



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

Cork County Council

Minutes of Proceedings at Meeting of Cork County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Cork and by Microsoft Teams on 11th April 2022 at 11am.

I LATHAIR

Comhairleoir Cathal Rasmussen, Leas-Mhéara

Comhairleoiri: Ó Colmáin, Ó Murchú C, Ó Suilleabháin S, Uí Shuilleabháin M, Ó Donnabháin, Ó Coileáin, Ó Murchú PG, Ní Chroinín, Ó Conaill, Mac Craith, Uí Daltún, Ó Muircheartaigh, Uí Bhuachalla, De Faoite S, Daltún Ó Suilleabháin, Ní Cheallacháin, Barra, Sheppard, Rasmussen, Ó Conchubair S, Ó Conchubair A, MacCarthaigh N, Ó Flionn, Uí Bhriain, Ó Laoghaire, Dawson, De Róiste, Ó Muineacháin B, Ó Dubhghaill, Ó Sé SP, Ó Murchú G, Críod, Ó Muineacháin G, Ó Luanaigh, Ó Cochláin M, Uí Loinsigh, Ó Luasa, Ó Haodha Padraig, Ó Murchú Gearóid, Ó Cinnéide, Ó Madaoin, Ó Sé T, Léineacháin Uí Foghlú, Ó Héigheartaigh, Ní Heachthigheirn, Uí Thuama, MacCarthaigh S, Ní Cheallaigh, Ó Cearbhaill, Ó Muirthile, Uí Chaochlaoidh, Ó Haodha Pól

PRESENT

Councillor Cathal Rasmussen, Deputy Mayor, presided.

Councillor: Coleman, Murphy K, O'Sullivan J, O'Sullivan M, O' Donovan, Collins, Murphy PG, Cronin, O' Connell, McGrath, D'Alton, Murtagh, Buckley A, White J, Dalton – O' Sullivan, O' Callaghan, Barry, Sheppard, Rasmussen, O' Connor S, O' Connor A, McCarthy N, O' Flynn, O' Brien, O' Leary, Dawson, Roche, Moynihan B, Doyle, O' Shea JP, Murphy G, Creed, Moynihan G, Looney, Coughlan M, Lynch, Lucey, Hayes Pat, Murphy Gearóid, Kennedy, Madden, O' Shea T, Linehan – Foley, Hegarty M, Ahern, Twomey, McCarthy S, Kelly, Carroll, Hurley, Coakley, Hayes Paul

Chief Executive, Senior Executive Officer.

[a] CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

1/4-1

Proposed by Cllr. Michael Hegarty

Seconded by Cllr. Pat Hayes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Meeting held on 28th March, 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Deputy Mayor.

[b] VOTES OF SYMPATHY

2/4-1

TO: Mr. Pat O'Sullivan on the death of his father Patrick O'Sullivan.

TO: Ms. Sandra McLellan on the death of her mother in law Eileen McLellan.

[c] STATUTORY BUSINESS

3/4-1

DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY:

SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001:

Members noted the following disposals: _

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BANDON/KINSALE:

Lease of property at No. 47 Deerpark, Bandon

3(a)4-1

In accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, the disposal of the property as shown hereunder shall be carried out in accordance with the terms specified in the notice issued to members dated 1st April, 2022.

Situation: No 47, Deerpark, Bandon, Co. Cork

Area: 0.0764 hectares

Consideration: €10 per annum

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF CARRIGALINE:

Lease of land at Marmullane Park, Passage West, Co Cork

3(b)/4-1

In accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, the disposal of the property as shown hereunder shall be carried out in accordance with the terms specified in the notice issued to members dated 1st April, 2022.

Situation: Marmullane Park, Passage West, Co. Cork

Consideration: €1 nominal fee

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF EAST CORK:

Disposal of house at No. 47 Sarsfield Terrace, Youghal, Co Cork

3(c)4-1

In accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, the disposal of the property as shown hereunder shall be carried out in accordance with the terms specified in the notice issued to members dated 1st April, 2022.

Situation: Disposal of house at No. 47, Sarsfield Terrace, Youghal, Co Cork.

Consideration: €75,000

4/4-1

**PART 8 MANAGER'S REPORT SECTIONS 179(3) OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000
(AS AMENDED)**

RESOLUTION UNDER SECTION 179 OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000, AS AMENDED

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF KANTURK/MALLOW:

Part 8 Chief Executive's Report on Charleville Court and Market House development and upgrade.

