

Minutes of January Meeting of Cashel Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Cashel on Monday 10th January 2011 at 7.30pm.

Chair:	Councillor Michael Browne
Members Present:	Councillor Eddie Bennett Councillor Martin Browne Councillor Dan Dillon Councillor Eoghan Lawrence Councillor Sean McCarthy Councillor PJ Quinlan Councillor Maribel Wood
Officials Present:	Mr. Sean Keating, Town Manager Ms. Mairead Ryan, Staff Officer Mr. Willie Corby, Town Engineer
Apologies:	Councillor Joe Moloney Ms. Marie McGivern, Town Clerk

1. MINUTES OF NOVEMBER MEETING HELD ON THE 1ST NOVEMBER 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on the 1st November 2010 were adopted on the proposition of Councillor Sean McCarthy and seconded by Councillor Dan Dillon.

2. MINUTES OF ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING HELD ON 6TH DECEMBER 2010

The minutes of the Annual Budget meeting held on 6th December 2010 were adopted on the proposition of Councillor Sean McCarthy and seconded by Councillor Eddie Bennett.

3. MINUTES OF DECEMBER MEETING HELD ON 14TH DECEMBER 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on the 14th December 2010 were adopted on the proposition of Councillor Eddie Bennett and seconded by Councillor Dan Dillon.

MANAGERS REPORT ON ADVERSE WEATHER/WATER SERVICES FOR CHRISTMAS PERIOD 2010/2011

The Town Manager began his report by thanking the consumers of the town for their patience over this difficult period, he thanked the members for their reports, understanding and support and most importantly thanked the Town Council staff for their tremendous response throughout the holiday period and

up to last week. He specifically mentioned John Canny, Town Foreman and his staff, Willie Corby and his staff and Marie McGivern who were available at all times over the period.

He informed the meeting that there were 19 staff on duty at the peak of the emergency; the Council had brought in contract plumbing staff to work on the leaks. He indicated that 25 leaks have been repaired since St. Stephens Day.

He outlined the measures taken as follows

- Town Council delivered water to designated areas before and during the Christmas period
- An external water tanker was hired by the County Council to maintain water levels in the reservoir
- This measure helped to ensure that there were limited restrictions throughout the period especially on New Years Eve
- There were over 3,000 calls to the countywide call centre in 6 days from Christmas eve to 29th December 2010
- The main leaks in Cashel were dealt with quickly
- During the freeze the Council was producing 170% of normal volumes of water

The Manager expressed his concerns at the number of households leaving taps running at night and said that this is a bad neighbour approach as it leads to water restrictions. He asked all consumers to check their service pipes in particular in vacant properties to ensure that leaks are detected. He said that the conditions and challenges in this period were even more extreme than previous but the Council response was generally adequate but there have been lessons learned. He said that the Council had already reviewed some aspects of the response and would be meeting in the coming week to further review. He said that the Minister for Environment had indicated that the costs of the emergency response will be refunded and the Council will be making their returns to the Department as soon as possible.

Councillor Martin Browne thanked John Canny and his staff for all their work over the period with the limited resources available. He agreed that the practice of leaving taps running should be frowned upon. He said that he was amazed at the numbers that were brought in to help over the period. He asked why the fire service was not used this year in the same way as they were involved last year. He said that he was very upset that the executive had made the decision not to use the Fire Service. He said that he had no doubt that the fire service would have worked for nothing had they been asked. He was critical that large families and the elderly were left without water over the Christmas period.

Councillor Sean McCarthy expressed his gratitude for all the work done over this extreme period of weather. He said that help was available for all situations and he witnessed staff working in very difficult situations. In relation to the fire service he said that he knew that this was not a decision that was made lightly.

Councillor Eoghan Lawrence echoed the thanks for the work done. He continued by saying that there are some shortcomings in the response. He indicated that the public were not all aware of the emergency number available. He was also critical that the fire service was not used and said that if the decision was made due to money it was regrettable. He said that he knew of one tenant that was left with a bill due to burst pipes and asked that this be addressed.

Councillor Dan Dillon echoed his thanks for the work done by the staff.

Councillor Eddie Bennett asked if something can be done to improve the situation with stopcocks freezing.

Councillor PJ Quinlan said that in some cases the meters are close to the ground. He said that extreme conditions have occurred and we need to be prepared for it.

