

**Minutes of Leitrim County Council meeting held in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae,
Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim on Monday, 6 November 2023**

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 Padraig Fallon
Councillor Paddy Farrell
Councillor Des Guckian
Councillor Felim Gurn
Councillor Thomas Mulligan
Councillor Sean McDermott
Councillor Paddy O'Rourke
Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn
Councillor Enda Stenson

Councillor Justin Warnock (Cathaoirleach) presiding

Apologies: Councillor Caillian Ellis

Officials Present: Joseph Gilhooly, Chief Executive (interim)
Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance, Water, Environment, Climate
Action and Emergency Services
Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing, Corporate Services,
Community and Cultural Services
Justin Fannon, A/Director of Services, Economic Development,
Planning and Infrastructural Services
Pauline Brennan, County Librarian
Darragh O'Boyle, Senior Executive Engineer, Roads - South
Leitrim Area
Kieran Brett, Meetings Administrator
Kathleen Ellis, Assistant Staff Officer

At the outset of the meeting, Cathaoirleach, Councillor Justin Warnock congratulated Mr Joseph Gilhooly on his appointment as Chief Executive (Interim) and Mr Justin Fannon on his appointment as A/Director of Services, Economic Development, Planning, and Infrastructural Services.

MM.136.23 Votes of sympathy

The Members extended a vote of sympathy to the following:

- Mrs Anna Mae Creegan, Rossan, Carrigallen P.O., Co Leitrim on the death of Seamus Creegan RIP.
- Mrs Mossie Whelan, Drumgunny, Aughavas, Carrigallen PO, Co Leitrim on the death of Michael Whelan RIP
- Mrs Martina Maxwell, Ballinamore on the death of Kathleen Flanagan RIP
- Mrs Paula Harkness, Aughavore, Carrigallen, Co Leitrim on the death of John Harkness RIP
- Marion Casserly, Fearnought, Aughamore, Carrick-on-Shannon on the death of John Casserly RIP
- Larry McDermott, Curraghamore, Manorhamilton on the death of Peter McDermott RIP

MM.137.23 Adoption of Minutes 4th September 2023

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

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the 4th September 2023.

MM.138.23 Approve overdraft accommodation in the sum of €5 million for the period ending 31st December 2024.

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

It was **AGREED** that the raising of a loan of €5 million for the purposes of matched funding requirements of the Capital Investment Programme for the period 2023-2028 be approved.

MM.139.23 Approve the raising of a loan of €5m for the purposes of matched funding requirements of the Capital Investment Programme for the period 2023 - 2028

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

It was **AGREED** that the raising of a loan of €5 million for the purposes of matched funding requirements of the Capital Investment Programme for the period 2023-2028 be approved.

MM.140.23 Consider the report of the Audit Committee on the Audited Financial Statement 2022 and the LG Auditors Report

Mr Vincent Dwyer advised the members that the Audit Committee had reviewed the audited Annual Financial Statement 2022 and the Local Government Auditors report at its meeting on 25th October 2023 in accordance with Section 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and were satisfied with the content of the Audit Report.

Councillor Des Guckian said the members are in the dark on this process and stating he hoped all is above board.

Mr Vincent Dwyer said the Local Government Auditor is independent of Leitrim County Council. The Audit Committee reviewed the LG Auditors report, and they are satisfied with the unqualified report as presented to the committee.

Councillor Enda McGloin advised that he and Councillor O'Rourke are members of the Audit Committee. He concurred with Mr Vincent Dwyer and confirmed that the Audit Committee went through the report in detail and were happy with the manner in which the Audit was conducted.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke said the Audit Committee meet at least quarterly and he concurred with Councillor Enda McGloin's comments.

This report was noted by the Members.

MM.141.23 Consider for adoption the Leitrim Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) 2023-2029

Mr Justin Fannon, presented the Leitrim Local Economic & Community Plan 2023-2029 to the Members that appears as **Appendix 1** to the minutes of the meeting.

Councillor Des Guckian said he had read the plan in detail and was rejecting it, as it is not fit for the current or future needs of Leitrim. Councillor Guckian said it is very long and it needs to be more realistic and up to date.

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire said she was very happy that the LECP is aspiring to the objectives as set out in it.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finola Armstrong McGuire
SECONDED by Cllr. Enda McGloin

It was **AGREED** that the Leitrim Local Economic & Community Plan 2023-2029 be adopted.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly advised that a considerable amount of time has been spent on the development of the plan. The Plan sets out high level objectives for the next 6 years and is prepared at a high level, so that it is flexible enough to meet challenges as they arise. A 2-year action plan is in place to commence the Leitrim Local Economic & Community Plan. The

Plan will be subject to review, and actions contained within the plan can be updated as necessary. Mr Gilhooly said the plan is realistic and adequately ambitious to develop the county and it is expected that there will be continued investment through the Capital Programme for the next 5-6 years.