Proposed by Councillor Ian Doyle

Seconded by Councillor Pat Hayes

RESOLVED:

Noting that in accordance with Section 179 of the Planning & Development Act 2000, (as amended), notice of the proposed development and upgrade was published, 3 submission was received in respect of the proposal, approval pursuant to Section 179 of the Act is given for the following:

Charleville Court and Market House development and upgrade.

FILLING OF VACANCIES ON COMMITTEES AND EXTERNAL BODIES:

5/4-1

Appointment of Councillor Caroline Cronin to Committees as follows:

- Social Inclusion, Community & Rural Development SPC
- Arts, Culture and Languages SPC
- Regional Health Forum

Proposed by Councillor John Paul O'Shea

Seconded by Councillor Michael Hegarty

[e] **REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES** **TÚAIRISCÍ AGUS MOLTAÍ Ó CHOISTÍ**

6/4-1

CORPORATE POLICY GROUP

Approval of attendance by Members at conferences on the Conference list for April 2022

Proposed by Councillor Frank O'Flynn

Seconded by Councillor Seamus McGrath

[g] **CORRESPONDENCE FROM GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS** **COMHFHREAGRAS Ó RANNA RIALTAS**

7/4-1

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Correspondence received 1st April 2022 in response to the Council's letter dated 14th March 2022 requesting an update on the pending legislation on Community CCTV systems.

Members noted the correspondence.

[h] **NOTICES OF MOTION** **FOGRAÍ RÚN**

CEMETERIES

8/4-1

Councillor Karen Coakley proposed, seconded by Councillor Paul Hayes

“I call upon this Council to increase the budget to maintain our graveyards and re-instate outdoor staff”.

9/4-1

“That this council would provide a review of the programme they have in place for the upkeep and maintenance of graveyards and cemeteries around the county.”

Councillor Joe Carroll proposed, seconded by Councillor Gobnait Moynihan

RESPONSE:

Context

Cork County Council manages and oversees a total of 261 no. burial grounds across the county. These can be categorized as follows:

- 96 no. active burial grounds
- 165 no. old / inactive burial grounds

Budgetary Provision

As part of the annual Budgetary process, Cork County Council members consider the various needs and demands in the context of the level of financial provision that is available. Each Municipal District is allocated a revenue budget for the maintenance and upkeep of Cork County Council burial grounds within its administrative area.

There are various arrangements in place for maintaining burial grounds at a local level. These arrangements tend to be quite localised and have developed over time. The arrangements typically have regard for the nature, location and size of the burial ground, as well as the level of activity taking place in terms of interments.

The total revenue budget made available to Municipal Districts countywide in 2022 is €3.26 million.

Maintenance Arrangements

Maintenance and grass cutting arrangements include:

- Cork County Council caretakers (primarily part time, with some larger burial grounds having full time caretakers) – these are all direct labour staff who carry out the work during normal working hours
- Cork County Council staff carrying out the work outside of normal working hours
- Local development company CE scheme placements
- Local community / voluntary input
- Engagement of contractors.

The duties vary from location to location, and may include:

- Grass cutting
- General maintenance
- Strimming
- Weeding & edging

Cork County Council continually strives to obtain best value for money in the use of its scarce resources. To this end, arrangements are regularly reviewed and monitored so as to ensure that efficiencies are optimised. The level of service that is provided is based on the budgetary provision available and the most appropriate and cost effective arrangement available locally.

It is noted that this matter was recently discussed by members of the West Cork Municipal District. Municipal District members were asked to identify specific Burial Grounds within the MD where issues have been identified that may need to be considered. It is noted that the MD Officer is awaiting a list of Burial Grounds where there are specific issues to be considered.

During this discussion the Members made the following points:

