

**Minutes of Leitrim County Council meeting held in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae,  
Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim on Monday, 7 November 2022**

**Members Present:** Councillor Mary Bohan  
Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire  
Councillor Enda McGloin  
Councillor Sean McGowan  
Councillor Brendan Barry  
Councillor Frank Dolan  
Councillor Gerry Dolan  
Councillor Pádraig Fallon  
Councillor Paddy Farrell  
Councillor Des Guckian  
Councillor Felim Gurn  
Councillor Thomas Mulligan  
Councillor Sean McDermott  
Councillor Paddy O'Rourke  
Councillor Justin Warnock

Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn (Cathaoirleach) presiding

**Apologies:** Councillor Caillian Ellis  
Councillor Enda Stenson

**Officials Present:** Lar Power, Chief Executive  
Joseph Gilhooly, Director of Services, Economic Development,  
Planning and Infrastructural Services  
Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance, Water, Environment, Climate  
Action and Emergency Services  
Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing, Corporate Services,  
Community and Cultural Services  
Terry McGovern, Senior Engineer  
Bernard Greene, Senior Planner  
Darragh O'Boyle, Senior Executive Engineer, Roads - South  
Leitrim Area  
Kieran Brett, Meetings Administrator  
Kathleen Ellis, Assistant Staff Officer

**MM.131.22 Votes of Sympathy**

The Members extended a vote of sympathy to the following:

- Gallogly Family, Sonnaghbeg, Cloone, Co Leitrim on the death of Tommy Gallogly R.I.P.
- Mr Seamus McManus, Beaghamore, Carrigallen on the death of Eamon McManus

R.I.P

- Mr Aidan McGoldrick, Church Street, Ballinamore, Co Leitrim on the death of Martina McGoldrick R.I.P.
- Mrs Ann Gallagher & Family, St Patrick's Park, Carrick-on-Shannon on the death of Peter Gallagher R.I.P.
- Mr Gerry Gallagher, Lugmeen, Drumkeeran, Co Leitrim on the death of Peter Gallagher R.I.P.
- Mrs Darina McWeeney, Banaghmore, Drumkeeran, Co Leitrim on the death of Sean McWeeney R.I.P.
- Ms Sandra Rowley, Mohill on the death of Amanda Rowley R.I.P.
- Flynn Family, Hartley Lodge, St Mary's Close, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim on the death of Yvonne Flynn R.I.P.
- Mrs Bernadette Phillips, Aughameeney, Carrick-on-Shannon on the death of Pat Quinlain R.I.P.
- Mr Robert Mulvey & Family, Hartley, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim

#### **MM.132.22 Adoption of Minutes**

##### **MM.132.22a Adoption of Minutes 5th September 2022**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finola Armstrong McGuire  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Sean McDermott

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

Councillor Des Guckian noted that under the Leitrim Digital Strategy it is proposed to store all data in electronic format in the IT cloud. He outlined his view that this is not a good idea and paper records should be maintained.

##### **MM.132.22b Adoption of Minutes of Special meeting 4th October 2022**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Sean McDermott  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Brendan Barry

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of Special Meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

Councillor Guckian referred to the 174 proposed amendments that were dealt with at the meeting and the process involved outlining his view that motions were rushed through. He also expressed his dissatisfaction with the maps provided criticising the quality and clarity of the maps.

Mr Lar Power, Chief Executive stated that he took exception to the comments made by Cllr Des Guckian. He referred to the extensive workshops held with the members, and in which most elected members participated. Mr Power said the draft County Development Plan 2023-2029 has been prepared in accordance with Departmental requirements and is fit

for purpose.

Referring to the Local Improvement Scheme, Cllr Paddy O'Rourke said the scheme excludes 50% of roadways as the criteria that requires 2 individual farming enterprises on a roadway, is proving difficult, and he sought clarification on what these people are getting for their taxes paid. Councillor Gerry Dolan supported Cllr O'Rourke comments.

Councillor Des Guckian said the two farming enterprises requirement needs to be revisited.

Councillor Brendan Barry said he hoped there would be flexibility in the scheme in relation to turbidity rights.

Councillor O'Rourke said Leitrim County Council previously put a requirement into the scheme that one occupied house must be included in an application, and they should now have the power to do this again.

Councillor Enda McGloin sought clarification on what the rules of the scheme are as set out by the Department and what are Leitrim County Council's add-ins to the scheme.

Councillor Mary Bohan asked if these Department guidelines are recommendations or fixed criteria.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly, Director of Services said the minimum criteria were set by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Local Authority must comply with this national standard. For a road to be eligible, 2 separate owners of land engaged in farming activities must have direct access to the road. Leitrim County Council have no scope to amend this. Mr Gilhooly said the level of scrutiny and audit from the Department is increasing. Some years ago, Leitrim County Council added a requirement that an occupied house must also be included in the application.

Mr Terry McGovern, Senior Engineer said the Local Improvement Scheme is an agricultural scheme. For a road to be eligible for the scheme it must provide direct access to two or more parcels of land, owned, or occupied by different persons engaged in separate agricultural activities. Applications will be ineligible if only one parcel of land has access to the road. Leitrim County Council cannot substitute one parcel of land with an occupied dwelling.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke said people have waited on an LIS scheme since 2010. Over that time farming practises and land holding size have changed. 25 years ago, Leitrim County Council had the authority to amend the LIS criteria so that a dwelling house could be included on in the application process, now 50% of applications are excluded.

