



**MINUTES OF MEETING OF WEST CORK MUNICIPAL DISTRICT  
held at Clonakilty Council Chamber and MS Teams at 11.00am  
on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024**

**Members Present:** Cllrs. Joe Carroll, Paul Hayes, Deirdre Kelly, Caroline Cronin, Declan Hurley, Danny Collins, Karen Coakley, Patrick Gerard Murphy, Chris Heinhold

**In attendance:** Loraine Lynch, Divisional Manager West  
Noreen O'Mahony, S.E.O. W.C.M.D.  
Jacqueline Mansfield, M.D.O. W.C.M.D.  
John Ahern S.E.E. Skibbereen  
Martina O'Driscoll, Meeting Administrator W.C.M.D.

**Apologies:** Ruth O' Brien, S.E.E. Bantry

Cllr. J. Carroll presided.

**Statutory Meeting**

**1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

- (a) ***Minutes of Municipal District meeting (as circulated) of 5<sup>th</sup> April 2024***  
*Proposed by Cllr. Karen Coakley, Seconded by Cllr. Deirdre Kelly*

**Resolved:**

"That the minutes of Municipal District meeting (as circulated) of 5<sup>th</sup> April 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Cathaoirleach."

- (b) ***Minutes (as circulated) of 'In Committee' West Cork Municipal District meeting dated 26<sup>th</sup> April 2024***  
*Proposed by Cllr. Caroline Cronin, Seconded by Cllr. Deirdre Kelly*

**Resolved:**

- (c) "That the minutes (as circulated) of 'In Committee' West Cork Municipal District meeting dated 26<sup>th</sup> April 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Cathaoirleach."

## **BRIEFING BY DIVISIONAL MANAGER**

### **Keelbeg Pier**

The Divisional Manager Loraine Lynch informed the members that a delegation from Cork County Council had met with the Minister regarding Keelbeg pier. They outlined three phases of works that need to be carried out. It was highlighted that there is no further funding available from BALAMI, and all three phases require very significant funding for improvement works. The DM informed the members that Cork County Council has committed to investing €300,000 for design and statutory consents for the old pier at Keelbeg, and the Department has pledged to support the project with an additional investment of €2.5 - 3 million. She mentioned that the meeting with the Minister provided an opportunity to discuss the need for an additional €90 million for other coastal schemes throughout the County. The members expressed their appreciation for the Managers briefing and thanked the Council for progressing the project, recognising its importance as a crucial piece of infrastructure. Some members enquired if the commitment from the Minister's Department was provided in writing. The members expressed disappointment that the announcement regarding Keelbeg pier was made on social media before they were informed. The DM acknowledged the members' comments and recognised that it was their efforts that drove the push for funding.

### **Sports Centre, Bantry**

The Divisional Manager Loraine Lynch advised the members that for a number of years there has been a plan to develop a Sports Centre in Bantry, and Cork County Council had identified land for this project for which a lease would be put in place. The Council were preparing a Part 8 planning for this project, and it would proceed once a number of ecological reports were completed on the site. Cllr. PG Murphy and Cllr. Collins both welcomed the news of the Part 8 and noted that it would be a huge boost to the town of Bantry.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

Cllr. Collins requested an update on the lining required for the pedestrian crossing at Newtown, Bantry. The S.E.O. Noreen O'Mahony noted the matter for follow up with Ruth O'Brien.

## **2. STATUTORY BUSINESS /GNO REACHTUIL**

### **Section 183 –Notices**

In accordance with the provision 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 notices circulated to members.

#### **(a) Coomerkane Road Junction, Shrone, Glengariff, Co. Cork**

<b><u>Situation:</u></b>	Exchange of lands at Coomerkane Road Junction, Shrone, Glengariff, Co. Cork
<b><u>Area:</u></b>	Lands with area of 0.012 hectares as per map A attached
<b><u>Acquired From:</u></b>	Land acquired by Cork County Council in 1982
<b><u>Proposed to Grant To:</u></b>	Nellie O'Shea
<b><u>Consideration:</u></b>	€1.00

On the proposal of Cllr. Danny Collins, seconded by Cllr. Caroline Cronin, members approved the above exchange of lands and recommended it to full plenary Council for consideration.