MM.142.23 Consider for adoption the Leitrim Library Development Plan 2023-2027

Ms Pauline Brennan, County Librarian presented the Leitrim Library Development Plan 2023-2027 to the Members which as appears as **Appendix 2** to the minutes of the meeting.

Councillor Des Guckian paid tribute to Ms Brennan for her report and to the Library Service for the good service provided over the last 40 years and he hoped this service would continue.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Sean McDermott
SECONDED by Cllr. Ita Reynolds Flynn

It was **AGREED** that the Leitrim Library Development Plan 2023-2027 be adopted.

MM.143.23 To note Leitrim County Council Winter Maintenance Service Plan 2023-2024

Mr Darragh O'Boyle presented the Leitrim County Council Winter Maintenance Service Plan 2023 -2024 to the members which appears as **Appendix 3** to the minutes of the meeting.

The Members raised the following:

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke said the Road from the Golden Vale Mart in Carrigallen to the junction at Doogarry at the County boundary with Cavan needs to be considered for gritting as part of the normal winter maintenance service plan as there is a lot of traffic on this road due to the industries associated in Ballyconnell.

Councillor Enda Stenson acknowledged the good work that was carried out last year under the winter maintenance service plan and he proposed that a short route of 200 metres from Browne's up to Lough Erril Nursing Home be included in the plan.

This request was supported by Councillors Thomas Mulligan, Sean McGowan and Des Guckian.

Councillor Fallon paid tribute to the outdoor staff that grit and salt the road often in treacherous conditions. Councillor Padraig Fallon queried if there were adequate salt supplies in stock. Councillor Fallon asked that communication takes place with neighbouring Local Authorities to ensure that all roads crossing country boundaries are adequately treated during periods of severe weather.

Councillor Thomas Mulligan noted the road between Mohill and Drumlish is not on the plan this year and he highlighted that a number of accidents occurred on this road last year. He said the road coming out of Drumlish is gritted by Longford County Council as far as the County boundary.

This was supported by Councillors Sean McGowan and Des Guckian.

Councillor Felim Gurn highlighted the ongoing works on the N16 and said access roads onto the N16 should be gritted in severe weather as more traffic is using these roads during these works.

Councillor Sean McDermott said the road from Manorhamilton to Kiltyclogher does not get much attention and needs to be considered.

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire asked that housing estate residents associations be notified that salt bins are available for a nominal fee and will be refilled as required. Cllr. Armstrong McGuire highlighted the importance of these salt bins to communities and asked that litter is not deposited in them.

Councillor Des Guckian outlined the road and car park at Annaduff Church & National School and the steep hill to Antfield below the National School should be included in the Winter Maintenance Plan. Councillor Des Guckian queried who is going to spread the salt out of the yellow salt bins.

Councillor Brendan Barry referred to roads in Drumshanbo, Aughacashel and Aughnasheelin and he proposed that smaller trucks with gritters would be more beneficial for treating roads in these communities.

Councillor Gerry Dolan supported this request.

Councillor Paddy Farrell proposed the road at the back of Kiltoghert cemetery which also serves a pre-school should get attention under the winter maintenance service plan.

Councillor Justin Warnock queried the price of a bin of salt and the cost of refilling. Councillor Warnock queried if it is possible that salt can be put at locations before severe weather events occur. Councillor Warnock said the road to Four Masters School in Kinlough also needs to be included in the plan.

Mr Darragh O'Boyle responded to the members queries as follows:

- A new salt bin costs €170.00 for a 400-litre bin. This bin should last a few seasons if properly maintained.
- Yellow salt bins are available countywide, and the area offices will supply salt as needed.
- The PPN will be contacted and made aware of locations where salt bins are available.
- Deposits of salt will be put out before major winter events occur.

- The Road from the Golden Vale Mart in Carrigallen to the junction at Doogarry at the County boundary with Cavan is Priority 3 on the Winter Maintenance Plan
- Leitrim County Council place salt deposits on minor roads for local distribution.
- Schools, Churches, Communities can request deposits of salt from the Local Authority.
- All drivers should assume all roads are not salted. The responsibility lies with the driver to exercise due care and attention.
- Due to existing resources available it is not possible to deviate from the Winter Maintenance Service Plan as presented.
- A salt bin will be provided at Lough Erril Nursing home.
- Communication does take place with neighbouring Local Authorities concerning the gritting of roads.
- Mohill to Drumlish Road is Priority 3 on the Winter Maintenance Plan. The road surface has a good degree of friction following major roadworks recently.
- Salt deposits will be in place in areas of Drumshanbo, Aughacashel and Aughnasheelin

MM.144.23 Management Reports - August & September 2023

The Monthly Management Reports for August and September 2023 as circulated, were noted by members.