- Members stated that some sacred places are not being looked after. Graveyards need more work. Footpaths need repair.
- They said there was no seating for visitors.
- Members said cemeteries need maintenance and preservation.
- Voluntary groups are doing the grass cutting.
- They stated that the work being done is not good enough and can be embarrassing for Members at times during funerals.
- The tendering process needs to be looked at.
- At times the Undertakers must do the work before funerals in the cemeteries.
- Said the Council want the Tidy Towns Committees to clean the towns and voluntary groups to clean the cemeteries.
- Suggested that the Municipal Districts need more support to upgrade footpaths and remove trees when necessary.
- Stated that no attention is given to hedgerows in cemeteries.
- Appreciate the €3.26m budget being spend on cemeteries.
- Said it is a county wide issue.
- Voluntary groups are willing to do the work but there are insurance issues.
- Stated that this issue has been discussed at Municipal District and Divisional level.
- Said that 33 volunteers worked on St. Mary's Cemetery in Clonakilty over 2 nights to clear it.
- Members said in the Avondu/Blackwater area in North Cork, volunteers are doing the work.
- Suggested it is necessary to combine the efforts of the Council and the volunteers to do the work.
- Asked if it is possible to computerise the work of the Registrar.
- Recommended that the public look after family plots and the green areas and paths be the responsibility of the Council.
- Members acknowledged the work of the Community Groups.
- Stated that Caretakers need to be replaced when they retire.
- Asked to get breakdown of expenditure.
- Said that there were only resources in place to cut the grass twice a year in old graveyards.
- Suggested that burial ground maintenance needs to be looked at during Budget time.
- Acknowledged that individual burial grounds are looked after when issues are raised.
- Recommended a schedule be put in place to deal with the maintenance.
- Noted that no one takes responsibility of old burial grounds not owned by the Council.
- Stated the Council does a good job by and large.
- Stated the maintenance issue includes management of bins, disregarded flowers, earth and wreaths.
- Noted that Caretakers are working well in large cemeteries and suggested that one caretakers could look after a number of smaller cemeteries.
- Recommended the number of outdoor workers be increased.
- Stated the cost of graves have gone through the roof.

- Stated county wide policy is need and asked if it could be discussed at the SPC.
- Said that old cemeteries are the main concern. Abolition of herbicides have become an issue with them as some as only suitable to a strimmer and adequate spraying.
- Stated that some community groups use the Tidy Towns insurance when carrying out the work.
- Asked who is responsible for the private burial grounds.

The Deputy Mayor stated that an old cemetery in Cobh is maintained by the community in conjunction with the Council. He stated the short term issue is the seasonable grass growth and the long term issue is the Budget. He said the main issues were the insurance, maintenance of paths and funding of the work.

The Chief Executive referred to the level of funding that can be put into the services. He said this issue is more appropriately dealt with at local level. He said the report from the Municipal District Director was factual. The detailed matters will be worked at Municipal Level if adjustments are needed. He stated the €3.26 m cover maintenance and Caretakers fees. He encouraged Members to go back to the Municipal District Officers to get a breakdown of the Budget and to discuss it.

He stated that if a burial ground is owned by a church then it is their responsibility. He said the insurance was a complex issue and he would revert to Members through the Director of Services for MDs.

The Deputy Mayor confirmed that if burial grounds need additional work then Members should request through the Municipal Districts. He also said the Budgets for 2023 should be discussed at the Municipal Districts.

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT INCOME LIMITS

10/4-1

Councillor Seamus McGrath proposed, seconded by Councillor Deirdre O'Brien

"To write to the Minister for Housing requesting that the income limits for qualification for social housing support be reviewed and increased as a matter of priority. "

During this discussion the Members made the following points:

- Members stated there was a lot of movement in the last 10 years in the terms of wages and salaries but criteria for Housing Support has remained the same.
- Noted that people slightly over the income level are not eligible for Social Housing but Home Loans, Affordable Housing are not options.
- This is a critical issue for people working but not qualifying.
- The inflationary cycle is causing people to struggle and this issue is likely to continue.
- There is an anomaly between City and County Council support that needs to be addressed.
- Suggested that if the income threshold is increased, it will encourage more people to work.
- The income limits need to be updated as there are a group of people whose income is in the middle and they are loosing out.
- Noted that cost of rent has increased.
- Stated people are giving up work or cutting their hours in order to qualify for Social Housing. The balance needs to be adjusted.
- People are being penalised for working.

- Paid tribute to the staff in Housing Department in floor 4. They are very efficient in processing housing applications.
- “Working poor” are impacted by thresholds for Social Housing.
- Frontline workers were impacted as they worked overtime during the pandemic and this put them over the threshold limit.
- Stated many people did not qualify for the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan. Many people with good income were not eligible as they previously had a mortgage.
- There should be discretion if only just over the threshold limit.
- Said Minister Burke said a review was done recently and will be published shortly.
- Stated the review should be done every 4 to 5 years.
- Noted the working middle class cannot afford to rent. As a result people are being lost out of the community.
- Members hope the affordability issue will be addressed.
- Suggested there should be an ongoing review linked to the Consumer Price Index and inflation.