Mr Gilhooly outlined that the Local Improvement Scheme criteria has not changed in principle since the last scheme. He acknowledged farming practices have changed over the last 10-15 years and he re-iterated the criteria that is being used in Leitrim is the national standard, set by the Department.

Councillor Sean McDermott and Councillor Felim Gurn expressed their disappointment with

situations where a small area is left unfinished around a house where the lane finishes. Councillor Mc Dermott said tarmac should be extended around occupied houses especially around the houses of elderly people. Councillor Gurn said some discretion should be given in this regard.

Councillor Des Guckian proposed that Councillor Paddy O'Rourke put forward a motion to amend the national criteria and for each political grouping to contact their Oireachtas members and insist on a change to the criteria.

Councillor Paddy Farrell proposed that a review of the scheme be carried out in the new year.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly said the quantity of road eligible for the scheme is that which forms an integral part of the road. Private yards and entrances are not eligible as they are not an integral part of the roadway.

Mr Gilhooly said a review of the scheme will be carried out after the closing date on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and once all applications have been assessed and processed. It is likely that the review will commence in the second part of 2023.

Councillor Des Guckian queried how near to a private house can surfacing works be carried out and it should not be the personal opinion of an engineer.

Mr Gilhooly said the proximity of resurfacing works to a private dwelling is assessed on a case by case basis and will be assessed by the district engineer. A second opinion can be sought from another council Engineer, but Leitrim County Council staff have the responsibility to make this judgement and stand by their decision taken.

Councillor Gerry Dolan said he was aware where contractors have done additional works at homes, but this was an additional payment, separate to the LIS.

**MM.133.22 Disposals under Section 183(1) of the Local Government Act, 2001**

**MM.133.22a Consider for approval disposal of house and lands at Cornacloy, Glenfarne, Co Leitrim (Folio LM1209F)**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Sean McDermott  
**SECONDED** by Cllr Frank Dolan

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council consent to the disposal of house and lands pursuant to the provisions of Article 206 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

Particulars of the property to which County Council proposes to dispose:

**The Property:** Derelict 3 roomed precast house with adjoining site comprising circa 0.28

hectares in the townland of Cornacloy, Glenfarne, Co Leitrim as contained in Folio LM1209F  
**The Consideration proposed in respect of the disposal:** The purchase price for the Disposal of the property is €30,000 (minus Leitrim County Council legal fees).

The Purchase will be responsible for the purchaser's own legal fees associated with this disposal. The property being disposed of is being disposed in its present condition. The Disposal of this property is Conditional upon the Contract for Sale being completed with 3 months of this disposal being approved by the Members of Leitrim County Council.

**MM.133.22b Consider for approval disposal of strip of land at Lahard, Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim (Folio 14081)**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Paddy O'Rourke  
**SECONDED** by Cllr Gerry Dolan

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council consent to the disposal of plot of land pursuant to the provisions of Article 206 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

Particulars of the property to which County Council proposes to dispose:

**The Property:** Strip of land comprising circa 0.057 hectares that exceeds behind house numbers 11,12 & 13 in the townland of Lahard, Ballinamore, Co Leitrim as contained in Folio LM14081.

**The Consideration proposed in respect of the disposal:** €500 (minus Leitrim County Council legal Fees). The Purchase will be responsible for the purchaser's own legal fees associated with this disposal. The property being disposed of is being disposed in its present condition. The Disposal of this property is Conditional upon the Contract for Sale being completed with 3 months of this disposal being approved by the Members of Leitrim County Council.

**MM.134.22 To approve overdraft accommodation, in the sum of €1.5 million, for the twelve month period ending 31st December 2023**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Pdraig Fallon  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Des Guckian

It was **AGREED** that the overdraft accommodation in the sum of €1.5 million for the twelve-month period ending 31st December 2023, subject to the sanction of the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, in accordance with Section 106 (2) of the Local Government Act, 2001 as amended be approved.

**MM.135.22 Consider the report of the Audit Committee on the audited Financial Statement 2021 and the LG Auditors Report**

Mr Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance, Water, Environment, Climate Action, and Emergency Services outlined that the Audit Committee had reviewed the Audited Financial Statement 2021 and the Local Government Auditors report at its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022 in accordance with Section 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and were satisfied with the content of the Audit Report.

The report was noted by the Members.

**MM.136.22 To note Leitrim County Council Winter Maintenance Service Plan 2022-2023**

The Leitrim County Council Winter Maintenance Service Plan 2022 -2023 as circulated to the members appears as **Appendix 1** to the minutes of the meeting.

The Winter Maintenance Plan as circulated was noted by the Members.

**MM.137.22 Consider date for the January Plenary Meeting**

Mr Kieran Brett, Meetings Administrator advised that the Corporate Policy Group is recommending that the January Plenary meeting be scheduled for Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 11.00 am.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Enda McGloin  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Pdraig Fallon

It was **AGREED** the January Plenary Meeting of Leitrim County Council be held on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 11.00 am in the Council Chamber, Aras an Chontae, Carrick on Shannon.

**MM.138.22 Management Reports- August 2022 and September 2022**

The Monthly Management Reports for August and September 2022, as circulated, were noted by Members.

Councillor Des Guckian sought an update in relation to the operation of the Civil Defence service in the county

In reply, Mr Vincent Dwyer, said the Civil Defence forms part of the Emergency Services within the Local Authority. The Chief Defence Officer reports to the Chief Fire Officer. There are two permanent officers in the Civil Defence. The Civil Defence Officer is responsible for recruitment and retention of volunteers. Mr Dwyer said Civil Defence Services over the years have exceeded, particularly on operations on the River Shannon. The Civil Defence offices are in Drumshanbo. The Civil Defence service is 70% funded by the Department of Defence and 30% by the Local Authority. Volunteers are not paid, but incidental costs items such as food are provided during operations.