MM.145.23 Commitments

There were no commitments to be noted.

MM.146.23 Report from Corporate Policy Group

Ms. Mary Quinn, advised that the Corporate Policy Group considered the following items at their meeting held on 27th October 2023

- Considered update on Budgetary position 2024.
- Received updates from SPC's.
- Considered request to receive presentation from National Broadband Ireland at January plenary meeting.
- Considered items for plenary council meeting on 6th November 2023
- Considered members attendance at upcoming conferences, training events and seminars.
- Considered date for the January 2024 Plenary Council meeting,
- Considered Carrick-on-Shannon MD meeting to be deferred to Monday 15th January. Ms Quinn said this will be discussed by the Carrick MD members at their next meeting.
- The members were advised that a Tourism Workshop will be held on 17th November at 9.30 am in Carrick Campus all members and persons with an interest in tourism in the county are welcome to attend.
- Considered the possibility of sending a delegation from Manorhamilton Municipal Districts and counterparts from Donegal County Council to meet with the Minister of Transport in regard to the Lennox Bridge project.
- Úisce Éireann have requested to have a workshop with members and this will be facilitated at 12.30 pm on the 4th December 2023, after JPC meeting.

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Justin Warnock proposed that a delegation of 6 members from Donegal County Council and 3 or 4 Members from the Manorhamilton Municipal District meet the Minister for Transport to expedite progress on the new Lennox Bridge. Councillor Mary Bohan supported the proposal.

This update from the CPG was noted by the Members.

MM.147.23 Attendance at conferences/training

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

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Paddy Farrell, Cllr Mary Bohan, Cllr Sean McGowan, Cllr Ita Reynolds Flynn, Cllr Frank Dolan, Cllr Thomas Mulligan, Cllr Enda McGloin, Cllr Enda Stenson, Cllr Padraig Fallon, Cllr Gerry Dolan and Cllr Caillian Ellis at the AILG Training on the 18th November 2023 in the Clayton Hotel Galway on Government Policy Programme 2023 be approved.

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

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Councillor Caillian Ellis, Councillor Thomas Mulligan and Councillor Paddy O'Rourke at the AILG Training "Elected Member Personal Security – Positive Home, Workplace and Mobile Security Practices" in the Rose Hotel, Tralee, Co Kerry on the 21st October 2023 be retrospectively approved.

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

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Paddy Farrell and Cllr Caillian Ellis at the AILG Training on "Elected Member Personal Security – Positive Home, Workplace and Mobile Security Practices" on the 19th October 2023 in the Hotel Kilmore, Cavan be retrospectively approved.

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

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn, Councillor Sean McGowan, Councillor Thomas Mulligan, Councillor Paddy Farrell and Councillor Sean McDermott at the LAMA Autumn Seminar on the 25th to 26th October 2023 in the Ard Ri Hotel, Tuam, Co Galway be retrospectively approved.

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

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Councillor Enda McGloin, Councillor Frank Dolan, Councillor Thomas Mulligan and Councillor Gerry Dolan at the "Irish Social Welfare System" conference in O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty, Co Cork on 1st to 3rd December 2023 be approved.

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

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Justin Warnock at the Electric Vehicle Launch in

the County Hall, Dundalk on the 14th September 2023 be retrospectively approved.

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

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Justin Warnock at the Tourism Awards in the InterContinental Hotel, Dublin on the 6th October 2023 be retrospectively approved.

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

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Justin Warnock at the Pride of Place Awards in Armagh City Hotel on the 10th November 2023 be approved.

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

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Justin Warnock at the Leitrim Disapora Promotion Event in Dublin on the 30th November 2023 be approved.

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

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Justin Warnock at the Leitrim Disapora Promotion Event in Dublin on the 30th November 2023 be approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Sean McGowan
SECONDED by Cllr Ita Reynolds Flynn

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Paddy O'Rourke at the Centenary End of Decade Seminar in the National Concert Hall Event in Dublin on the 30th November 2023 be approved.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Justin Warnock
SECONDED by Cllr Sean McGowan

It was **AGREED** that the attendance of Cllr Paddy O'Rourke at the Age Friendly Ireland Event in Wexford on the 30th November 2023 be approved.

MM.148.23 Consider date and time of January 2024 plenary council meeting

Ms Mary Quinn proposed to the members that the January Council Meeting take place on the Monday, 8th January 2024.

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

It was **AGREED** the January Meeting of Leitrim County Council will take place on the Monday, 8th January 2024 at 11 am.

