

**Minutes of July Meeting of Cashel Town Council held in the Council Chamber,
Civic Offices, Friar Street, Cashel on Monday 6th July 2009 at 7.30pm.**

Mayor: Councillor Eddie Bennett

Members Present: Councillor Sean McCarthy
Councillor Michael Browne
Councillor Maribel Wood
Councillor Joe Moloney
Councillor P.J Quinlan
Councillor Martin Browne
Councillor Eoghan Lawrence

Officials Present: Mr. Sean Keating, Town Manager
Ms. Mairead Ryan, A/Town Clerk
Mr. Willie Corby, Town Engineer
Ms. Sharon Kenny, A/Assistant Staff Officer

1. MINUTES OF MAY MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 11th May were adopted on the proposition of Councillor Michael Browne seconded by Councillor Sean McCarthy

2. MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 15th June were adopted on the proposition of Councillor Michael Browne seconded by Councillor Sean McCarthy.

3. DEPUTATION FROM CASHEL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The two speakers on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce were Mr. Cian O'Carroll and Mr. Sean Moloughney. Cian O'Carroll firstly congratulated the new and re-elected members. He stressed that the businesses of the town were already facing difficulties and then had to face an increase in rates at a time when trading has been reduced. Businesses are already worrying about the next budget. He said that the Council needs to curb expenditure and to look at areas where this can be done instead of increasing Rates in the next Annual Budget. Businesses have already reduced prices for their customers and the result of an increase in rates would be businesses having to close and further job losses.

Sean Moloughney called for a 20% reduction in Water Charges. There was he said a big increase in 2009 of 15% and still significantly more than the actual cost. The Council will still have a surplus income as a result he said. He also called for a 15% reduction in Commercial Rates to 2006 levels as Businesses are operating at the 2002 turnover levels. The contributions from new businesses such as the Tesco development means in reality the Council may suffer no actual reduction.

He then asked for 30 minutes free parking to be introduced. This, he said, will have little effect on income but huge effect on business.

The main demands from the Deputation were: -

- 30 minutes free parking in the Town
- Reduction in Commercial Rates of 15%
- Reduction in Water Charges of 20%

Councillor Eddie Bennett agreed we are in a recession and said he understood the plight of business people.

Councillor Eoghan Lawrence said that with the opening of Tesco. The Town Council will have a huge increase in Revenue but that the 2009 Budget does not take this figure into account.

Councillor Martin Browne acknowledged that Cordis were present at the meeting and asked what impact the current times had on their business. The reply from Gearoid McDermott, Cordis, was that costs were under scrutiny and he was under pressure to reduce costs and would welcome a reduction in Rates – in his case, from the County Council. Councillor Martin Browne also said that publicans in the Town were upset about the current Water Charges.

John Tierney, Feehans Pub, was at the meeting and he said that although he had spent money on reducing water usage, his water charges had doubled this year. He mentioned that the General Public uses his toilets and no allowance was made for this. He said that tourism is down so far this year and his turnover is down by approx. 30% and he has had to reduce staff from 11 people to 9. Councillor Martin Browne asked how his water charges had doubled when there had been no increase in water rates. Mr. Tierney answered that he doesn't know why as he had checked for leaks but there was none.

The deputation then withdrew from the meeting.

4. SOUTH TIPPERARY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY.

Mr. John Devane, C.E.O, made a presentation outlining the activities of the South Tipperary Development Company. He said that the S.T.D.C provide a range of Programmes such as the Rural Development Programme, Social Inclusion Programme, Rural Social Scheme, Walks Scheme and Rural Recreation. The main objective of the presentation was to give information and to familiarise the public on these Programmes and the aim was to improve quality of life and to encourage diversification in the local economy and to provide funding for projects. A Budget of approximately €14m is available from now until the end of 2013 to grant aid projects. An example of a project that could be considered for funding is Diversification into non-agricultural activities such as speciality food production or farm shops. He said that tourism activities would be encouraged. Further examples of projects would be the development of youth cafes in rural areas, community owned shops and farm shops, upgrading community facilities, supporting cultural activities and providing amenity and recreational facilities.