The Deputy Mayor recommended that Members need to put pressure on TDs and Ministers regarding the review of the income threshold.

Members agreed to write to the Minister for Housing requesting that the income limits for qualification for social housing support be reviewed and increased as a matter of priority. Members asked that the income limits need to be linked to an index like wage growth per annum. In addition, Members asked that consideration be given to allowing deductibles similar to those in a medical card application. Members also asked that the anomaly in the income limits between Cork County and Cork City be addressed.

DEPLETED NUMBERS OF FRONTLINE STAFF

11/4-1

Councillor Michael Paul Murtagh proposed, seconded by Councillor Cathal Rasmussen

“I want to ask for the support of the Council to write to An Taoiseach (if that’s appropriate) to highlight the worrying trend and very serious issues created by depleted numbers of frontline staff. Gardai, Firefighters, Ambulance Paramedics and Defence forces.

During this discussion the Members made the following points:

- Members stated that problems were mounting due to lack of Gardai on the ground. There is an increase in drug use and violence.
- There have been delays of up to 2 hours for the ambulance service.
- Navy patrols have been impacted as there are not enough staff.
- Industrial unrest to defend frontline services is a possibility.
- Members said this is a country wide issue and not just in Cork county.
- Suggested that staffing needs to match the growth in the population numbers.
- Noted that younger people will not join the forces as pay and conditions are an issue.
- Reality is that people working in the forces are almost in poverty. Society depends on these people when things are at the worst.
- Suggested a Recruitment Drive by the defence forces at schools.
- Stated that in some countries the defence forces qualify for Social Housing but not in Ireland as their income is above the threshold.
- Stated that the Ambulance service is currently doing a review of it’s service and a presentation will be made at the next meeting of the Regional Health Forum.

- Said the navy and army have raised these issues at election times.
- Stated that the Garda Sergeants and Inspectors were having their Annual Conference today and wages and conditions were being discussed.
- These services should be funded properly as serious issues are dealt with by the emergency services.

Members agreed to write to An Taoiseach to highlight the worrying trend and very serious issues created by depleted numbers of frontline staff. Gardai, Firefighters, Ambulance Paramedics and Defence forces.

LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES

12/4-1

Councillor Marcia Dalton proposed, seconded by Councillor Ben Dalton O’Sullivan

“That as governments across the European Union grant a range of fiscal supports to stimulate the market uptake of electric vehicles in response to the European Commission’s goal to have at least 30 million electric vehicles on Member State roads by 2030, this Council believes it ethically and morally necessary to highlight the ongoing environmental and social injustices endured by countries such as Chile, Argentina, Bolivia and the Democratic Republic of Congo in meeting the exponentially accelerating demand for the lithium-ion batteries that will enable the Commission’s goal for Europe to become a climate-neutral continent by 2050.

In addition, that this motion and the introduction to the motion would be circulated to all local authorities in Ireland, to the Minister for Transport and to the First Vice-President of the European Commission who also serves as Executive Vice President of the European Commission for the European Green Deal and as European Commissioner for Climate Action.”

During this discussion the Members made the following points:

- Members stated 20% of greenhouse emissions are from vehicles.
- EV ownership is being promoted and lithium is the key.
- Currently most are being imported into the EU. There are 2 methods of lithium extraction (a) The lithium is extracted and the brine is soaked. Large extraction pools are used. This has a huge impact on water supply to residents in a desert area. (b) Hard rock lithium mining also has a huge negative impact on the environment.
- Batteries also contain cobalt 70% is from the democratic region of Congo. Child labour is used by mining companies. There are no laws there about reporting on the supply chain so abuse is happening.
- Recycling of lithium-ion batteries is difficult.
- The raw materials extraction processes have environmental and social consequences.
- People least responsible are paying with negative environmental and health impacts for the first world.
- Members said that luxuries often are produced at the expense of the poorer countries.
- Suggested that letters be set to every Irish Member of the European Parliament.
- Members recommended that the ongoing impacts of extracting metals should be highlighted.
- Noted there are high social costs of EVs but there are also problems caused by car dependence.
- EVs are the future of cars but are not the future of transport. Focus should be on public transport, cycling and walking.
- Said there will always be a dependence on cars.
- The issues raised about lithium-ion batteries should be highlighted.
- Said EVs might be improving greenhouse impacts but is causing other problems.