MM.149.23 Meeting Correspondence

1. Resolution dated 5th September 2023 from Mayo County Council calling on the Department of Housing to increase the build time requirement of Croi Cónaithe Scheme from 13 months to 24 months.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Padraig Fallon
SECONDED by Cllr Enda McGloin

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Department of Housing to increase the build time requirement of Croi Cónaithe Scheme from 13 months to 24 months as it is too difficult to get skilled labour and that the payment be made on a phased basis as opposed to one payment.

2. Resolution dated 12th September 2023 from Clare County Council calling on the Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan to address the chaos being caused to members of the public by the incompetent service currently in operation by the National Car Test Company.

Councillor Padraig Fallon proposed that a letter issue to Minister Chambers in support of this motion. Councillor Brendan Barry supported this.

3. Co Leitrim Society of New York Newsletter dated 14th September 2023.
4. Acknowledgement received 19th September 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Health, regarding the Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to the re-instatement of Regional Health Boards.
5. Acknowledgement received 20th September 2023 from the Office of Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine regarding the Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to change of dates to Farmers ANC, BISS, CRISS and Eco-Scheme payments for 2023.
6. Resolution dated 19th September 2023 from Sligo County Council calling on the Government to provide free transport to all students, Primary, Secondary and University students and all citizens up to the age of 25.
7. Acknowledgement received 20th September 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Health in regard to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to restoration of Day Services in Manorhamilton.
8. Acknowledgement received 20th September 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food & Marine in regard resolution passed by Leitrim County Council seeking an extension on the deadline for slurry spreading.

9. Acknowledgement received 20th September 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Transport regarding the resolution passed by Leitrim County Council on Driving Test Waiting Times.
10. Acknowledgment received 20th September 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Transport regarding the Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to Community Car Scheme.
11. Resolution from Cork Conty Council dated 20th September 2023 calling upon National Authorities to review policies to reduce road deaths.
12. Email received 21st September 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine in regard to farm scheme payments.
13. Email received 25th September 2023 from the Office of Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine in regard to the the provision of fodder support in areas impacted by poor ground conditions.
14. Email received 25th September 2023 from the Minister for Finance acknowledging receipt of Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council on funding for social housing.
15. Acknowledgement received from the Office of the Taoiseach dated 21st September 2023 in regard to resolution passed by Leitrim County Council on Social Housing construction.
16. Acknowledgement received from the Office of the Taoiseach dated 21st September 2023 in regard to resolution passed by Leitrim County Council on VAT rates.
17. Letter of acknowledgement of 26th September 2023 from the HSE regarding resolution passed by Leitrim County Council on the re-opening of day care services at Our Lady's Hospital, Manorhamilton.
18. Acknowledgement received 27th September 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage regarding the resolution passed by Leitrim County Council on Social Housing construction.
19. Resolution from Limerick City & County Council dated 26th September 2023 calling on the Minister for Housing to reconsider the Government's position in relation to tax placed on residentially zoned land.
20. Acknowledgement from the Office of Taoiseach dated 28th September 2023 regarding resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding Social Housing construction.

21. Acknowledgement from the Office of the Minister for Finance dated 28th September 2023 in regard to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council regarding Vat rate.
22. Resolution from Limerick City & County Council dated 27th September 2023 calling on the Minister for Health and Minister of State at the Department of Health to provide the necessary funding to the NTPF to stop further nursing home closures and bring fees payable in line with the reality of nursing home care cost.
23. Resolution from Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council dated 26th September 2023 calling for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and urging the Irish government to support the initiative for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.
24. Email from the HSE of the 29th September 2023 in regard to the re-opening of Day Care Services at Our Lady's Hospital, Manorhamilton.
25. Acknowledgement from the Office of Taoiseach dated 28th September 2023 in regard to Resolution passed by Leitrim County Council in regard Social Housing Construction.
26. Letter dated 5th October 2023 from the Office of the Minister for State for Planning & Local Government regarding rural housing guidelines.
27. Resolution dated 12th October 2023 from Clare County Council calling for traffic calming measures to be included with planning developments, as a matter of safety for all concerned.
28. County Leitrim Society of New York Newsletter October 2023.
29. Letter from Minister Noonan in regard to the ongoing of the Public Consultation on draft revisions to the Shannon Navigation Byelaws and the Canal Byelaws.

Other matters raised under Meeting Correspondence

Septic Tank Grant

Councillor Enda Stenson welcomed the announcement that the grant to repair septic tanks has been increased from €5,000 to €12,000.

Councillor Mary Bohan clarified that this grant will also become available to people who did not register a septic tank by 1 February 2013.

Councillor Enda McGloin said the grant is available to people if their septic tank fails on foot of an inspection.