**(b) Old Playground, Newtown, Bantry, Co. Cork**

**Situation:** Old Playground, Newtown, Bantry, Co. Cork  
**Area:** Land Area measuring 0.2063 hectares (0.5097 acres) as per Folio CK34487,  
**Acquired From:** Acquired From Unknown – predated Council records  
**Proposed to Dispose To:** Trustees of Bantry Blues GAA Club (namely Vincent Coakley, Barry O’Neill, Donal Nealon and Frank Murphy)  
**Consideration:** €1.00

On the proposal of Cllr. Danny Collins, seconded by Cllr. Caroline Cronin, members approved the above disposal and recommended it to full plenary Council for consideration.

**3. NOTICES OF MOTION/ FOGRA RUN**

- (a) Proposed by Cllr. Paul Hayes, Seconded by Cllr. Deirdre Kelly**  
"That this council facilitates and supports plans by the Clonakilty Community Youth Centre committee to extend their existing facility at Deasy’s car park, to create a bigger space, to cater for more groups and organisations in the community."

The members all fully supported the motion and noted that the immense benefits to having a designated space for young people in the town and agreed that the need for this facility outweighed the loss of parking spaces.

**Response from M.D.O. Jackie Mansfield**

*"Clonakilty Community Youth Centre invited Cork County Council to a meeting in July 2023 at the newly refurbished Youth Centre facility for Clonakilty, a Council owned property currently leased to the Youth Centre, to discuss the Youth Centre’s request for an extension to their new facility. On foot of this meeting, Cork County Council requested further information in early August of 2023 regarding the current running of the Youth Centre, and their proposed extension request. Documentation was recently received by the Council. There is a large volume of paperwork being assessed at present, and likely to be further communications between both parties concerned. Once all information has been reviewed in full, in conjunction with the relevant Council Departments, an update will issue accordingly."*

Noreen O’Mahony S.E.O. advised that the Council had applied recently for EU funding under THRIVE for specific projects in Clonakilty and Mallow. She noted that the Councils application for Clonakilty was to develop an integrated urban strategy for Kent Street in Clonakilty as the Council owned a large block of lands and buildings there. She noted that there was potential for Community use to be included in the plan for this area.

Councillor P. Hayes expressed his gratitude for the support received from the members regarding his proposal and appreciated the Council's commitment to advancing it. He informed the meeting that he would actively participate in the project's development after the Elections, ensuring its progress into the future.

**(b) Proposed by Cllr. Danny Collins, Seconded by Cllr. Patrick Ger Murphy**

"I'm calling on Cork County Council to introduce the free travel scheme on the Dursey Cable Car."

**Response from Noreen O' Mahony S.E.O.**

The Department of Rural and Community Development currently provides financial supports to facilitate subsidised ferry travel to/from inhabited islands. In light of this, we requested that they consider supporting a similar initiative for Dursey Cable Car, given that it also facilitates connectivity from the mainland to an offshore inhabited island. However, no support has been received. It should be noted that free travel is currently granted to full-time residents and island farmers. This scheme has recently been reviewed and it is intended that the option to purchase an annual pass will be made available to those who own a second/holiday home on the island. A new special category will also be introduced for Senior Citizens (65+) and Students (16+). These fares will be available on production of valid identification.

Cllr. D. Collins expressed concern that no response was received from Minister Heather Humphries and requested that the matter be followed up with the Minister's Office. Members highlighted that when travelling to other islands that the Free Travel Scheme is in place. The S.E.O. noted the matter for follow up.

**(c) Proposed by Cllr. Danny Collins, Seconded by Cllr. Declan Hurley**

"Since the recent announcement by the Minister of Rural and Community Development of €2.5 million for the Local Improvement Scheme, she again is changing the criteria back this time to only needing 1 herd number on the road where the former criteria needed 2, where do those households stand that were thrown out of the former scheme as they did not qualify with Cork County Council."