- Bio-gas should be considered.
- The management of end-of-life batteries and recycling of same must be examined.
- Stated that this is not a problem linked solely to EVs. It is also linked to batteries in various devices. Devices are usually replaced rather than repaired.
- It is very important to move from fossil fuels to clean energy.
- Said it is difficult to get measure to ameliorate the issues.
- Trying to solve a problem but did not give it holistic consideration.
- Said that human assessments needed for policies. There should be emphasis on human impact.
- The bigger picture should be taken into account when considering legislation or policies.
- Proposed sending it to the Environment, Climate Action & Biodiversity SPC.
- Companies need to be held accountable so proper polices need to be put in place.
- The world must become greener but there are consequences.
- Stated that work is happening on how to recycle lithium-ion batteries but not happening fast enough.
- Certification on supply chain is critical.

The Deputy Mayor stated that with change comes problems. He did not recommend taking this topic to the Environment, Climate Action & Biodiversity SPC.

Members agreed to write to Minister for Transport and to the First Vice-President of the European Commission who also serves as Executive Vice President of the European Commission for the European Green Deal and as European Commissioner for Climate Action and all the Irish Members of the European Parliament. In addition, that this motion and the introduction to the motion would be circulated to all local authorities in Ireland.

“That as governments across the European Union grant a range of fiscal supports to stimulate the market uptake of electric vehicles in response to the European Commission’s goal to have at least 30 million electric vehicles on Member State roads by 2030, this Council believes it ethically and morally necessary to highlight the ongoing environmental and social injustices endured by countries such as Chile, Argentina, Bolivia and the Democratic Republic of Congo in meeting the exponentially accelerating demand for the lithium-ion batteries that will enable the Commission’s goal for Europe to become a climate-neutral continent by 2050.”

EXTENSION OF TIME:

As the time was now 1.15pm an extension of time was agreed.

Proposed by Councillor Karen Coakley

Seconded by Councillor Seamus McGrath

[K] VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS

13/4-1

TO: Cobh Pirates Under 18 team who were crowned Bank of Ireland Under 18 Club Cup Champions for 2021/2022.

TO: Skibbereen Rugby Club ladies’ team who won Division 1 Junior Cup.

TO: John and Catherine Field on being presented the Richard Harris Patrons Award in London for dedication to club and Munster Rugby.

TO: Skibbereen Basketball boys who won the County Final.

TO: Lydia Heaphy from Skibbereen Rowing Club who won Silver in the Paola Daloja International Regatta.

TO: Crosshaven Under 14 boys Basketball Team on winning the Championship.

TO: County Librarian and her team for their work involved in the Covid response and for delivering books to houses during the lockdown and for winning the Gold LAMA award.

TO: Bandon Grammar School on winning the All Ireland Senior Schoolboys Hockey Championship.

TO: Fermoy Under 18 Soccer Club on their recent League win.

TO: Irish Golfers in their success in the Masters 2022.

TO: St. Mary's High School, Midleton on winning the All Ireland Senior A Football Championship.

[I] ANY OTHER BUSINESS

14/4-1

UKRANIAN HUMANITARIAN EFFORT:

Members stated that various towns have welcomed new arrivals from Ukraine. They commended everyone involved. They said the Council is at the forefront of co-ordinating it. The Chief Executive was asked if he would relay that much of the accommodation is not suitable for anything more than a few nights. Members stated that the HSE need to engage faster when refugees arrive. Members asked if more permanent housing could be prioritised for the refugees. Hubs were recommended in town and villages to help the refugees.

The Chief Executive stated that Minster O'Brien was very aware of this. The Chief Executive and the County and City Management Association colleagues are actively engaging with relevant Departments. This has evolved in a short space of time and is challenging for all. The Chief Executive commended staff and agencies for the phenomenal work put in. He said different forms of accommodation is being sourced. IPAS has the responsibility for refugees but the Local Authorities have a huge engagement with them. 57 people in Clonakilty need to go to a more suitable accommodation. There are 21,000 refugees to date have arrived but there could be 100,000 in due course.

There is accommodation in a range of areas but the Council is not always advised of it. There are 19 Community Support Hubs across the county and these are meeting regular. The issues in the Clonakilty Emergency Centre are being addressed. He expects a second centre will be needed in due course.

The Chief Executive stated that the Housing Department has no formal responsibility for housing refugees. It is the responsibility of IPAS. There are a range of Council staff working full time on dealing with the current emergency. There is ongoing daily engagement between the Government Department and the Local Authorities. He stated the Members will be informed of any updates.

The Deputy Mayor commended the work being done by the Chief Executive and the Council staff.

~ THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING ~