

Minutes of Council Meeting May 2021

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Louth County Council hosted in Council Chamber and held remotely over MS teams on 17th May 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

In attendance:

Cathaoirleach: Cllr. Dolores Minogue (present in Chamber)

Members: Councillors: Marianne Butler, Paula Butterly, James Byrne, Joanna Byrne, Kevin Callan, Emma Coffey, Edel Corrigan, Tom Cunningham, Maria Doyle, Michelle Hall, Conor Keelan, Seán Kelly, Fiachra MacRaghnaill, Pearse McGeough, Andrea McKevitt, Paddy McQuillan, Kevin Meenan, Declan Power, John Reilly, Liam Reilly, Tomás Sharkey, John Sheridan, Pio Smith, Jim Tenanty, Eileen Tully, Antoin Watters, Maeve Yore

All Councillors attended remotely

Apologies: Cllr. Hugh Conlon

Officials: J. Martin, Chief Executive – (present in Council Chamber)
J. McGuinness, Director of Services – (present in Council Chamber)
G. Tuomey, Meetings Administrator – (present in Council Chamber)
P. Donnelly, Director of Services – (present in Chamber)
C. Duff, Director of Services – (attended remotely)
B. Woods, Head of Finance – (attended remotely)
F. Pentony, Director of Services – (attended remotely)
J. Lawrence, Senior Executive Officer (attended remotely)
D. McMahon, Senior Executive Engineer (attended remotely)
E. Eaton, Staff Officer, Corp. Services (present in Council Chamber)

Minute No. 84/21

Confirmation of Minutes

Proposed by: Cllr. P. Smith

Seconded by: Cllr. L. Reilly

And resolved:

That the minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 19th April 2021 be confirmed.

Minute No. 85/21

Matters Arising

Cllr McGeough advised Minute 83/21 wrongly referenced Christine Kearney rather than Christy Kearney

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Minute No. 86/21

District Meetings Minutes for noting

Minutes of the District meetings listed below were noted by the members.

Borough District of Drogheda 12th April 2021
Municipal District of Dundalk 6th April 2021
Municipal District of Ardee 1st April 2021
Corporate Policy Group 7th April 2021

Minute No. 87/21

Tuarascáil ó Chathaoirleach an Ghrúpa Beatais Corpaideach / Report from Chairperson of Corporate Policy Group

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Dolores Minogue advised Members about the CPG Meeting held on 5th May over zoom. CPG Members received a briefing on the council agenda and requested that Fleadh Ceoil Committee Members attend the council meeting. Items discussed included AGMs, remote SPCs, the County Development Plan, and the CE reports format. Member were advised that Foras na Gaeilge reps met the Management Team and will meet full council in future, and a review of the Mother and Baby report as it pertains to Louth is being undertaken.

Minute No. 88/21

Tuarascail o Chathaoirligh an Choiste an Beartaqs Straiteiseach / Strategic Policy Committee Chairperson's Report

Cllr Maria Doyle advised Members about the Planning and Support Infrastructure SPC held on 14th April over zoom. SPC members discussed timelines and action plans for their work programme as previously given to the Council. Among items discussed were there possibility of bye-laws on RVs and Motorhomes to be developed, and an official from Operations is to attend the meeting on the 7th July 2021.

Cllr Sharkey asked if there was any conflicts of interest declared at the meeting regarding the byelaws and was advised that one of the committee members had made a declaration.

Minute No. 89/21

Breithniú ar Thuarascálacha agus ar Chomhréitigh ón bPríomhfheidhmeannach / Consideration of Reports and Recommendations from Chief Executive

- Monthly Management Report
- Finance & Water Services
- Economic Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure
- Operations & Waste Management
- Corporate & Emergency Services
- Housing & Quality of Life

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Members noted all reports, and relevant Directors responded to queries raised.

The following items were noted:

Economic Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure: The Tourism Masterplan for Carlingford had been submitted by Fáilte Ireland and was not a Louth County Council Document
There were several different options for outdoor seating, 19 applications received for the individual €4k grant were currently being processed.

PANCR – Officials await date for feedback meeting with Dept after which appeal will be lodged. Comparison exercise with successful application is ongoing.

A very high volume of planning applications being received as applicants are trying to get in before the new Plan. Some of those whose applications are not successful have not engaged in the preplanning process.

Operations: A column would be added to bin report to indicate frequency – collection frequency is increased

Outdoor dining schemes – A summary doc will be prepared for Members on schemes and on parklets

Accessibility issue of parklets is under discussion with BIDs

Willie Walsh to provide update on bottle banks.

If householders send evidence of bins they will not be pursued under MyWaste

Coordinated approach with Gardaí, HSE, Operations, Housing to tackle Muirhevna Mór issues

Officials will examine if funding is available for Dog campaign on owner responsibility, fouling, licensing and microchipping.

Corporate – A review of Member correspondence process will take place.

Director of Services meets Cooley landowners to discuss fire prevention measures

Minute No. 90/21

Presentation from Dr. Augustus Pereira regarding increasing Covid rates in Drogheda

The meeting was halted to allow a Covid-19 presentation from Dr. Augustus Pereira, Regional Director of Public Health for the NE Region as agreed by members at the last special planning meeting. Dr. Pereira was welcomed to the meeting and gave members an informative presentation on how Covid-19 has progressed in Louth. He showed data demonstrating how vaccinations have greatly decreased transmission rates in the over 85 age group. And finally he advised around the concerns about growing rates of the virus in Drogheda. To that end he advised that a walk-in testing centre was opening from Tuesday to Thursday at Bolton Square Car Park in Drogheda and that due to the Cyber attack on the HSE that the centre would be open to symptomatic people also. Members were requested to encourage attendance at the centre. His presentation was very well received by Members and he was thanked by Members, the Cathaoirleach and the CE for giving up his time to attend.

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Minute No. 91/21

Fleadh Ceoil 2018/19 – Feedback Report from Fleadh Executive Committee

Lolo Robinson and Padraic Kierans Members of the Drogheda Fleadh Committee joined the meeting, as requested at the CPG. Members were shown a lively video of the Fleadh which demonstrated the variety of acts and volume of attendees over the course of both years' events. They were then given a powerpoint presentation which set out the success of the Fleadh. Members were advised it brought 1.2m people to the region over the two years and in its first year it generated €45million of local spend in the region, and the estimated spend in year two was much higher. It was estimated that over €100m local revenue was generated from the Fleadh. A debit balance of some €1.8m remained which initially thought would be funded from events in 2020 but due to Covid-19 would now fall to the council to fund.

Members were divided in response to the presentation and a detailed discussion ensued. In response to allegations of impropriety made by members regarding the debt, the CE advised she had always been absolutely honest in her reporting of debt at any given time and would present to members at next Council meeting as an agenda item.

Minute No. 92/21

Breithniú ar Thuarascálacha agus ar Chomhréitigh ón bPríomhfheidhmeannach / Consideration of Reports and Recommendations from Chief Executive

Members returned to the CE Reports and under Housing & Quality of Life the following items were noted:

The need to request Void Scheme funding at national level.
With regard to Permissions to Reside, it was stated that the council cannot encourage overcrowding in council tenanted properties.

Previously Customer Service staff used to assist housing applications with forms, in the absence of Counter Services, applications now had higher level of errors or missing information which delays processing of forms.

Minute No. 93/21

Section 183 Notice – Disposal of Land at Griffith Court, Laurels Road, Dundalk

Proposed by: Cllr. C. Keelan

Seconded by: Cllr. M. Yore

And Resolved:

That having considered the notice on the matter dated 4th May 2021, to confirm the disposal of 0.0283 hectares of land at Griffith Court, Laurels Road, Dundalk for a consideration of €8,000 (eight thousand euro) following a valuation process to Oldmount Construction Limited, Shanmullagh, Hackballscross, Dundalk.

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Minute No. 94/21

Allocations of Members Community Grants

Proposed by: Cllr. M. Yore

Seconded by: Cllr. E. Coffey

And resolved

To approve Members Community Grant Allocations as circulated with the agenda

Minute No. 95/21

Notice of Motion

Proposed by Cllr. Emma Coffey

Seconded by Cllr. John Sheridan

And resolved

That Louth County Council calls on the Minister of Housing to immediately decommission The SHD (Strategic Housing Developments) system due to its undemocratic and unconstitutional nature and increase costs to developers in the application process and to citizens in having to challenge such decisions made under this system in the high court jurisdiction.

Minute No. 96/21

Notice of Motion

Proposed by Cllr. John Sheridan

Seconded by Cllr. Joanna Byrne

And resolved

"That Louth County Council supports the principle of legislation on hate crimes planned to come before the Oireachtas. The legislation will seek to create new aggravated forms of existing criminal offences, where those offences are motivated by prejudice on the basis of race, disability, colour, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity and potentially other grounds. It would enhance crimes like assault, coercion, harassment, criminal damage and a threat to kill or cause serious harm, endangerment among other offences where there is a specific proven element of hate involved.

If we are a true Republic, Ireland has an obligation to be the leader in how we manage tolerance and intolerance. The absence of hate crimes legislation here can be sometimes be used as an example around the world to legitimise discrimination in other countries."

Minute No. 97/21

Notice of Motion

Proposed by Cllr. John Sheridan

Seconded by Cllr. Joanna Byrne

And resolved

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"That Louth County Council supports legislation to prohibit the practice or advertisement of 'Conversion Therapy' for LGBTQ+ people. The legislation currently before the Oireachtas seeks to prohibit 'conversion therapy', as a deceptive and harmful act or practice against a person's sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression. The practice is dangerous pseudo-scientific practice with damaging consequences. It also undermines genuine medically-proven interventions to assist people at times of challenge in their mental health."

Minute No. 98/21

Notice of Motion

Proposed by Cllr. Tomás Sharkey

Seconded by Cllr. Joanna Byrne

And resolved

"This Council believes that the use of credit cards for gambling should be banned through legislation. This council commends Paddy Power Bookmakers for its recent decision to stop accepting credit cards for gambling and urges all operators to do likewise.

"This Council notes that the banning of credit card gambling is on the government's agenda and will write to the Minister for Justice to urge for the publication of the heads of a new gambling bill which should ban credit card gambling."

Minute No. 99/21

Notice of Motion

Proposed by Cllr. Tomás Sharkey

Seconded by Cllr. Maeve Yore

And resolved

"This Council is proud of the provision of public open spaces and notes the importance of these facilities. Louth County Council will place outdoor table tennis tables in selected locations as a pilot to encourage physical activity."

Reply:

This matter will be examined as part of the preparation of a Play Policy.

Minute No. 100/21

Question: Cllr. Pearse McGeough

"With the growing number of applications for the HAGs, MAG s ,HOPs and DPGs, how long are the average waiting lists for Priority 1 applications and Priority 2 ?"

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Reply from Mr. P. Donnelly, Director of Services Housing & Community

There has been a significant increase in the number of HOP HAG and MAG applications submitted to Louth County Council in recent years.

Application time vary as the vast majority of applications submitted are not completed in full and staff have to follow up with applicants requesting , forms to be signed, proof of payment of Local Property Tax , income details for all household members, etc – All these requirements are clearly set out in the application form.

With regard to HOP's all 2020 applications which rolled over will be processed in 2021 , it is anticipated that the HOP budget will be allocated in full by June 2021 and after that time all new applications will roll over into 2022.

With regard to HAG & MAG the budget for 2021 is already allocated based on applications rolling over from previous year's applications.

The following process is involved.

- Applications assessed to see if they meet initial grants criteria.
- Where criteria is reached application is placed on a waiting list for OT assessment. Circa 52+ weeks
- OT carries out assessment and makes recommendation in relation to adaptations.
- Applicants placed on waiting list and when funding becomes available grant processed.
- Due to the large number of applications in recent years it is difficult to give a timescale however there is a considerable wait time involved.
- Due to the nature of the grants scheme all eligible applicants either have a disability or a complex medical condition and are either priority1 or priority 2 and therefore a wait time involved.
- OT will advise if a case is urgent and it will be prioritised as resources allow.

The tables below outline the number of grants processed and completed together with the number of grants that are submitted. Note the significant increase in applications in recent years.

Table 1.0 DPG Applications Processed and Completed

	HOP	HAG	MAG	TOTAL
2020	131	60	36	227
2019	65	59	18	142
2018	76	53	24	153
2017	102	81	26	209
2016	39	41	10	90

Table 1.1 DPG Applications Rolling Over Annually

	HOP	HAG	MAG	TOTAL
2020	89	298	65	452
2019	80	215	15	310
2018	33	85	20	138
2017	66	100	17	183
2016	00	46	00	46

Table 1.2 DPG New Applications 2021

	HOP	HAG	MAG	TOTAL
2021	115	50	48	213

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Minute No. 101/21

Question: Cllr. Marianne Butler

“Can Louth County Council outline how many inspections has taken place as part of the National Inspection Plan for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems for the years 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?”

Reply from Ms. C. Duff, Director of Services, Operations:

- 2018 - 8 no. completed
- 2019 - 8 no. completed
- 2020 - 10 no. completed
- 2021 - 8 no. proposed - none started yet.

Minute No. 102/21

Correspondence

Correspondence as listed with the Agenda was noted by the members

Letter to Minister Donnelly 12th March and response received 24th March

Motion to Paul Reid, Chief Executive HSE 30th April & Response received 12th May

Minute No.103/21

Motions from other Councils

Motions from other Councils as listed with the Agenda was noted by the members

Minute No. 104/21

During the meeting Standing Order No.3 was suspended twice to extend the time of the meeting. Members were asked if there was an objection to this and no member objected.

Meeting Concluded at 2.07 p.m.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

The Minutes were confirmed at a meeting of Council held on:-

Date: _____

Cathaoirleach: _____

Meetings Administrator: _____