Councillor Michael Browne said that he would be concerned about over development of products in a small town and the problems with opening walkways would be that the farmers concerned would be looking for money. He agreed that in theory it all sounded great but felt it could work in reality only if you had supply and demand.

Councillor Maribel Wood said that tourists come to Ireland to see how we live and for the ambiance. Cashel, she stated, is not good at selling itself to tourists. We have a lot in this town such as coffee shops, restaurants, nice streets with flowers and we need to work together on it.

Councillor Sean McCarthy agreed that our native culture needs to be sold to the tourists and the old American view of Ireland needs to be buried.

5. EUROPEAN CHARTER

Mr. Willie Corby, Town Engineer, spoke briefly on the European Charter and the 2011 hosting of the Summer Meeting.

Ms. Mairead Ryan mentioned that there would be a Steering Committee meeting in early September. She also asked the members if they could give details to her of local groups who would be interested in getting involved.

Councillor Joe Moloney said that it would be a good idea to inform organisations and clubs very soon that it was coming up and to get involved as most have monthly meetings

Councillor Maribel Wood suggested that foreign nationals could also get involved.

6. RENT COLLECTION

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that the rent arrears to the end of June were €14,600.

7. MANAGERS ORDERS

The Managers Orders were noted.

8. FINANCE

(a) Manager's Statement of 2009 Budget

Mr. Sean Keating, Town Manager informed the members that our Local Government Fund (LGF) allocation for 2009 has been reduced by €48,341 at the start of this year with a further reduction recently in the sum of €22,768 giving an overall reduction in this fund to-date of €71,109. In addition the Road Grants for Cashel have been reduced by €78,000.

He explained that, while staff are working hard to limit expenditure and increase income to date this year, income is lower than was budgeted for in a number of areas. The

Council will continue to minimise our expenditure while attempting to maintain a high standard of service and have eliminated overtime for indoor staff, reduced it for outdoor staff and are not replacing staff on annual or sick leave.

As regards reducing Rates, he said that the Council set a figure at the time of adopting the 2009 budget, in order to balance our levels of income and expenditure as obliged to do so which legally cannot be changed. The water charges are based on the figures set by South Tipperary County Council (STCC), which are based on the real cost of providing the service. This amount is fixed and is not negotiable at this time. He agreed, however to examine any individual hardship cases to help them overcome short-term difficulties.

Regarding car parking, he said the Town Council have a very detailed survey being carried out and will make a full presentation of the results to the members at the September meeting.

Councillor Joe Moloney acknowledged that the Manager had given a lot of budgetary detail but that this was not helping the business people of the town. Their problems must be addressed as well. He said the Manager had not listened to the Deputation, he did not fully address parking or the excessive water charges. He supported 15 to 30 minutes of free parking.

Councillor Martin Browne supported what Councillor Joe Moloney he said. He formally proposed 20 minutes free parking in town.

Councillor Maribel Wood added that a lot of Businesses would not be there by Christmas, which would then mean a loss to the Council revenue. There are currently a huge number of empty shop units in the town. The Council reducing costs might encourage other businesses to set up.

Councillor Eoghan Lawrence did not accept waiting until next budget for changes to be made. The businesses need some reductions now. He seconded Councillor Browne's proposal.

Councillor Michael Browne expressed a concern about changing to free parking in the middle of a financial year.

Councillor Joe Moloney said he cannot accept that 15 or 20 minutes of free parking would make any difference to revenue.

The Town Manager proposed that the period of grace of 10 minutes be extended to 15 minutes until September when the parking report will be brought to the Council. Councillor Sean McCarthy said that we are obliged to produce a balanced budget but to extend the grace period would show goodwill.

This amended proposal was proposed by Councillor Michael Browne and seconded by Councillor Joe Moloney.

The following vote was taken.

	FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Bennett	For	
Councillor Martin Browne		Against
Councillor Michael Browne	For	
Councillor Dillon	Absent	
Councillor Laurence		Against
Councillor McCarthy	For	
Councillor Moloney	For	
Councillor Quinlan	For	
Councillor Wood	For	

This proposal was carried by 6 votes to 2 votes.