Councillor Brendan Barry welcomed the increase in the grant and said the Code of Practice still is a big issue for Leitrim. Cllr Barry proposed that a meeting be sought with the EPA about how the Code of Practice may be interpreted to facilitate people wishing to build a home.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly advised that there is research being carried out in conjunction with Trinity College, Dublin, on 2 pilot domestic waste water sites, using willow based systems, in Leitrim. Mr Gilhooly said it is a matter for the planning agents to interpret the Code of Practice as set by the EPA and all planning applications received will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Workshop on taking in Charge of Housing Estates

Councillor Mary Bohan proposed that a workshop is arranged to update the members on the taking in charge of Housing Estates.

Mr. Joseph Gilhooly advised that a workshop would take place at each Municipal District meeting in the coming weeks.

Follow up on Correspondence

Councillor Des Guckian queried if there is follow up to correspondence issued where no reply is received and he asked the Meeting Administrator to monitor the situation.

MM.150.23 Vote of Congratulations

The members extended a vote of congratulations to Shane McGourty, of Mohill, on being recently crowned World Irish Dancing Champion.

MM.151.23 Motion from Councillor Pdraig Fallon - Rural Social Scheme

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

"I propose that Leitrim County Council write to the three Government party leaders urging an increase in the income threshold for applicants of the Rural Social Scheme. I also ask that they and the relevant ministers address the unreasonable situation where travel expenses are assessed as income in determining eligibility for this scheme."

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

It was **AGREED** that that Leitrim County Council write to the three Government party leaders urging an increase in the income threshold for applicants of the Rural Social

Scheme. I also ask that they and the relevant ministers address the unreasonable situation where travel expenses are assessed as income in determining eligibility for this scheme.

MM.152.23 Motion from Councillor Des Guckian - Pollution

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

"That we ask the Council officials to admit that there is a large amount of pollution going into our rivers and lakes from town dumps, from wastewater treatment plants and from the unofficial dump / sewer that exists between the old Leitrim Observer office and St. Patrick's Park. I wish to know how they are proposing to end this pollution which poses massive risks to public health."

Report by Head of Finance & Water Services

"In the very recent past this Council has investigated reports of pollution of surface waters adjacent to the closed landfills and Hartley Business Park. These investigations have confirmed that there is no evidence of pollution emanating from either the closed landfills or from Hartley business park into the adjacent surface water.

This Council is not aware, nor have we received complaints in relation to the pollution of the surface water caused by wastewater treatment plants. However, your concerns in relation to pollution from wastewater treatment plants have been passed onto Uisce Eireann."

Councillor Des Guckian gave the background to his motion and said the reply received was evasive.

Mr Vincent Dwyer outlined that Mohill Landfill is operated under the EPA license. Leitrim County Council have investigated reports of pollution of surface waters adjacent to the closed landfill site at Mohill and at Hartley Business Park. These investigations have confirmed that there is no evidence of pollution emanating from either the closed landfill or from Hartley business park into the adjacent surface water.

Councillor Guckian said he could not agree with Mr Dwyer in this regard, and he said Lough Rynn is the most polluted lake in the midlands.

MM.153.23 Motion from Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire - Note of Congratulations

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

"I ask that this council send a Note of Congratulations to President Professor Orla Feely of University College Dublin. Professor Feely has been elected President of the College which is an honour and great achievement. Professor Feely in her inaugural address as President mentions with pride her Leitrim roots as her father hails from North Leitrim."

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finola Armstrong McGuire
SECONDED by Cllr. Enda McGloin

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council would send a Note of Congratulations to President Professor Orla Feely of University College Dublin. Professor Feely has been elected President of the College which is an honour and great achievement. Professor Feely in her inaugural address as President mentions with pride her Leitrim roots as her father hails from North Leitrim.

MM.154.23 Motion from Councillor Sean McGowan - Ash Die Back

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

"I seek the support of the members in calling on the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Transport to provide, as a matter of urgency, a funding scheme to support landowners to address the serious issue that Ash Die Back poses on the Ash Tree species in roadside hedgerows across the country."

Councillor Sean McGowan gave the background to his motion and called for a funding scheme to be made available to support landowners to address the issue of Ash Die Back which is a significant issue.

Councillor Enda Stenson said local authorities will have to drive this.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Sean McGowan
SECONDED by Cllr. Enda Stenson

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Transport to provide, as a matter of urgency, a funding scheme to support landowners to address the serious issue that Ash Die Back poses on the Ash Tree species in roadside hedgerows across the country.

MM.155.23 Motion from Councillor Felim Gurn - Overgrown hedgerows

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

"There is an on-going problem with overgrown hedgerows on country lanes that are making it impassable for school buses to provide services for school children. It is normally down to a small number of landowners who won't maintain their hedgerows. The exiting grant of €75 per km for cutting hedges may not be enough to encourage maintenance of hedgerows. Can the members receive an update on the number of hedge-cutting grant applications received per Municipal District and how much has been paid out this year, and I ask this Council include an emergency fund in the Annual Budget to swiftly resolve this issue."