Councillor Guckian sought an update on the housing units planned from Drumsna.

Ms Mary Quinn confirmed that this project is currently at design stage.

The reports were noted by the Members

#### **MM.139.22 Report from Corporate Policy Group**

Ms Mary Quinn, outlined the Corporate Policy Group had considered the following items at their online meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022:

- Consider the Draft Budget for Leitrim County Council for the financial year ending 31st December 2023
- Update from the Planning, Economic Development & Infrastructure SPC
- Update from the Housing, Community & Culture SPC
- Considered Items for Council Meeting
- Agreed to receive a presentation from Tusla at the January Council meeting
- Attendance of Members at Conferences, Training Events and Seminars
- Electoral Register

Mr Kieran Brett advised the electoral registration process has changed, the Electoral Reform Act 2022 came into effect on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022. The Draft and Live Registers have now been replaced by a Rolling Register of Electors. The Rolling Register will be continuously updated. Registered electors are encouraged to visit [checktheregiser.ie](http://checktheregiser.ie) and add their PPSN, date of birth and Eircode. This will help to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the Electoral Register. All new applicants to the register will have to provide their PPSN, as well as their date of birth. All application forms are available on Check the Register.

The update was noted by Members.

#### **MM.140.22 Attendance at conferences/training**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Paddy Farrell  
**SECONDED** by Cllr Sean McDermott

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Councillor Mary Bohan, Councillor Frank Dolan, Councillor Sean McDermott and Councillor Paddy O'Rourke at the Conference on "The Role of the Local Authorities in addressing the needs of older people" on the 11<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> November 2022 in the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co Louth be approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Paddy Farrell  
**SECONDED** by Cllr Sean McDermott

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Councillor Sean McGowan, Councillor Mary Bohan, Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn, Councillor Thomas Mulligan, Councillor Paddy Farrell, Councillor Justin Warnock and Councillor Paddy O'Rourke at the LAMA Conference on the 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022 in the Four Seasons Hotel, Cloonshannagh, Co Monaghan, H18 Y220 be approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Paddy Farrell  
**SECONDED** by Cllr Sean McDermott

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Mary Bohan, Cllr Paddy O'Rourke, Cllr Paddy Farrell, Cllr Enda McGloin, Cllr Thomas Mulligan and Cllr Ita Reynolds Flynn at the AILG Training on "DATA Protection – what Councillors Need to Know" on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at the New Grange Hotel, Navan be approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Paddy Farrell  
**SECONDED** by Cllr Enda McGloin

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Paddy O'Rourke at the IPB Meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2022 in the Shearwater Hotel, Athlone, Co Westmeath be retrospectively approved".

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Frank Dolan  
**SECONDED** by Cllr Sean McDermott

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Enda McGloin at the National Age Friendly Awards in Dromland, Co Clare on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2022 be retrospectively approved".

#### **MM.141.22 Meeting Correspondence**

1. Co Leitrim Society of New York Newsletter for September 2022
2. Resolution from Tipperary County Council dated 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022 calling on the Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform to provide additional funding to Local Authorities in 2023 having regard to the unprecedented levels of inflation.

Councillor Sean McGowan and Councillor Des Guckian supported the resolution.

3. Resolution from Sligo County Council dated 19<sup>th</sup> September 2022 in regard to



disabled parking places.

4. Resolution from Sligo County Council dated 19<sup>th</sup> September 2022 in regard to the introduction of a windfall tax on energy companies' excessive profits.

Councillor Des Guckian supported the resolution.

5. Resolution from Mayo County Council dated 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022 calling on the Minister for Housing to update the criteria for the first-time buyer's derelict property grant Crio Conaithe to enable derelict properties in rural areas to be eligible to avail of the scheme in order to address the low supply of houses across the country.
6. Email of the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2022 from the Office of the Minister for Health regarding long covid.
7. Email of the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2022 from the Office of the Minister for Health regard the ambulance service.
8. Email dated 21<sup>st</sup> September from the Office of the Minister for Justice regarding the Free Legal Aid.
9. Email of the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022 from Senator Boyhan in regard to the Local Government (Maternity Protection and other measures for Local Authority Members) Bill 2022.
10. Letter of Acknowledgement from the Office of the Minister for Social Protection dated 20<sup>th</sup> September 2022 following Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to the Rent a Room Scheme.
11. Letter of acknowledgement from the Office of the Minister for Rural and Community Development dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022 following resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to review of the 2023 Local Improvement Scheme.
12. Resolution from Limerick City and County Council dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022 in regard to the establishment of an Expert National Review Group on Horticulture to include the main stakeholders and to report back in six months.
13. Email of the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022 from the Office of the Minister for Health acknowledging receipt of Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to Working Conditions and Pay Increases for Hospital Staff.
14. Letter of acknowledgement from the Office of the Taoiseach following resolution passed by Leitrim County Council on Working Conditions and Pay Increases for Hospital Staff.

15. Letter of acknowledgement from the Office of the Taoiseach following resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding grants for the purchase and refurbishment of houses in all rural areas.
16. Letter of acknowledgement from the Office of the Taoiseach following resolution passed by Leitrim County Council on the Legal Aid System.
17. Resolution from Cork City Council dated 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022 in regard prospecting licences.
18. Email of the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage acknowledging receipt of Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to Housing Grants.
19. Email of the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022 from the Office of the Minister for Health following resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to ambulance services in Co Leitrim.
20. Email from Senator Victor Boyhan of the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022 in regard to the Action Plan for Reform on An Bord Pleanála.
21. Letter from the HSE dated 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022 in regard to the reopening of the Social Day Care Centres in Leitrim

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire welcomed the upgrading works at St Patricks Hospital, and she asked if Leitrim County Council has been approached by HSE regarding suitable accommodation in Carrick-on-Shannon.

Councillor Brendan Barry expressed his disappointment that funding has not yet been received for the works at St Patrick's.

Councillor Sean McGowan said the Day Care Centre in Mohill should be re-opened

22. Resolution from Monaghan County Council dated 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022 in regard to the All-Ireland Citizens' Assembly to debate and discuss our Constitutional Future.
23. Email of the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022 from the Office of the Minister for Rural and Community Development in regard to Local Improvement Scheme in 2022.
24. Resolution from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council dated 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022 in regard to the Justice for Noah campaign.
25. Email of the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2022 from the Office of the Minister for Health in regard to working conditions and pay for hospital staff.

Councillor Des Guckian expressed his disappointment with the reply received.

26. Co Leitrim Society of New York October 2022 Newsletter.

27. Briefing Note on the Residential Tenancies Bill 2022.

28. Resolution from Longford County Council dated 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 in regard to Social Housing Assessment Regulations.

29. Resolution from Offaly County Council dated 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022 in regard to difficulties faced by emergency medical technicians including low salary and poor working conditions resulting in a number of technicians leaving the service.

### **Other Items raised under Meeting Correspondence**

#### **Vacant Properties**

Councillor Sean McDermott asked if more information could be circulated in regard to the vacant properties grant. This was supported by Councillor Enda McGloin.

#### **Breast Check**

Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn expressed her disappointment that there has been no reply in respect of the correspondence issued to the HSE regarding restoration of Breast Check services in Carrick-on-Shannon and asked that this be followed up. Mr Brett confirmed this will be followed up.

### **MM.142.22 Vote of Congratulations**

The members extended a vote of congratulations to the following

- Pat & Denise Rigney and John Dillon on winning the International Spirit Brand/Distiller of the Year in the USA Industry at the 2022 Wine Enthusiast Star Awards
- St Mary's GAA Club on winning the Minor and Senior Football Championship titles and the Ladies on winning the Intermediate Football Championship Title
- Zak Moradi on his Book "Life Begins In Leitrim" being shortlisted for a National Award.
- Carrigallen GAA Club on winning the Junior A Championship Final
- Gortletteragh GAA Club on winning the Junior B Championship Final
- Glencar Manorhamilton GAA Club on winning the U15 Boys and U16 Girls Division 1

**MM.143.22 Motion from Councillor Des Guckian - Landlordism**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Des Guckian;**

"That we strongly oppose the return of landlordism to County Leitrim by means of speculators and vulture funds buying up development land and, also, large amounts of agricultural land to be put under forestry."

***Report by Director of Services for Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation.***

"The Constitution (Article 43) declares that the State will vindicate the property rights of every citizen. This means that a person has the right to own, transfer and inherit property and also has the right to bequeath their property upon death. The State accordingly guarantees to pass no law attempting to abolish the right of private ownership or the general right to transfer, bequeath, and inherit property.

The State recognises, however, that the exercise of the rights mentioned in the foregoing provisions of this Article ought, in civil society, to be regulated by the principles of social justice. The State, accordingly, may as occasion requires delimit by law the exercise of the said rights with a view to reconciling their exercise with the exigencies of the common good. This is the basis for example for the Compulsory Acquisition of land in the interest of the common good to facilitate a specific project or development.

There is no legal basis therefore to support the submitted Notice of Motion to unilaterally oppose the acquisition of lands identified for development purposes or of land for the purposes of forestry plantations when such rights are clearly protected within Bunreacht na hÉireann."

Councillor Des Guckian gave the background to his motion, and he said he strongly opposed the return of landlordism.

Councillor McGloin said what is proposed is a very broad stroke and while he understood the trust of the motion, people have the freedom to sell and do what they like with their property.

Councillor Mary Bohan said the Elected members do not have the power in this regard.

Councillor Justin Warnock referred to the Save Leitrim Group and outlining 20% of County Leitrim is planted versus 11% of the country nationally. Councillor Warnock stated young farmers will stay working the land if they get access to it. Afforestation has caused serious pollution to the country.

Councillor Brendan Barry said he would n't support controlling what property owners can do with their property. Cllr Barry said there should be a change brought about that speculators

should be living within a certain distance from property they purchase in relation to forestry.

Councillor Guckian said we must take a stand on this issue outlining he did not deny anyone the right to buy or sell property.

Chairperson, Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn sought a seconder for the motion. As there was no seconder for the motion she moved to the next item.

**MM.144.22 Motion from Councillor Paddy Farrell - VAT Rates**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Paddy Farrell;**

"I ask Leitrim County Council to call on the Minister for Tourism, Catherine Martin, to control or regulate the rip-off rates being charged to customers staying in some of our hotels around the country, as this will ruin our tourist industry."

Councillor Paddy Farrell gave the background to his motion.

Councillor Enda McGloin supported the motion, stating that it was a timely motion and the Government have reacted in this regard by not increasing the VAT rate.

Councillor Gurn, Councillor Bohan, Councillor Barry, Cllr McDermott, Cllr Armstrong McGuire, Cllr Warnock, Cllr Dolan, and Cllr Guckian supported the motion.

Councillor Enda McGloin said it is a free market and the reduced VAT rate should be withdrawn by Government if hotels don't reduce prices accordingly.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Paddy Farrell  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Enda McGloin

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Tourism, Catherine Martin, to control or regulate the rip-off rates being charged to customers staying in some of our hotels around the country, as this will ruin our tourist industry.

**MM.145.22 Motion from Councillor Sean McGowan - Bus Eireann**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Sean McGowan;**

"I will seek the support of members in calling on Bus Eireann to now put in place the necessary arrangements to increase their school bus fleet, so that a sufficient number of buses will be available for next September, and thereby avoid the problems that happened throughout the country at the start of this school year."

Councillor Sean McGowan stated Bus Eireann should be given resources and a plan should be put in place to increase the Bus Eireann school transport fleet.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke referred to his motion at the July meeting on this topic and referred to the chaos that occurred in September with the Government announcement of free travel for all school children. Cllr O'Rourke said there are still a number of outstanding issues, and the issue is not yet resolved.

Councillor Padraig Fallon referred to an instance where a parent is now at home to pick up children from school. Cllr Fallon said the lottery ticket system should be withdrawn and when the child receives a place on school transport when they start school this access to transport should stay with the child until they finish school.

Councillor Des Guckian supported the motion and said all cases have not been resolved and there is a shortage of both buses and drivers.

Councillor Brendan Barry said the distance from the school criteria set by the Department needs to be reviewed in order that more children can avail of the school bus service.

Councillor Justin Warnock, Councillor Sean McDermott and Cllr Gerry Dolan supported the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Sean McGowan  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Paddy O'Rourke

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on Bus Eireann to now put in place the necessary arrangements to increase their school bus fleet, so that a sufficient number of buses will be available for next September, and thereby avoid the problems that happened throughout the country at the start of this school year.

**MM.146.22 Motion from Councillor Padraig Fallon and Motion from Councillor Sean McDermott – Irish Water**

It was agreed by members to take Motion No 15 in the name of Councillor Padraig Fallon and Motion No 18 in the name of Councillor Sean McDermott concurrently as they are similar in nature.

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Padraig Fallon;**

"I propose that Leitrim County Council support a vote of No Confidence in Irish Water and write to the relevant Minister seeking a structured winding down of Irish Water. We have no confidence in Irish Water to provide a competent and quality water service to the people of Leitrim and believe the only way to achieve a proper water service is to hand control of water services back to the local authority."

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Sean McDermott;**

"I raise the issue of Group Water Schemes who are awaiting takeover by Irish Water and are finding that their financial reserves are being severely depleted by substantial increases in energy, and they have no other income except from subsidies. I call on Irish Water to speed up the process of taking over these Group Water Schemes."

Councillor Pádraig Fallon said he has no confidence in Irish Water, and he wanted to see responsibility for Water Services handed back to the Local Authority. This is no reflection on staff from Leitrim County Council who have worked with Irish Water in this county.

Councillor Fallon referred to the campaign that was published last week calling for a referendum to Keep Water Public. The campaign is calling on the Government to name the date for a referendum to keep water in public ownership and for this to be part of the constitution. Cllr. Fallon said leak allowances are not being applied to customers' bills. Service users are being penalised while Irish Water is the biggest offender as it is their infrastructure that leaks.

Councillor Sean McDermott supported the motion.

Councillor Sean McDermott said some Group Water Schemes are awaiting to be taken over by Irish Water and they are experiencing financial constraints. They would like to continue as a Group Water Scheme, but they are totally dependant on subsidies. They would like to see some outcome that would enable them to be taken over by Irish Water.

Councillor Mary Bohan supported Cllr. Fallon's motion and she said it was a big mistake taking water services from the Local Authority. Resources should have been given to the Local Authority and a better services would have been provided. Councillor Bohan paid tribute to the excellent work of Leitrim County Council staff in this area. Councillor Bohan highlighted the prohibiting costs to provide water connections to houses which are totally unacceptable. Councillor Bohan said Irish Water was a disaster for Leitrim and expressed her disappointment in the delay in Irish Water taking in charge water services in housing estates.

Councillor Felim Gurn supported both motions.

Councillor O'Rourke said new water connections for Irish Water have to be carried out by designated contractors and he said one job in his area was priced at €84,000 by Irish Water's contractor as opposed to €24,000 from a private competent contractor. Cllr O'Rourke said the designated contractor did not carry out the work but sublet the work to someone else.

Councillor Des Guckian said he was not able to support Cllr Fallon's motion at the moment. Councillor Guckian said improvement is necessary and Irish Water should be given a chance to improve.

Councillor Warnock said Irish Water inherited a serious problem and he acknowledged there is a lot of bureaucracy and said there is a greater role for the Local Authority, and he said he would not like to see Irish Water as a private entity.

Councillor Gerry Dolan supported Councillor Fallon's motion.

Councillor Enda McGloin outlined that Irish Water was setup to deal with a lot of inefficiencies at the time in water supply and wastewater treatment. The country was in a bad financial position at the time, and it was considered that a private company could raise the necessary finance without the borrowing showing on the Government Balance sheet. Cllr McGloin said the Minister should review the situation on how this utility is being funded. Water is being paid for through income taxes and circumstances have changed. Councillor Enda McGloin paid tribute to the exceptional services provided by the staff of Leitrim County Council in delivering water services.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon acknowledged that it is not the fault of Leitrim County Council.

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire encouraged members to link in with Irish Water online with queries in this regard.

Councillor Brendan Barry said Group Water Schemes should not yet sign over to Irish Water. Irish Water should be wound up and not let go into private ownership. The Service Level Agreement between the Local Authority and Irish Water is due to expire next year, and all Local Authority staff should be supported as they did not have a chance to vote on this.

Mr Vincent Dwyer said a Framework Agreement has been agreed between all parties including unions. Staff did not vote on this, and he acknowledged it is causing a great concern among staff.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Pdraig Fallon  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Sean McDermott

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council support a vote of No Confidence in Irish Water and write to the relevant Minister seeking a structured winding down of Irish Water. We have no confidence in Irish Water to provide a competent and quality water service to the people of Leitrim and believe the only way to achieve a proper water service is to hand control of water services back to the local authority.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Sean McDermott  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Mary Bohan

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on Irish Water to speed up the process of taking over these Group Water Schemes. Group Water Schemes who are awaiting takeover



by Irish Water are finding that their financial reserves are been severely depleted by substantial increases in energy, and they have no other income except from subsidies.

**MM.147.22 Motion from Councillor Felim Gurn - Rural Link**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Felim Gurn;**

"Rural Link has provided much needed transport into the county, connecting towns and villages that were previously not connected by transport services.

However, the withdrawal of the subsidised bus service to crèches throughout the county has caused huge hardship for working parents trying to balance work and childcare. This service needs to be immediately reinstated at crèches throughout the county, where the service was available pre COVID-19."

Councillor Felim Gurn gave the background to his motion and outlined the benefits of Rural link in rural areas and to the night-time economy. Councillor Gurn expressed his disappointment to the withdrawal of subsidised bus services to creches in the county which is causing hardship for working parents.

Councillor Frank Dolan supported the motion.

Councillors McDermott, Guckian, Warnock, Farrell and McGowan supported the motion.

**MM.148.22 Motion from Councillor Paddy O'Rourke - Outdoor Meeting Space for young people**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Paddy O'Rourke;**

"As members may recall, we received a presentation from Comhairle na nÓg in March 2022. They put forward a proposal for an outdoor meeting space for young people in one of our larger towns. Comhairle Na nÓg have a proven track record in putting forward the needs of school going teenagers and this request comes having received the support of their members through what is a very democratic system.

On behalf of Comhailre na nOg, I ask that the concept they put forward last March is explored and where feasible brought to fruition."

**Report by Director of Services, Housing and Community, Corporate Services, Cultural and Emergency Services**

"The request for an outdoor meeting space will be explored further when the opportunity arises as part of our overall and ongoing commitment to enhance and improve the public realm in towns and villages throughout the county. In considering the potential for public realm infrastructure of this nature, the feasibility and suitability of proposed locations and designs can be explored with the community and voluntary sectors, to ensure that any proposed development meets the needs of the community in which it may be developed."

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke called on the members to support the concept previously put forward by Comhairle na nÓg for an outdoor meeting space for young people in one of our larger towns be explored and a space be identified suitable for this activity.

Councillor Mary Bohan supported the motion and said this was specifically asked for by Comhairle na nÓg. Councillor Bohan said involvement and support is needed from the Local Authority to bring this to fruition.

Councillors Warnock, Gurn, Dolan, and Armstrong McGuire supported the motion.

Councillor Sean McGowan referred to the marvellous facility that is in place in Bornacoola for young people to meet.

Councillor O'Rourke said this proposal should be progressed by Leitrim County Council and that the council do not just provide a lip service to this request.

Councillor Des Guckian said a number of meetings places should be provided throughout the county and not just outdoor spaces.

#### **MM.149.22 Motion from Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire - Ambulance Service**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Finola Armstrong-McGuire;**

"I ask that this Council write to Minister Stephen Donnelly requesting that an evaluation is done of the Ambulance service in Co. Leitrim. The base in Carrick on Shannon is being called upon to serve a wide area into counties Cavan and Longford regularly, and the staff of the ambulance service are stretched beyond regulation. A fair evaluation would lead to a second ambulance and second team of personnel being based in South Leitrim."

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire called for more paramedics and ambulances to be put in place. Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire paid tribute to the ambulance paramedics, and the excellent service they provide, however the ambulance service is stretched beyond regulation.

Councillor Sean McGowan supported the motion.

Councillor Paddy Farrell and Councillor Felim Gurn supported the motion and said they will bring this issue up at the next HSE Regional Health Forum meeting.

Councillor Brendan Barry said the density of ambulances is too low especially in the Carrick-on-Shannon area.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finola Armstrong McGuire

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Sean McGowan

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council write to Minister Stephen Donnelly requesting that an evaluation is done of the Ambulance service in Co. Leitrim. The base in Carrick on Shannon is being called upon to serve a wide area into counties Cavan and Longford regularly, and the staff of the ambulance service are stretched beyond regulation. A fair evaluation would lead to a second ambulance and second team of personnel being based in South Leitrim."

**MM.150.22 Motion from Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn - Respite Care Places and a High Dependency unit for South Leitrim**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn;**

"I call on Leitrim County Council to write to HSE about obtaining more respite care places and a high dependency unit for the south of County Leitrim. This situation with respite care is at crisis point and needs to be addressed urgently."

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn said this issue has reached crisis point and is causing parents' significant worry.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke supported the motion and he referred to the meeting that was held in Carrick-on-Shannon in July with Minister Ann Rabbitte and he expressed his disappointment that there has not been much progress since then.

Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn highlighted the situation of 75-year-old lone parent who has a daughter with special needs. Should anything happen this parent, there is nowhere for her daughter to go; she needs a place that is familiar to her if such a situation arises. Cllr Ita Reynolds Flynn said Cloonamahon in County Sligo, is not a viable option.

Councillor Mary Bohan supported the motion.

Councillor Brendan Barry proposed that a copy of this letter be sent to Minister Ann Rabbitte.

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire queried if there has been any preplanning enquires from the HSE on this matter.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Ita Reynolds Flynn  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Paddy O'Rourke

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council to write to HSE about obtaining more respite care places and a high dependency unit for the south of County Leitrim. This situation with respite care is at crisis point and needs to be addressed urgently."

**MM.151.22 Motion from Councillor Justin Warnock - Primary Care Centre**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Justin Warnock;**

"I ask that Leitrim County Council write to the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD, and the CEO of the HSE, Stephen Mulvany, to provide a new Primary Care Centre and a Day Care Centre for the town of Kinlough and environs. I ask that this issue is raised and supported by our representatives on the HSE Forum."

Councillor Justin Warnock said a Primary Care Centre is needed in Kinlough and he called on the representative on the HSE Regional Health Forum to raise this issue at forum meetings.

Councillor Mary Bohan supported the motion and said a primary Care Centre should be provided in Kinlough and there should be one in every town.

Councillors Fallon and Gurn also supported the motion.

Councillors Farrell, Armstrong McGuire and Gurn agreed to bring this issue to attention of the HSE Regional Health Forum.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Justin Warnock

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Mary Bohan

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council write to the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD, and the CEO of the HSE, Stephen Mulvany, to provide a new Primary Care Centre and a Day Care Centre for the town of Kinlough and environs. I ask that this issue is raised and supported by our representatives on the HSE Forum.

**MM.152.22 Motion from Councillor Thomas Mulligan – Greenway**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Thomas Mulligan;**

"In light of the recent announcements of substantial developments to the "Old Mohill Station Hse" and the nearby "Former Vocational School" I am proposing a programme of events to inform the public and raise awareness of the economic and social advantages to be gained from the recreation off the former Narrow Gauge line between Mohil and Ballinamore as a Greenway."

**Report by Director of Services for Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation.**

"One of the key recommendations contained in Leitrim's Draft Recreation Strategy which will be finalised later in 2022 and launched in early 2023 is to 'to Deliver signature Recreational Infrastructure projects for Leitrim: to form the recreational framework of Leitrim, creating a recreational destination of national and international significance' which includes Signature Greenways and Blueways, developed to highest international standards, with respect for Leitrim's considerable biodiversity. One such project is the Cavan-Leitrim Railway which is the development of the inter-county rail-to-trail greenway, as a major recreational trail through South Leitrim and Cavan, linking the Shannon to the Leitrim-Cavan lakelands and SEW. The Narrow Gauge line between Mohill and Ballinamore forms part of this proposed project Greenway and will receive attention through the County Recreation Forum as part of the implementation of the Recreational Strategy."

Councillor Thomas Mulligan proposed that an awareness campaign be put in place to highlight the economic and social advantages to be gained from the development of a greenway on the former narrow gauge railway line between Mohill and Ballinamore.

Councillor Sean McGowan supported the motion and said it was a timely motion.

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn said a publicity campaign would be beneficial and she noted that the association of the Late John McGahern with the area would be an important element to highlight in the campaign.

**MM.153.22 Motion from Councillor Mary Bohan - Extraction of Timber**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cllr Mary Bohan;**

"I request the following information regarding applications for the extraction of timber from mature forests by Coillte and private individuals:

When an applicant applies for a felling licence to the Dept. of Agriculture, Food and Marine, what is the consultation process with Leitrim County Council, and is a bond put in place to cover any damage done to the roads during the extraction process?"

**Report by Director of Services for Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation.**

"Section 8 the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2018, made provision for the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine (DAFM) to act as consenting authority for the construction, maintenance or improvement of a road that serves a forest or woodland and ancillary works. This section was commenced by order of the Minister on 7th February 2020. Following this, responsibility for granting development consent for the construction of forest entrances onto public roads (other than national roads) or the material widening of an existing entrance, has been transferred to the DAFM under the Single Consent System. An Applicant who is planning to either construct a new forest entrance, or widen an existing entrance, must apply to the DAFM for consent prior to commencing works. The DAFM refers the application to the relevant Local Authority who can make a submission. The DAFM then decide on the Application and notifies the Local Authority of their decision. The LA has a period of 14 days in which to make an appeal in relation to the decision of the DAFM. Any appeal must be submitted to the Forestry Appeals Committee (FAC) within 14 days of the decision of the DAFM with a €200 fee. Prior to commencement of works on site, the applicant must notify the DAFM by way of Commencement Notice – this Commencement Notice is sent to the Local Authority who then have a period of 2 weeks to make any comments in relation to the matter. Following completion of works on site, the applicant must notify the DAFM using a Certificate of Completion, and this is forwarded by the DAFM to the Local Authority who have a period of 28 days to make any comments etc.

The DAFM do not make provision for a bond on these applications, but our District Engineers liaise with these forestry companies and strive to come to an agreement regarding any potential damage caused to roads. They actively pursue forestry companies for contributions to Community Involvement Schemes (CIS). This Contribution was 15% up to the end of 2021 but has now been amended to 10% since the start of 2022 as per Department Circular. Between 2018 and 2021, Forestry Companies and/or Forestry Landowners had contributed to a total of 32 CIS's throughout the County to the value of circa €280,000. Approximately three CIS's are being completed in the current year with the Local Contribution of 10% coming from the Forestry Company. Leitrim County Council continue to pursue Forestry Companies for Contributions to CIS's."

Councillor Mary Bohan expressed her disappointment that it is not possible for the Local Authority to seek a bond from forestry companies as part of the felling licence application, for any potential damage that they may cause to public roads. Councillor Mary Bohan said this council is fully responsible for the maintenance of roads in the County and she proposed that a letter issue to the Minister to review the felling licence application process.

Councillor Justin Warnock supported the motion and he referred to the recent damage that was caused to the Duff River through felling operations.

Councillor Mary Bohan thanked the engineering staff of the Council for making a submission on the felling licence at Corcormack, but the submission was ignored. Councillor Bohan said the Corcormack road is not suitable for a Heavy Goods Vehicles and the timber should be taken out by tractors and trailers.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon supported this and re-iterated that the Corcormack road was not suitable for using articulated lorries to extract timber.

**MM.154.22 Motion from Councillor Gerry Dolan - Deer Stock Proof Fencing**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Gerry Dolan;**

"I ask that Leitrim County Council make a submission in the interest of public safety, to the Irish Forestry Strategy Implementation Plan, calling for the erection of deer stock proof fencing, for all new afforestation licences and for all replanting projects undertaken by farmers, private forestry companies and Coillte."

Councillor Gerry Dolan proposed that in the interest of safety, the erection of deer proof fencing should be a condition on all new afforestation licences and all replanting projects undertaken by farmers, private forestry companies and Coillte.

Councillor Justin Warnock and Councillor Brendan Barry supported the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Gerry Dolan  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Justin Warnock

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council make a submission in the interest of public safety, to the Irish Forestry Strategy Implementation Plan, calling for the erection of deer stock proof fencing, for all new afforestation licences and for all replanting projects undertaken by farmers, private forestry companies and Coillte.

**MM.155.22 Motion from Councillor Enda McGloin - Additional Funding for Local Authorities in 2023**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Enda McGloin;**

"That we, the members of Leitrim County Council, call on the Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform and the Minister for Transport to provide significant additional funding to Local Authorities in 2023 having regard to the unprecedented levels of inflation, spiraling energy costs, rising construction costs, enhanced payroll commitments, and the

impact of the cost-of-living crisis on other revenue streams such and rents and rates. Such additional funding is crucial to maintaining essential services."

Councillor Enda McGloin said with inflation currently at 10% he was calling on the support of the Members to call on the Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform and the Minister for Transport and Minister Hildegard Naughton to provide significant additional funding to Local Authorities in 2023.

All Members supported the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Enda McGloin  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Mary Bohan

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council, call on the Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform and the Minister for Transport to provide significant additional funding to Local Authorities in 2023 having regard to the unprecedented levels of inflation, spiraling energy costs, rising construction costs, enhanced payroll commitments, and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on other revenue streams such and rents and rates. Such additional funding is crucial to maintaining essential services.

#### **MM.156.22 Motion from Councillor Brendan Barry - ACRES Scheme**

**To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Brendan Barry;**

"I request that Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Agriculture, Charlie McConalogue TD, to ensure that all farmers who wish to partake in Acres or Glás will receive an environmental scheme payment in 2023. It would be totally unacceptable if farmers are blocked out, given that agriculture is expected to contribute so much to the countryside and emission reduction targets. Acres places for 2023 must not be limited to 30,000."

Councillor Brendan Barry gave the background to his motion and said the number of applicants to the Acres Scheme for the 2023 must not be limited to 30,000. Councillor Barry said 50,000 to 60,000 farmers are coming out of the GLÁS Scheme and it is very disappointing that a limit has being put on the ACRES Scheme. Councillor Barry said the closing date of applications for the scheme needs to be extended from 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022 to allow eligible people to apply.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke supported the motion and said a lot of farming families are struggling because of higher priced inputs, the current high prices for sheep and cattle have been undermined by high fertilizer prices, fodder, etc.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon supported the motion and said these schemes are an integral part of income for many farmers in this county.

Councillors Warnock, Dolan and Guckian also supported the motion.



On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Brendan Barry  
**SECONDED** by Cllr. Paddy O'Rourke

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Minister for Agriculture, Charlie McConalogue TD, to ensure that all farmers who wish to partake in Acres or Glás will receive an environmental scheme payment in 2023. It would be totally unacceptable if farmers are blocked out, given that agriculture is expected to contribute so much to the countryside and emission reduction targets. Acres places for 2023 must not be limited to 30,000.

**MM.157.22** **Any Other Business**

Councillor Enda McGloin queried if there was a proposal for meetings to be streamed live on the internet. Ms Mary Quinn confirmed that this is not proposed at present.

Councillor Sean McGowan proposed that in future, the November Council meeting is held at a time later in the day to coincide with the time of the Annual Mass for the Deceased Members and Staff of Leitrim County Council, to accommodate Members who want to attend the Annual Mass. Councillor Sean McDermott supported this.

Ms Mary Quinn confirmed this will be considered for the November 2023 Council Meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting at 1.56 pm

**Signed:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn**  
**Cathaoirleach**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Kieran Brett**  
**Meetings Administrator**

**Dated:** **Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023**