(b) Annual Financial Statement 2008

Mairead Ryan, Acting Town Clerk updated the members of the Annual Financial Statement 2008. She said that the Financial Accounts section now comprises of two statements

- Income & Expenditure
- Balance Sheet

She stated that the Total Revenue expenditure for 2008 was €3,376,083 and the Total Revenue income for 2008 was €3,406,106, therefore there is an overall surplus for 2008 of €30,023.

In relation to the Capital Account she said that the Total Capital Expenditure for 2008 was €1.6m and the Capital Income for 2008 was €2.1m, therefore there was an increase in the capital account balance for 2008 of €0.5m

The percentage collection and year end arrears in respect of the council's main revenue collection accounts of Rates, Rents, Water, Refuse and Loans were good and consistent with previous years.

9. IRISH WALLED TOWNS FUND 2009

The Acting Town Clerk informed the members that the Town Council had received a grant allocation of €47,600 from the Irish Heritage Council to enable works at the Sallyport Section E of the wall and the removal of vegetation, archaeology and measured survey of the military structure of the walls. She circulated a map of the Town Walls to the members indicating the location of Section E.

The members welcomed this grant allocation.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

Councillor Maribel Wood

“That the Manager advise the Council as to what measures will be taken to upgrade and allocate vacant housing stock and implement measures necessary to rid this town of derelict sites and premises as its festering antisocial behaviour and is not fair to other residents”

A written response was issued as follows:

The Town Council currently has 9 vacant houses in its housing stock. These houses are at various stages of the repair process i.e.

⇒ 3 no. costings being determined

⇒ 3 will be ready for re-letting in 4-6 weeks

⇒ 3 will be ready for re-letting by the end of 2009

The Council is satisfied that none of these vacant properties can be defined as “derelict sites”.

Councillor Wood stated that all current tenants need to keep their houses tidy.

Councillor Maribel Wood

“That measures i.e. (road markings, stop signs mirrors) be implemented as a matter of urgency to safeguard pedestrians at the junction of William Street with John Street and William Street with Main Street before a serious accident happens.”

A written response was issued as follows:

New road markings and signage will be installed at both junctions shortly. Mirrors are not recommended for road safety reasons, as the images can be misleading for motorists.

In the medium term in order to improve safety for motorists and pedestrians, a one-way system may be considered for the area subject to public consultation and agreement with the elected members. For your information traffic calming works are to commence shortly on John Street between William Street and Main Street in order to prevent cars mounting the footpaths as agreed with the members earlier this year.

Councillor Maribel Wood.

“That due to the highly dangerous road and footpath situation at Dominic Street, this Council directs the Manager to raise a loan from our Insurers, Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd., and rectify the matter once and for all.”

A written response was issued as follows:

Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd are not loan providers to local authorities they act as insurers.

As agreed, some time ago, it is intended to upgrade Dominic Street using the 2009 Special Block Grant allocation of €49,000 from the Department of Transport. It is intended that road surfacing and footpath works at this location will commence shortly.

Councillor Eoghan Lawrence

“That Cashel Town Council considers putting on hold phase two of the Town Centre Strategy and redirects its scarce resources, as the businesses on the Main Street are unable to withstand any further disruption to trade”

A written response was issued as follows:

Phase 2 of the Town Centre Improvement Works (from Plaza to Wesley Square inclusive) consists of construction of defined parking bays on both sides of Main Street; roadway narrowing; sight re-alignment; paving; tree planting; street lighting and street furniture.

As Capital expenditure in 2009 cannot exceed Capital Income for that year it will not be possible to fund Phase 2 from such income, therefore, the Town Council will explore other avenues of finance i.e. grant assistance from South Tipperary Development Company etc.

The Town Council will update the members should there be any developments in relation to this project.

Councillor Eoghan Lawrence

“That the Manager reports to the council on the cost of implementing 20 minutes free parking”

A written response was issued as follows:

Cashel Town Council recently commissioned the consultancy firm RPS Consulting Engineers to carry out a Parking Survey for Cashel.