The Mayor thanked the staff for their work over the Christmas period. He said that he had been without water over the period but that the neighbours had helped each other and he thinks that this is the best way to work in communities. He expressed concerns about the condition of the water pipes many of which are old and said that this will need to be addressed in advance of water metering.

The Manager indicated that the Council are and will be reviewing their response to this situation. He said that the Council were aware that taps were running as there were water losses while the pipes were still frozen. In relation to the level of stop-cocks, he agreed that it is an issue and the Council will be looking at the estates that are not taken in charge. In response to the issue of the Fire Service he informed the members that this was not a decision taken by the Town Council but rather the County Council. He indicated that cost was a factor in the decision but there were also Health & Safety issues along with the fact that it would not be possible to provide this service to all areas. The Council had instead made water tankers available to consumers and used tankers to fill the reservoir. He said that the tenant who had paid for repairs to his house should submit details and his bill to the Council, who would consider reimbursement.

4. HERITAGE – ADOPT A MONUMENT PROJECT

Mairead Ryan, Staff Officer, informed the members that Ms. Labhaoise McKenna, Heritage Officer was unable to attend the meeting. Arrangements will be made to include this item on the Agenda for the February meeting.

5. REPORT ON STREET LIGHTING

Mairead Ryan, Staff Officer, referred to the attached report on the public lighting repairs for 2010. She told the members that the Council had set up this system to keep an accurate track of the lighting situation in town and will update the members with the details on a regular basis.

6. RENT COLLECTION

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that Rent Arrears at the end of December amounted to €11,990.

7. MANAGERS ORDERS

Councillor PJ Quinlan queried the Planning Enforcement Notices issued by the Council in respect of external insulation. He said that works were being done to improve the houses which should be encouraged and it is also grant-aided by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). This was echoed by Councillor Martin Browne.

The Town Manager said that the Council would encourage insulation works to be undertaken by property owners but the works are not straight forward in all cases, especially within an Architectural Conservation Area. He said that notice needs to be given to the Town Council of the proposed works and planning permission would be required in some cases. He said that in cases under discussion work had commenced without contacting the Town Council, work continued when the owners were asked to stop works and the Town Council issued an enforcement notice.

Councillor Martin Browne said that there is no mention of planning permission in the documentation from SEAI and that external insulation is the only option for some property owners.

The Town Manager said that applicants can apply for a Section 5 Determination (Exemption from Planning Permission) or Planning Permission and if they are unhappy with the decision they can appeal to An Bord Pleanála.

Councillor Eoghan Lawrence was unhappy with the situation and felt that the Council is being petty in this regard.

Councillor Eddie Bennett said that insulation works are expensive and said that it would be important that applicants have discussions with the Council in advance of starting work.

Following a discussion on the matter the Manager indicated that the Town Council had no option but to serve the enforcement proceedings in these cases.

8. EUROPEAN CHARTER MEETING 2011

Councillor Maribel Wood updated the members on the progress of the preparations for the EU Charter Annual Meeting in 2011. She informed the meeting as follows:

- Niall Gregory & Shaun Leahy have put huge efforts into the organisation of the event
- The event will run from 30th June to 4th July 2011
- Minutes of Steering Group meetings are circulated to all members
- The Daily Board of the Presidium will be in Cashel on Saturday 15th January 2011 to assess the preparations to-date
- Next meeting of steering group is on Thursday 13th January at 4pm
- She urged all members to give their full support to this event

9. NOTICES OF MOTION

There were no notices of motion entered for the meeting.

10. CONFERENCES/SEMINARS

The list of Conferences and Seminars were circulated. On the proposition of Councillor Sean McCarthy, seconded by Councillor Eoghan Lawrence attendance at the following conferences were agreed:

11. CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence was read.

12. VOTES OF SYMPATHY

A vote of sympathy was extended to:

Mrs. Anne Doyle & Family, Glenbane, Holycross on the death of John Doyle
Councillor Sean McCarthy paid tribute to the former Tipperary Hurler and friend

Paddy O'Donnell, Lowergate, on the death of his mother Bridie

The Currivan Family, The Green on the death of their mother Winifred

Mrs. Patsy Bennett, Oliver Plunkett Park on the death of his sister Agnes

Councillor Joe Moloney on the death of his sister Mrs Mary Coleman

There being no other business the meeting then concluded.

Signed/ _____
Mayor

Dated/ _____ February 2011

Signed/ _____
Town Clerk

Dated/ _____ February 2011