



**MINUTES OF MEETING OF WEST CORK MUNICIPAL DISTRICT
held in Bantry Courthouse and on MS Teams
at 11.00am on Monday 2nd December 2024**

Members Present: Cllrs. Patrick Gerard Murphy, Danny Collins, Caroline Cronin
Deirdre Kelly, Finbarr Harrington, Isobel Towse, Daniel
Sexton

Members on MS Teams: Cllr. Noel O'Donovan

Apologies: Cllr. Joe Carroll

In attendance: Noreen O' Mahony, S.E.O. W.C.M.D.
Eimear O' Neill S/MDO W.C.M.D.
John Ahern S.E.E. Skibbereen
Kevin Lynch E.E. Bantry
Martina O'Driscoll, Meeting Administrator W.C.M.D.

Cllr. PG Murphy presided.

Statutory Meeting

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

- (a) ***Minutes of Municipal District meeting (as circulated) of 4th November 2024***
Proposed by Cllr. D. Kelly, Seconded by Cllr. F. Harrington

Resolved:

"That the minutes of Municipal District meeting (as circulated) of 4th November 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Cathaoirleach."

- (b) ***Minutes (as circulated) of 'In Committee' West Cork Municipal District meeting (Lets Play Briefing) dated 4th November 2024.***
Proposed by Cllr. F. Harrington, Seconded by Cllr. C. Cronin

Resolved:

"That the minutes of the 'In Committee' West Cork Municipal District meeting (Lets Play Briefing) dated 4th November 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Cathaoirleach."

- (c) ***Minutes (as circulated) of 'In Committee' West Cork Municipal District meeting (Vacancy & Dereliction Briefing) dated 4th November 2024.***
Proposed by Cllr. D. Sexton, Seconded by Cllr. D. Kelly

Resolved:

"That the minutes of the 'In Committee' West Cork Municipal District meeting (Vacancy & Dereliction Briefing) dated 4th November 2024. be confirmed and signed by the Cathaoirleach."



- (d) **Minutes (as circulated) of 'In Committee' West Cork Municipal District meeting (Bantry Culvert Update) dated 4th November 2024.**
Proposed by Cllr. C. Cronin, Seconded by Cllr. D. Collins
Resolved:
"That the minutes of the 'In Committee' West Cork Municipal District meeting (Bantry Culvert Update) dated 4th November 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Cathaoirleach."
- (e) **Minutes (as circulated) of 'In Committee' West Cork Municipal District meeting (Bantry TCF Funding) dated 8th November 2024.**
Proposed by Cllr. D. Collins, Seconded by Cllr. F. Harrington
Resolved:
"That the minutes of the 'In Committee' West Cork Municipal District meeting (Bantry TCF Funding) dated 8th November 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Cathaoirleach."
- (f) **Minutes (as circulated) of 'In Committee' West Cork Municipal District meeting (Skibbereen Regeneration Plan) dated 8th November 2024.**
Proposed by Cllr. D. Sexton, Seconded by Cllr. D. Kelly
Resolved:
"That the minutes of the 'In Committee' West Cork Municipal District meeting (Skibbereen Regeneration Plan) dated 8th November 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Cathaoirleach."
- (g) **Minutes (as circulated) of West Cork Municipal District (Draft Budgetary Plan 2025) meeting dated 8th November 2024**
Proposed by Cllr. D. Sexton, Seconded by Cllr. F. Harrington
Resolved:
"That the minutes of the West Cork Municipal District (Draft Budgetary Plan 2025) meeting dated 8th November 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Cathaoirleach."
- (h) **Minutes (as circulated) of 'In Committee' West Cork Municipal District meeting (Housing Briefing) dated 22nd November 2024.**
Proposed by Cllr. C. Cronin, Seconded by Cllr. D. Kelly
Resolved:
"That the minutes of the 'In Committee' West Cork Municipal District meeting (Housing Briefing) dated 22nd November 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Cathaoirleach."

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the members.