**Response from John Ahern, S.E.E.**

*"The announcement of the change in eligibility criteria has been made in recent days. Schemes that were being considered for funding 2024 and which were subsequently deemed to not meet eligibility criteria will be re-assessed under the department's updated eligibility criteria and those schemes that will be deemed eligible under the new terms following the re-assessment will be considered for funding in 2024. No decision has been made regarding pre-2024 schemes that were deemed ineligible under the departments qualifying criteria. On a point of clarification to the Notice of Motion, it was not a case that schemes "didn't qualify with Cork County Council", but that these schemes were determined to not meet the qualifying criteria as set out by the funding department at the time of assessment."*

The members expressed their concern with the recent changes in the eligibility criteria and requested clarification on the pre-2024 applications. Cllr. D. Collins noted that members were receiving constant calls regarding roads not being maintained and

queries on where applicants were on the list. He called for all old applications to be reviewed and written to if they now qualify under the new criteria.

Cllr. J. Carroll reported that CIS schemes also required money as cul-de-sacs which were public roads were not being done and were in a shocking state.

- (d) **Proposed by Cllr. Declan Hurley, Seconded by Cllr. Karen Coakley**  
“That Cork County Council call on the HSE to provide an MRI Scanner for Bantry General Hospital to deal with the growing number of patients being added to waiting lists for urgent MRI Scans”.

Cllr. Hurley outlined to the meeting that through a personal experience he had seen the delays in accessing an MRI in both the public and private sectors and expressed his concern that there is currently a 14-month waiting list for MRI scans. Cllr Hurley called on the HSE to make an MRI scanner available in Bantry Hospital to address the excessive waiting times for MRI scans. Cllr. Hurley requested that letter be sent to David Donegan, CEO of Cork University Hospital Group in relation to the matter. The members fully supported the motion and reported that most of West Cork as well as parts of Kerry all access Bantry Hospital for various clinical investigations and installing an MRI scanner in the hospital would alleviate the waiting times currently experienced.

#### **4. REPORTS & CORRESPONDANCE**

##### ***(a) MDO Report***

##### **1. Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2023**

The following three West Cork MD projects have been approved by the Department of Rural and Community Development for grant aid under the Town and Village Renewal 2023 Scheme;

- **Ballydehob:** Refurbishment of Ballydehob Playground to provide a more inclusive playground. Allocation: €172,712
- **Cape Clear:** Develop Cape Clear's first children's playground 'Clós Spraoi and Róis Bhuí', in the North Harbour. Allocation: €228,355
- **Lisavaid:** Upgrade works to the Community Hall roof to provide a structurally sound base for future installation of solar panels. Allocation: €72,000

##### **2. Community Monuments Fund 2024**

The Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage has approved a number of important archaeological heritage projects in Cork County to the tune of €420,000. Rathbarry Church is allocated a grant amount of €30,000 under Stream 3 of this scheme, towards an ecological assessment and address the most critical conservation works. The next step is to submit a Section 14 Ministerial Consent Form prior to any commencement of an ecological assessment and works. The original application submitted was for grant allocation of the maximum amount of €100,000 under Measure One of the Community Monuments Fund 2024.

##### **3. Community Recognition Fund 2024**

The Community Recognition Fund was first introduced in 2023 to recognise huge efforts made by communities in welcoming and supporting people coming to Ireland. Based on the continued impacts on communities throughout the country and the need to support these communities in welcoming new arrivals, a further €50 million is being

provided under the 2024 Scheme, of which €2,014,691 is allocated to Cork County Council.

Expressions of Interest are open for the Community Recognition Fund 2024. The fund is intended to support the development of community infrastructure and facilities in communities that have welcomed significant numbers of arrivals from Ukraine and other countries. **Completed Expression of Interest forms must be submitted online by 5pm on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024.**

To note, applicants that applied in 2023 seeking to apply for the 2024 scheme:-

- The 2024 funding is not to be used as a co-funding source for any other project funded under CRF 2023,
- If a group received funding in 2023, and apply to the 2024 Scheme for a different project, they will be assessed on their performance re their 2023 project, such as; whether the project has commenced yet or likely to commence,
- The 2024 funding is also not to be used as a co-funding source for any other scheme operated by the Department of Rural and Community Development or any other Government Department.

#### **4. CLÁR 2024**

CLAR 2024 was recently launched by the Department of Rural and Community Development. Almost €9 million in fresh funding has been allocated to community and sports facilities nationwide under the 2024 CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) programme.

The CLÁR programme provides funding for small scale projects in rural areas that have experienced significant levels of population decline. The programme is divided into three measures, which cover the different initiatives supported by the scheme.

Under **Measure 1** of the 2024 initiative, grants from **€5,000 to €50,000** are being provided to support the development of community and sports facilities, youth clubs, playgrounds, sensory gardens, walking tracks and much more.

**Measure 2** supports voluntary groups that provide free transport to people receiving cancer care and other treatment as well as Community First Response Support and Search and Rescue organisations. This year organisations providing a meals on wheels service are eligible to apply. The measure comes with maximum grants of **€50,000** for a car and **€100,000** for a bus.

**Measure 3** is designed to support offshore island communities, with maximum grants of **€120,000** available for community transport projects and up to **€50,000** available for amenities projects.

**Measure 1 is administered by Local Authorities in consultation with local communities and applications will only be accepted directly from Local Authorities.**

Measure 2 and Measure 3 are administered directly by the Department of Rural and Community Development and applications are being accepted via email to [CLAR@drcd.gov.ie](mailto:CLAR@drcd.gov.ie);

Areas targeted under the CLÁR Programme are parts of counties: Carlow, Cavan, Clare, Cork, Donegal, Galway, Kerry, Kilkenny, Laois, Limerick, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Meath,

Monaghan, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, and Waterford, Westmeath, Wicklow and all of County Leitrim.

**The Measure 1 Scheme will be opened by Cork County Council within the next Few days.**

#### **5. Thrive Scheme**

The Southern Regional Assembly recently announced a competitive call for **THRIVE (Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme)** funding. THRIVE will provide local authorities with funding of between €2m and €7m to renovate, refurbish and adapt vacant and derelict heritage buildings in their town centres. Projects are required to embrace the core values of the New European Bauhaus – sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusion. The scheme promotes a citizen-centred community-led approach to planning, design and project selection under the Town Centre First framework. Grants of between €40,000 and €200,000 are available to support local authorities with the planning and design phase.

**Mallow and Clonakilty are the RSES Designated Settlements in the Cork County area.**

It was agreed to apply for **Strand 1 funding for Kent Street, Clonakilty** to develop an integrated urban strategy for all Council owned buildings/lands on both sides of the street. Grant amounts of between €40,000 and €200,000, towards integrated urban strategies and project pipeline development, are available under this strand.

The deadline for submission of applications was 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2024, a very short turnaround time.

#### **6. Skibbereen Town Regeneration Plan**

Cork County Council is delighted to have officially launched our Town Centre First (TCF) Regeneration Plan for Skibbereen. The plan was formed as a result of significant public consultations, and feedback from the Skibbereen Community as part of the national Town Centre First policy initiative. The ambitious, yet achievable plan aims to progress a range of regeneration measures in Skibbereen Town covering areas such as sustainable travel, property activation and public realm enhancements.

#### **7. Dursey Cable Car**

- A card payment machine has been installed at the Dursey Cable Car Station so we will soon be able to accept card payments.
- Free travel is currently granted to full-time residents and Island farmers. This scheme has recently been reviewed and it is intended that the option to purchase an annual or half yearly pass will be made available to those who own a second/holiday home on the island. A new special category will also be introduced for Senior Citizens (65+) and Students (16+). These fares will be available on production of valid identification.

#### **8. Cruise Tourism**

Cork County Council looks forward to welcoming the first ship of the 2024 Cruise Tourism Season to Schull on Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> May. Venture, which is operated by the Seabourn Cruise Company, will carry 264 passengers. An optional trip to Cape Clear

is included as part of the package for the passengers.

