local residents during icy spells. She asked if there were any measures that could be taken to address these concerns. S. Cullen advised that the Council is constrained by a number of factors, with regard to priority routes, the time taken to complete a particular route, the volume of salt carried and rate of spread required. In relation to Priority 3 routes, it was noted that the areas around schools are prioritised, along with significant hills that would be treacherous if not treated and other strategic routes with significant volumes of traffic using them, subject to resources available. It was agreed that the plan can be reviewed, however if new routes are to be included, it is likely that others will have to be dropped from the plan.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 1st March at 10.00am.

Cllr Doherty thanked all for their attendance. This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: Fidelis Doherty
Cathaoirleach

Dated: 1/3/23