2. REPORTS & CORRESPONDANCE

Municipal District Officer's Report – 2nd December 2024

1. Schemes for the Protection of Architectural & Archaeological Heritage

The County of Cork is steeped in built and archaeological heritage with close to 3,000 protected structures, over 50 architectural conservation areas and close to 20,000 recorded archaeological monuments. Cork County Council's Heritage Unit administers a number of grant schemes to protect this heritage.

The BHIS Historic Thatched Buildings Stream 2025 and the Historic Structures Fund 2025 have been announced, with a closing date of 17th January 2025.

The Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) Historic Thatched Buildings Stream

This scheme is intended to support thatched buildings in need of repair and conservation works. There is a grant available of 80% of the total cost of works, up to a maximum of €20,000.

The Historic Structure Fund

The primary focus of the Historic Structures Fund 2025 is to assist the conservation and enhancement of historic structures and buildings for the broader benefit of communities and the public.

The 2025 Historic Structures Fund will offer a small number of grants of up to €200,000 for projects that deliver a clear community or public benefit, or where a clear residential benefit has been demonstrated.

Eligible structures include Recorded Protected Structures, structures eligible for or proposed for inclusion in the RPS, structures or works within Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA'S), or within the amenity of a National Monument, where exceptional circumstances apply.

The deadline for submission of completed applications for both these schemes is 4.00pm on Friday 17th January 2025. Applications can be made by emailing conservation@corkcoco.ie or a hard copy may be submitted to the Heritage and Conservation Office, Cork County Council, Floor 3, Planning Department, County Hall, Carrigrohane Road, Cork.

Application Forms and information available:

<https://www.corkcoco.ie/en/resident/heritage-and-conservation/schemes-for-the-protection-of-architectural-and-archaeological-heritage-in-county-cork>

2. Cork County Council's "My Creative Wish"

Cork County Council has announced the return of "My Creative Wish", an arts programme that aims to grant the creative wishes of children and young people in conjunction with Cruinniú na nÓg, Ireland's National Day of Creativity for young people.

Through workshops in schools and local libraries across the County, "My Creative Wish" granted 35 wishes in 2024. The wishes granted included everything from architecture to acting, baking to ballet, circus skills to ceramics and design to dance.

With the support of Creative Ireland, Cork County Council would like to grant even more creative wishes in 2025 and has extended the call to youth groups working with young people aged 13-17

Cork County Council's Culture and Creativity team will select 16 winning wishes from young people up to age 17. The winners will receive six creative workshops facilitated by professional artists, for them and their class. As part of Cruinniú na nÓg 2025, the winning wishes will go on to take part in a school showcase in the form of an exhibition, concert or performance on Saturday the 7th of June 2025.

16 runner-up proposals will be selected to receive a free Creative Ireland funded creative workshop at their local Library.

Schools may request an application pack by emailing creativeireland@corkcoco.ie by November 18th. The deadline for receipt of applications is the 6th of December 2024.

3. Cork County Council Arts Funding

Cork County Council has announced details of its 2025 funding opportunities for the county's Arts sector. The County's Library and Arts Service is inviting proposals for arts projects, activities and events taking place in the Cork County in 2025 that may be eligible for funding under a range of grant assistance schemes that are now open for applications.

Funds announced include the Arts Grant Scheme which will support arts organisations and the voluntary sector to deliver arts activity, a programme to support artists to work in schools, support for developing arts projects through the Irish language, and bursary and residency opportunities for professional artists working in all disciplines.

Applications can be made online from the 11th November 2024 until the 9th January 2025.

For queries on the scheme, email arts@corkcoco.ie or call 021 4346210, or visit: <https://www.corkcoco.ie/en/resident/arts/arts-funding-opportunities>

4. “Made By Hands” An Exhibition of 51 Artists, Makers, and Designers at LHQ Gallery

Cork County Council’s Library and Arts Service presents “Made by Hands” a group exhibition featuring the work of 51 artists, makers, and designers at LHQ Gallery, Carrigrohane Road from 22nd November to 20th December 2024.

Pieces on display will include painting, print, photography, ceramics, furniture, jewellery, and textiles selected through an open call by Cork County Council’s Arts Office. Many of the works will be on sale and offer an opportunity to acquire an incredible artwork or special gift this festive season.