#### **9. West Cork Leisure Centre - Dunmanway**

Cork County Council is delighted to continue to expand support of the HSE's Neuro Functional Training Programme. The Neuro Functional Training Programme (NFTP) is a collaborative initiative between the HSE and Cork County Council at the Gym in Dunmanway. The NFTP supports and enables service users with a neurological condition to engage in an exercise programme appropriate to their needs and level of ability, using gym equipment which can be adapted to suit their needs. HSE Physiotherapists are training staff to assist programme participants, on their scheduled visits during the 10-week programme, in how these gym goers can be supported to exercise effectively, safely and regularly. Cork County Council continues to offer reduced entry fees to participants for the duration of the programme.

#### **10. Michael Collins House Museum**

Michael Collins House Museum has received a new artefact for its collection in the form of an umbrella previously owned by Michael Collins. The umbrella was left behind following one of his visits to Devlin's Pub on Parnell Street, Dublin and has since been safeguarded by the Devlin family. It was their wish to have the historic item available for public display and recognised the Cork County Council run facility in his home county as the ideal location.

The umbrella was presented to the museum on long term loan by John Merivale, husband of the late Jocelyn Merivale, granddaughter of Liam Devlin, the proprietor of Devlin's Pub and a trusted intelligence officer in the Irish War of Independence. A plaque has recently been erected on the site of the pub to mark its importance in Irish history as a crucial meeting point and safe house for Michael Collins and members of his 'squad'.

The silk mechanical umbrella is tightly wound and held in a telescopic faux wood cover that doubles as a walking cane. Walking canes have become synonymous with Michael Collins with several different canes coming to prominence in recent years. It seems that Collins, though rarely photographed with a cane, may have used a cane as part of his disguise of a normal businessman about town. It is also an item he seems to have favoured as a gift with many of the canes appearing to have origins as gifts to people close to him.





## **11. Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024 - 2030**

Cork County Council has officially launched our Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2030. An extensive process of engagement has been instrumental in the preparation of this Plan, which included consultation with 84 community and economic stakeholders who were involved in contributing to and signing off each of the four stages of the LECP. Cork County Council looks forward to working collaboratively with our stakeholders and the citizens of Cork to implement this plan and continue the development of Cork County as an attractive, competitive and sustainable place to live, visit and do business.

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### ***End of MDO Report***

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Cllr. Hurley conveyed his dissatisfaction with the Community Recognition Fund and criticised the Department for being inflexible. He highlighted that community groups are striving to improve their facilities within their local areas, but due to escalating inflation affecting the prices of materials and labour, it has become unaffordable for them to carry out the necessary works. Jackie Mansfield M.D.O. observed that the scheme has undergone changes this year where a minimum of €50k is required for capital grants projects. She advised that the scheme cannot top up funding for the same project that is already in receipt of CRF 2023 funding.

Cllr. Hurley advised the meeting that Cork Sports Partnership were in a position to support the purchase of a hoist to be used in the Dunmanway Swimming Pool Complex and highlighted that Co-Action may advise on their requirements for a hoist at the facility. Noreen O'Mahony S.E.O. noted that a chair had been purchased to assist persons with disabilities accessing the Hydrotherapy pool and she would look into the requirement for a hoist at the facility.

*Cllr. Deirdre Kelly left the meeting at 12.30pm.*

Cllr. Hayes noted that €30k had been allocated for the Community Hall in Clonakilty but due to asbestos in the roof, more funding was required and the sources of funding were very limited.

Cllr. Hayes welcomed the €30k funding allocation under the Community Monuments Fund to Rathbarry Church but expressed his disappointment with the shortfall from the €100k that was applied for. He queried whether there was an opportunity to reapply for further funding. Noreen O' Mahony S.E.O. that the Rathbarry project under Strand 3 received €30k but they could apply again next year for further funding.