Report by Economic Development

"Leitrim County Council operate a Hedge Cutting Grant to encourage the cutting of roadside trees and hedges along the public road. This Grant has been available each year since 2017 during the hedge cutting season (1st September to 28th February each year). When first introduced the grant was €50 per KM and the minimum length per application was 2 KM. However, in order to further encourage the cutting of roadside trees and hedges, the grant scheme has been improved and the Grant is now €75 per KM of roadside trees/hedges cut and the minimum length per application has been reduced to 1 KM. The uptake on the grant has significantly improved in recent years with adverts placed every year in the Leitrim Observer at the start of the hedge cutting season and also promoted through ongoing notices in parish newsletters, local notes in the Leitrim Observer etc. Notice of the grant is also issued to the IFA. In addition, all previous applicants for the Grant are sent the Hedge Cutting Grant Application Form each year and the Application Form is sent out with any Hedge Cutting Letters or Notices issued.

During the 2022/23 season 57 No. grants were approved with 22 No. in South Leitrim and 35 No. in North Leitrim. In total 243.1km of hedges were cut and the overall grant paid was €18,233.

The application process reopened on 1st September for the 2023/2024 Hedge Cutting Season and there has been 13 Applications to date for this Grant. Provision for additional funding for hedge cutting has been included in the 2024 budget."

Councillor Felim Gurn gave the background to his motion, and he proposed that an emergency fund provision of €8,000- €9,000 is made in the Annual Budget to resolve this issue.

Councillors Paddy O'Rourke, Des Guckian and Justin Warnock supported the motion.

Councillor Brendan Barry sought clarification on what the legal position is if branches fall out onto the road and a car is subsequently damaged.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon said the hedge cutting scheme is excellent and it needs to be reviewed. Councillor Fallon supported the proposal for the provision of an emergency hedge cutting fund and that landowners are billed after the hedge cutting work is completed by the Local Authority.

Councillors Sean McDermott, Gerry Dolan and Mary Bohan raised concerns about hedges not being cut. It is an ongoing contentious issue and that is having an impact on the provision of transport services in communities.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly said he will take the views of the members on board and he re-iterated that it is the responsibility of the landowners to cut their hedges. Mr Gilhooly said the provision for additional funding for hedge cutting will be included in 2024 budget. Mr. Joseph Gilhooly said a proper policy with procedures will have to be put in place before public funds can be deployed.

He advised hedge cutting notices will be issued earlier, test cases will be brought to court

and the persistent offenders will be dealt with through the courts.

Councillor Sean McDermott said it is important that landowners are made aware that if they do not cut their hedges, they will be liable for prosecution.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke said a media campaign should be put in place to promote hedge cutting.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly advised that legislation states "that the owner or occupier of any structure and land must take reasonable steps to ensure that any structure on the land is not a hazard, or a potential hazard, to persons using the public road."

MM.156.23 Motion from Councillor Sean McDermott - Sean MacDiarmada Summer School & ICBAN

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

"I ask if there is provision in the forthcoming budget for contributions towards the Sean MacDiarmada Summer School and ICBAN?"

Report by Head of Finance & Water Services

"Provision has been made in the draft budget for both ICBAN and the summer school. Further detail can be provided at the budget meeting."

Councillor Sean McDermott welcomed the reply received in this regard.

MM.157.23 Motion from Councillor Justin Warnock - Building of Local Authority Housing

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

"I will ask for the support of the elected members in calling on Leitrim County Council to recommence building Local Authority houses for young families from rural areas who are on the housing waiting list and who would have access to a suitable site."

Report by Economic Development

"Where an applicant is approved for social housing and has indicated a preference for a rural house, Leitrim County Council will in the first instance review to determine if the housing need can be met through the allocation of an existing property within its housing stock either directly or through Choice Based Letting. Alternatively, the Council may review options to purchase a suitable existing property in the area. These delivery methods are the most expeditious means to provide a home to the applicant as the process to construct a single rural dwelling is a minimum 24 months once the decision to build a rural cottage is taken and approved for funding by the Department. In recent years, the DHLGH have approved a limited number of rural cottages which met strict criteria and where the process

of pursuing alternative means of providing social housing was unsuccessful."

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Justin Warnock gave the background to his motion and highlighted that in order to maintain our rural communities, we need to build rural local authority housing.

Councillors Enda Stenson and Mary Bohan supported the motion.

Councillor Sean McDermott noted that rural local authority housing kept primary schools open in the 60's, 70's and 80's.

Councillor Des Guckian agreed with the sentiments of the motion, and he asked that the members approach their respective party leaders to change this policy.

Councillor Sean McGowan said existing rural local authority houses should be brought back to useful life and with the new septic tank grant available it should encourage the refurbishment of these homes.

Councillor Felim Gurn noted that Leitrim County Council do not have any land banks available and a lot of young people are emigrating citing the cost of housing as an issue.

MM.158.23 Motion from Councillor Enda Stenson - Ukrainians living in Leitrim

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

"Can the members receive an update on the number of Ukrainian persons now resident in Leitrim, having fled their home country since the war there started in February 2022."

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

"As of the 8th October 2023, Central Statistics Office states that there are 1,898 Ukrainians living in County Leitrim under the Temporary Protective Directive.

89 properties have been activated under the Offer A Home Programme in Leitrim accommodating approximately 400 BOTP's (Beneficiary of Temporary Protection). There are approximately 1,100 BOTP's residing in commercial type accommodation in Leitrim."

Councillor Enda Stenson queried if Ukrainian people are being allocated to Leitrim or do, they come of their own accord. Councillor Stenson said he was not opposing them coming to the county but he sought clarification if it is within the remit of the Local Authority to decide who comes or when the County cannot accommodate any more. Councillor Stenson said the school in Carrick on Shannon is not capable of taking any more students.

Ms Mary Quinn said the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth is responsible for assessing expressions of interest received from property owners of potential accommodation for the provision of temporary emergency accommodation for beneficiaries of temporary protection.

Councillor Paddy Farrell highlighted that people are getting frustrated on this issue and there needs to be some control over it.

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Justin Warnock said that their needs to be a balanced view on this issue, as there are a lot of schools also that are under threat in this county of being closed.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke said when the war is over, the Ukrainian people will return home and the money that was spent in providing infrastructure and facilities to accommodate them, will be of benefit for the local community.

MM.159.23 Motion from Councillor Paddy Farrell - Residential zoned land tax

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

"I welcome the deferral of the residential zoned land tax for a further 12 months, as new legislation is required. I ask the support of members to call on the Taoiseach and the Government to remove all land that is being genuinely and actively farmed from the RZLT."

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

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the Taoiseach and the Government to remove all land that is being genuinely and actively farmed from the RZLT. The deferral of the residential zoned land tax for a further 12 months is welcomed, as new legislation is required.

All members supported the motion.

MM.160.23 Motion from Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn - Psychological assessment services

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

"That Leitrim County Council call on the HSE, the Minister for Health and the Minister for Education to provide psychological assessment services in County Leitrim for school children in need of this service."

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Ita Reynolds Flynn
SECONDED by Cllr. Mary Bohan

It was **AGREED** that Leitrim County Council call on the HSE, the Minister for Health and the Minister for Education to provide psychological assessment services in County Leitrim for school children in need of this service.

Councillors Brendan Barry and Finola Armstrong McGuire supported the motion also.

MM.161.23 Motion from Councillor Paddy O'Rourke - Signage

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

"I ask that Leitrim County Council arrange to have signs erected indicating the entry to County Leitrim from County Cavan on the R201, the R203 and the LP 1586-2 road entering the County from Longford, and all roads entering Leitrim from neighbouring counties. I am asking that provision be made for this initiative in the forthcoming budget, this signage is essential to compliment our efforts to develop our tourism product."

Report by Economic Development

"Leitrim County Council aims to have 'Welcome to Leitrim' promotional signage on all the main roads entering County Leitrim. This includes signage on National and Regional roads but does not include local roads. The erection of the signage on the R201 and R203 will be carried out."

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke gave the background to his motion and proposed that a provision be made in the forthcoming budget, to have signs erected indicating the entry to County Leitrim from County Cavan on the R201, the R203 and the LP 1586-2 road entering the County from Longford, and all roads entering Leitrim from neighbouring counties to compliment the efforts to develop our tourism product.

Councillor Pádraig Fallon said he previously sought the provision of signage, welcoming people to County Leitrim, the home of Sean MacDiarmada.

MM.162.23 Motion from Councillor Enda McGloin - WRAP

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

"I ask Leitrim County Council to consider the potential of this county been part of the WRAP film region alongside other counties in the West and North West. In just two years, the Regional Fund has generated over €16.8m in expenditure, putting the West at the epicentre of production and welcoming many high profile, indigenous and international productions, so perhaps Leitrim should consider been part of the successful project."

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

"Leitrim County Council, Roscommon County Council and Sligo County Council have worked together as a three-county region in the area of film development since 2015. In Dec 2020, the three counties joined the WRAP II programme, which commenced in April 2021 and will continue until April 2024."

Councillor Enda McGloin welcomed the reply received and he said Leitrim has not experienced investment yet but hopefully it will soon. Councillor McGloin said Leitrim has wonderful scenery, which would be attractive to the film industry. The employment, use of services, and exposure of the county, both nationally and internationally, by the film industry, would bring significant benefit to the county.

Councillor Felim Gurn supported the motion.

Ms Mary Quinn confirmed that Leitrim County Council participates in the WRAP Programme and the current programme continues until April 2024.

Councillor Thomas Mulligan paid tribute to Actor Richard Flood whose family comes from Mohill who has starred in many films, and he is currently starring in the RTE Drama, "The Gone."

MM.163.23 Motion from Councillor Mary Bohan - Group Sewerage Schemes

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

"What is the current position regarding the provision of Group Sewerage Schemes and also the taking over of same by the Council where necessary?"

Report by Head of Finance & Water Services

"Under the current Multi Annual Rural Water Programme 2019-2021 funding was sought and received for the taking in charge of one group sewerage scheme and the taking in charge process for this scheme is complete.

This Council awaits the publication of the framework of funding measures for the new 2023-2025 Multi Annual Rural Water Programme. Under the last MARWP 2019-2022, under measure 6b - Community Wastewater Connection Networks; 3 no. new group sewerages schemes were allocated funding, however none of the 3 schemes were in a position to proceed as the estimated construction costs of the schemes well exceed the allocated funding.

Funding under the MARWP 2019-2022 for Group Sewerage Schemes, also called Community Wastewater Connection Networks was as follows: Grants of up to 75% of cost are available subject to a maximum grant of €6,750 per house (this means that the effective cost limit per house for the project is €9,000).

It is a condition of funding that such community connection networks are taken-in-charge by Úisce Éireann once developed. Since January 2014 approval of taking-in-charge is a matter for Úisce Éireann rather than local authorities.

Despite a few Local Authorities securing funding for demonstration group sewerage scheme projects as far back as 2014, most of the projects have failed to proceed to the construction stage due to increased costs and potential cost overruns. Committees have been left with

limited options with some now wound up due to the cost issues.

Leitrim County Council made a joint submission to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage along with 6 other Local Authorities in relation to the underfunding of these community connection networks.

The Local Authorities asked the Department to review and significantly increase the grant aid amounts and unit cost per house considering:

- Increased inflation
- Úisce Éireann's enhanced construction standards, a requirement to ensure taking in charge at completion.
- Úisce Éireann's significant wastewater connection fees of €3,929 (under 5 houses) and €3,499 (greater than 5 houses) and water connection fees of €2,272 (under 5 houses) and €1,848 (greater than 5 houses).

Additionally, the Local Authorities requested that the funding thresholds should be flexible enough to accommodate increased costs due to local ground conditions, ie. the requirement of pumping stations.

The Local Authorities then suggested that the funding should be increased to 85% up to a maximum grant of €20,000 per connection."

Councillor Mary Bohan welcomed the very comprehensive reply received in this regard. Councillor Mary Bohan referred to the costs quoted by Irish Water for water connections and she re-iterated that reputable registered local contractors should be engaged to do this work rather than having to pay Irish Water 3 times the price.

Councillor Enda Stenson supported the motion. Councillor Enda McGloin said Group Sewerage Schemes are a good ideal for communities near villages.

Mr Vincent Dwyer advised that this Council awaits the publication of the framework of funding measures for the new 2023-2025 Multi Annual Rural Water Programme. Mr Dwyer welcomed the increase in funding for septic tanks and he pointed out this also needs to be seen in Group Sewerage schemes.

MM.164.23 Motion from Councillor Brendan Barry - Gaza

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

"That Leitrim County Council condemns Israel's brutal assault on the 2.3million civilians of Gaza with almost 50% of them under the age of 18, which live in an area less than a quarter the size of County Leitrim and has resulted in more than 7,028 deaths including over 2,913 children to date (26/10/23).

The forced displacement of Palestinians by Israel with the cutting off of water, fuel, food and medical supplies and the destruction of civilian infrastructure including Hospitals, throughout Gaza amounts to collective punishment, in contravention of international

humanitarian law."

Councillor Brendan Barry asked that the following amendments be made to his motion 10,000 deaths, 4,104 Children (6/11/23) and he called for an immediate cease fire and he said every life is equal.

Councillor Mary Bohan said it has to be condemned and she asked if the motion could also condemn the Hamas attack of 7th October.

Councillors Des Guckian, Pdraig Fallon, Sean McGowan, Enda Stenson and Cathaoirleach, Councillor Warnock supported the motion.

This concluded the business of the meeting at 7.12 pm

Signed:

Councillor Justin Warnock
Cathaoirleach

Kieran Brett
Meetings Administrator

Dated: Monday, 8th January 2024