“Made By Hands” opens from 22nd November from Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.30pm. All are welcome to the opening reception at 2.00pm on Saturday 23rd November 2024.

Enquiries for sale will be directed to the artist upon receiving. LHQ Gallery takes no commission on sales.



5. Government Grants applied for in WCMD in 2024

The following are status details of a number of grants that were applied for and awarded funding by Government Departments to West Cork Municipal District, which are either complete / ongoing / to commence this year:

Grant Name	Year	Project Name / Description	Funding Awarded by DRCD
CLÁR	2024	Refurbishment of Union Hall Playground & MUGA	€50,000 – funding provided
CLÁR	2024	Refurbishment of Skibbereen Playground	€50.000 – funding provided

DRCD Island Capital Works	2024	Bere Island - L-49277-0	€186,300 – completed and claimed
DRCD Island Capital Works	2024	Bere Island - L-49277-1	€146,700 – completed and claimed
DRCD Island Capital Works	2024	Bere Island – Dept. of Defence Road	€111,000 – completed and claimed
DRCD Island Capital Works	2024	Heir Island – installation of pontoon	€9,900 – completed and claimed
DRCD Island Capital Works	2024	Sherkin Island - Slievemore L8201-15	€177,408 – completed and claimed
DRCD Island Capital Works	2024	Sherkin Island - Library Road L4201-0	€101,250 – completed and claimed
DRCD Island Capital Works	2024	Sherkin Island - Jolly Roger Road L8203-	€50,625 – completed and claimed
DRCD Island Capital Works	2024	Sherkin Island - Silver Strand Rd. Erosion	€11,900 – completed and claimed
DRCD Island Capital Works	2024	Sherkin Island - Silver Strand L8201-0	€90,000 – completed and claimed
DRCD Island Capital Works	2024	Sherkin Island - Dock Pier Rd L8202	€103,680 – completed and claimed
ORIS 2023	2023	Durrus Coastal Walkway – Phase 1	€200,000 – funding provided
ORIS 2023	2023	Beach Disability Access Works at Garrestown, Garrylucas, Inchydoney & Owenahincha	€200,000 – funding provided
THRIVE	2024	Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme – Clonakilty	€200,000 – funding provided
Town & Village 2023	2023	Ballydehob Playground Refurbishment	€172,712 – funding provided
RRDF Funding	2024	Skibbereen Public Realm Enhancement	€1,855,945 – funding provided

Community Monuments Fund	2024	Rathbarry Church	€30,000 – completed and claimed
Dept. of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth - Play & Recreation Grant	2024	Refurbishment of Leap Playground	€14,152.12 – funding provided
DRCD TCF Funding	2024	Town Centre First Funding for Bantry Town to further develop Town Teams	€10,000 – funding provided

6. Tidy Towns Competition

The results of the National Tidy Town competition were recently announced. A total of 26 medals were awarded to towns and villages in Cork with many heading to West Cork, including:

- Eyeries – won the Silver Medal in Category A
- Rosscarbery – won the County First & Gold Medal in Category B
- Ballydehob – won the Silver Medal in Category B
- Clonakilty – won the County Third and Gold Medal in Category D
- Bantry – won the Gold Medal in Category D
- Skibbereen – won the Gold Medal in Category D

Bere Island and Sherkin Island were also recognised with special awards, while Ballineen and Enniskeane Tidy Towns Association was named the national winner of the Waters and Communities awards.

Each tidy town group was awarded funding from the Municipal District's Community Fund scheme which helped with the numerous projects in each town and village and it's great to see the groups rewarded for all their hard work and endeavour. Cork County Council has always maintained a strong relationship with tidy towns groups and as we move forward into 2025 and beyond it is our aim to develop this relationship further.

7. Community Climate Action Programme (CCAP) – Call 1 Part B

Community Climate Action Programme (CCAP) – Call 1 Part B

Cork County Council will launch a supplementary call (Call 1 Part B) for the Community Climate Action Programme (CCAP), Strand 1 on **Wednesday 11th December 2024** with the call for applications remaining open for a period of six weeks, with a closing date of **Wednesday 22nd January 2025, 16:00**.

The application process is open to eligible applicants who did not apply under the initial call (Call 1, December 2023) and successful projects must be delivered within 10 months of the awarding of funding.

Call 1 Part B has an increased focus on more innovative projects and the submission of applications from projects in Cork County's Decarbonising Zone (Macroom) is encouraged. Cork County Council strongly recommend prospective applicants to contact Anthony O'Reilly, Community Climate Action Officer, at climate@corkcoco.ie in advance of any submission to confirm eligibility.

Further details on the CCAP Call 1 Part B will be available here shortly:

<https://www.corkcoco.ie/en/resident/environment/community-climate-action-programme-ccap>

Dunmanway Pool – Christmas Opening Hours



8. Christmas Parking Arrangements

West Cork Municipal District continues to provide free parking all year around, including the upcoming 2024 festive season. We ask the public to give due consideration to the regular parking limits in place in each town, especially during the busy festive period.

West Cork Municipal District would also like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas.

End of Report

Cllr. P.G. Murphy requested that St. Peters Church in Castletownbere be contacted regarding the historic structures fund.

On behalf of the members, Cllr. P. G. Murphy requested that a letter be sent to all Tidy Town groups, congratulating them on their recent awards and achievements, and expressing gratitude for their dedicated voluntary efforts.

4. NOTICES OF MOTION/ FOGRA RUN

- (a) **Proposed by Cllr. D. Kelly, Seconded by Cllr. PG. Murphy**
“In line with promoting positive mental health that this Council would consider reviewing the fees and membership structures in the West Cork Leisure Centre in Dunmanway. In addition, that this Council would consider the introduction of early morning fitness classes together with earlier opening times”.

Cllr. D. Kelly highlighted the importance of advocating for positive mental health and all opportunities to support this should be explored. She reported that a class instructor was willing to run circuit classes from 6.30am in the mornings if that facility was open at that time and she highlighted that the current opening time of 7.30am was too late for many gym users. She also called for membership options for students to be made available. The members all expressed their support of Cllr. Kelly's motion and noted that a review of the operations and insurance was needed to be make the facility more accessible.

Response from Noreen O'Mahony SEO

Cork County Council is currently undertaking a review of membership fees and structures at Dunmanway Pool and looking at the cost benefit of these to the organisation. Gym fitness classes are not delivered at present; however it should be noted that the meeting room is available for hire by external providers. The facility currently opens at 7:30am on weekdays, we can introduce an earlier open time of 7:00am on a trial basis, 3 days per week (Monday, Wednesday & Friday), to gauge demand.

- (b) **Proposed by Cllr. F. Harrington, Seconded by Cllr. PG. Murphy**
“That this Council would explore all options to install a Pedestrian Crossing on the L-8789-0 road between the Riverway Estate and Cois Na Cuirt Estate, Pearsons Bridge, Kealkill.”

Cllr. F. Harrington highlighted the excessive speed of vehicles traveling through Kealkill and stressed the necessity for a pedestrian crossing in the village. He also reported that certain trees owned by Coillte had become overgrown and required trimming. Cllr. P.G. Murphy expressed his support for the motion and pointed out that the road markings at the junction of St. Colum's and the main road needed to be restored.

Response from Kevin Lynch E.E.

The Bantry Area Office will request an inspection by the Regional and Local Roads Design Office to determine if a pedestrian crossing is warranted at this location and if so what type of crossing would be suitable. If the need for a pedestrian crossing is identified, then obviously a source of funding will be required.

Cllr. F. Harrington suggested that the contract terms and conditions for road line contractors should be amended, aiming to reduce the prolonged wait times for works to be completed. Cllr. D. Sexton supported this proposal, emphasising the importance of line markings on roads. Members raised concerns regarding the lack of prioritisation for rural roads in West Cork by line painting crews. Cllr. Danny Collins noted a similar issue with pedestrian lights which had been out of service for months on Marino Street,

Bantry and he requested an update on the matter. Kevin Lynch E.E. noted that his office were pursuing the contractor to repair the lights.

- (c) **Proposed by Cllr. F. Harrington, seconded by Cllr. PG. Murphy**
“That this Council would once a year in the spring time move the build-up of sand from the slipway and pier at Garnish Pier Beara onto the adjacent beach in order to make it safer for all users.”

Response from Noreen O’ Mahony S.E.O.

It is acknowledged that there is a build-up of sand at the head of this pier, and the works required are listed on our priority programme, which is subject to funding.

It should be noted that this area is within Kenmare Special Area of Conservation which is now subject to European Union Habitats Regulations 2024 - Statutory Instrument No. 143 of 2024, which states that a person shall not carry out, or assist in carrying out, any activity specified within the Special Area of Conservation in accordance with, consent given by the Minister under Regulation 30 of the Regulations of 2011, upon application in writing to the Minister to carry out the activity. There are a total of 19 activities requiring consent of the Minister listed on this Statutory Instrument with ARC 11 - Digging, ploughing, harrowing or otherwise disturbing soil of substrate being one of them.

Cllr. PG. Murphy noted that the motion be referred to the County Engineer and that it be included on the Agenda for the February meeting of the Western Committee when the County Engineer would be in attendance.

- (d) **Proposed by Cllr. F. Harrington, seconded by Cllr. D. Collins**
“That this Council would carry out much needed repairs on the surrounding fence and entrance gate to Ballaghboy Graveyard, Garnish, Beara and put in place a maintenance programme to have the grass cut at least three times a year.”

Response from Eimear O’Neill A/MDO

Cork County Council is currently reviewing all Council burial grounds within West Cork with a view to agreeing a programme of works which will be based on priority. Factors included in this weighted factor model will include but are not limited to: the estimated plot availability, the heritage interest of the site, the geographical area. It should be noted that a number of burial grounds in West Cork require works and funding is limited.

5. CORRESPONDENCE / COMHRÉIREACHT

- (a) OPW Letter dated 14.11.2024 – Property Protection Barriers for Bantry Town

Cllr. D. Collins proposed that a letter should be sent to the new incoming Minister of the OPW in order to keep the Bantry issue on alert and the members agreed.

(b) Mr. Malcolm Noonan, TD Letter 18.11.2024 – Election Count in Mallow

The Members expressed their frustration at the decision to use Mallow for the election count. They outlined various issues with the location which included: extremely long travelling distance for candidates and their campaign teams, a lack of seating for observers, very poor food options. It was reported that there was no access to the building until 8.45am and people were left waiting outside in the rain unnecessarily. Members pointed out the absence of wheelchair-accessible toilets and the lack of access to indoor toilets after 11.00pm, forcing attendees to use portable toilets situated outside the complex in complete darkness, which raised significant health and safety concerns. Members emphasised that the extended duration of the count into the early morning hours left individuals from West Cork with no alternative but to undertake a 1.5 to 2-hour drive home after spending over 20 hours at the count centre, a situation deemed extremely unsafe. The members expressed their thanks to the Council staff who had worked very hard during the count process.

Cllr. D. Sexton indicated that, upon reviewing the spoiled votes, he noted that over 20 ballots lacked a verification stamp, and he requested a review of this matter. Members reported that 14 polling boxes were consolidated in West Cork, with polling clerks being informed of this decision only two days before the election, at which point they were notified that their services would no longer be needed. The members voiced their concerns that this amalgamation of polling boxes could signify the beginning of a trend to eliminate polling stations in West Cork, emphasizing that, as public representatives, they should have been consulted on such decisions. The Chair, Cllr. P.G. Murphy, requested that each member submit their observations regarding the inadequacies of the Mallow count centre, as well as the issues related to the polling boxes and spoiled votes, to Noreen O'Mahony, S.E.O., who would compile these points into a letter addressed to the County Sheriff.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The members agreed that the next meeting would be held in the meeting room in Dunmanway Municipal Pool on Monday 6th January.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

CATHAOIRLEACH _____ **DATE** _____