Cllr. Hayes welcomed the information in relation to THRIVE and the inclusion of the old buildings in Kent Street as part of the study. He queried whether the scope of the study could include another area of Clonakilty. Noreen O' Mahony advised that the study was restricted to Kent Street and there was no scope at the moment to extend the study.

## **5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Cllr. Cronin expressed her thanks for the application which secured funding for Ballydehob playground.

Cllr. Hurley requested an updated on the footbridge required in Enniskeane. John Ahern S.E.E. noted that the Castlelands bridge was being progressed by the Regional Roads Unit and he will seek an update on the matter for the next MD meeting.

Cllr. Coakley highlighted that significant delays could be caused for emergency services due to the traffic congestion in Townshend Street, Skibbereen and she noted that progressing the Gortnaclohy Bypass would alleviate this issue. She queried whether there was any revenue streams that could be pursued to progress this bypass project. John Ahern S.E.E. noted that there was no update on the bypass project.

Cllr. Coakley welcomed the €60k allocated to improvement works on the footpath between Skibbereen Community School and the primary schools and requested an update on the works. She requested that funding be used to provide a bicycle shelter in Norton House carpark. Noreen O' Mahony S.E.O. noted the matters for follow up.

Cllr. Coakley requested 'Children at Play' signed to be erected in Newbridge Park estate and also Ard Carrig Estate. John Ahern S.E.E. noted that matter for follow up.

Cllr. Carroll raised the issue of the O'Donovan Rossa facility receiving €300 for the hire of the complex during the last Referendum and he highlighted that this election centre was covering for 2 previous election centres, why was the payment still only €300. He noted that the facility had to cancel its usual Bingo event and it would be operating at a loss if it had to cancel existing business to receive a payment of €300. Cllr. Carroll requested a letter be sent to Sinead McNamara to highlight the poor funding for the facility.

Cllr. Carroll highlighted the ongoing issue of traffic speeding through the village of Drinagh and requested that either ramps be installed or the road be narrowed similar to those used in Buttevant. He also highlighted that Leap village needed similar traffic calming measures. Cllr. Collins reported that the ramps installed in Durrus and Kilcrohane have worked well in reducing traffic speeds. Cllr. Hurley suggested a simple solution to address some traffic problems in Drinagh village would be to install a designated bus stop to service the school, he advised that this was done in Enniskeane and it had an impact. John Ahern S.E.E. advised the members that speed enforcement is a matter for the Gardai. He noted that Drinagh could be put forward for a traffic calming scheme but it would need to be designed first. He advised that Leap village was a matter for the TII and that a report was submitted to the TII for funding and an update was expected on the matter by June 2024. The members queried the use of ramps and raised tables as traffic calming measures. Cllr. Hurley recommended if there was any shortfall in the Council policy regarding the use of ramps that the issue should be put on the Agenda for the SPC to review. John Ahern noted that ramps are not an advised solution and raised crossings linking footpath networks were the preferred option.

Cllr. Hayes requested an update on the Flood Relief Scheme at Fax Bridge in Clonakilty. John Ahern S.E.E. advised that following approval from the OPW, colleagues in the Capital Flood Projects office have engaged the Designers of the main Clonakilty Flood Relief Scheme, Mott Mc Donald Consulting Engineers, to undertake the detailed Design of the new drainage system for Fax Bridge.

Cllr. Hayes queried whether there was any update on the Uisce Éireann clinics. Noreen O'Mahony S.E.O. noted that a motion regarding Uisce Éireann clinics was sent to Full Council from the Western Committee requesting that Uisce Éireann attend Development Committee on a quarterly basis to update Members on Water Services matters.

Noreen O' Mahony S.E.O. advised the members that the official opening of The Rock in Skibbereen and a photo opportunity at the Gallanes walkway in Skibbereen are scheduled to take place on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024. She also advised that the official opening of the Blue Pool in Glengarriff and a photo opportunity at Bantry Peace Park are scheduled to take place on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024.

The members agreed to hold the June Municipal District meeting in Dunmanway Pool on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**CATHAOIRLEACH** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