The Brief to the Consultants in carrying out this Survey require them to examine all aspects of parking including charges. This survey together with a cost analysis of implementing a 20 minute free parking facility will be available for presentation to the members at the Town Council meeting scheduled for 7th September next.

Councillor Eoghan Lawrence

“That high visibility car park signage be installed on Main Street, so as to alert motorists that parking is available in “Buckley’s Car Park”, Main Street”

A written response was issued as follows:

Improved directional signage indicating the Main Street car park will be erected on the Main Street informing motorists of the availability of this facility i.e. "Buckley's Car Park".

Councillor Sean McCarthy

"That this Council should take all the necessary steps in association with the appropriate Authorities to endeavour to eliminate anti-social behaviour, which is rampant in Cashel Town at present"

A written response was issued as follows:

The Community Liaison Officer, Cashel Town Council is currently working on 2 cases of anti-social behaviour reported to the Town Council. All cases will be dealt with in accordance with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

It is proposed to hold the first meeting of the Cashel Joint Policing Committee this month and this will provide the Committee with an opportunity to raise these issues with the appropriate representatives of An Garda Síochána at this meeting.

The Council have also engaged the services of the South East Simon Community to deal with tenant sustainment. This organisation works with families or individuals who are in danger of losing their tenancy and provides them with measures of support and monitoring.

Councillor McCarthy that he was in agreement that the Joint Policing Committee needs to be set up as soon as possible, that the town might qualify for C.C.T.V and he requested an evening meeting with the Committee. The Acting Town Clerk informed the meeting that the first meeting of the Joint Policing Committee would be held on Thursday 16th July 2009. On the request of Councillor Sean McCarthy it was agreed it would be arranged for 7 p.m.

Councillor Sean McCarthy

"That this Council endeavours to support the Business People of Cashel in these difficult financial times and take whatever necessary steps are required and possible to help them to maintain viable businesses taking cognisance of the difficult economic times in which businesses are being conducted at present"

A written response was issued as follows:

Cashel Town Council have been pro-active in assisting/facilitating out customers to pay their charges.

Rates demands and Invoices for Water Charges are issued in February each year.

In accordance with Local Government legislation

Rates are payable in two moieties, the first on demand and the second on the 1st July each year.

Water Charges are payable on demand for metered accounts and unmetered accounts

At the beginning of the year the Council notifies all customers that payments may be made monthly by Standing Order. Officials of the Town Council are available to meet customers who may be experiencing difficulty with payments in an effort to assist them in facilitating a phased payment arrangement.

It must be noted however, that all charges are required to be paid within the current year.

Councillor Sean McCarthy

“That new efforts should be initiated to forward the process of a Farmers Mart on a regular basis in the Town of Cashel such as they have in other Towns for example Cahir as a local Market helps to promote and advance the image of a Town”

A written response was issued as follows:

As you are aware some work was done on this project in the early part of 2009. In order to progress this proposal an amendment is required to be made to the Casual Trading Bylaws for Cashel Town Council. Public Notice will be given shortly inviting submissions/observations in relation to the proposal following which a report will be prepared for consideration by the members.

11. CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS:

The list of Conferences and Seminars were handed out.

12. CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence was read.

13. VOTES OF SYMPATHY/CONGRATULATIONS

A vote of sympathy was extended to the

Ryan Family, Ladyswell Street.

14. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Sean Keating, Town Manager informed the members that he proposed that there would be a meeting held to discuss the possible use of the former Convent Lands site with the Senior Executive Planner, Ms. Sonia Reidy. The meeting was arranged for 7 p.m. on the 8th July 2009. The Members were in agreement with this arrangement.

Councillor Martin Browne expressed concern about the traffic lights at the graveyard, he said that people on a daily basis were complaining about the length of time it was taking to remove them. Mr. Willie Corby, Town Engineer explained that there was a delay in the Planning Application with the Developer and the County Council.

Councillor Joe Moloney proposed that there is a civic reception held for the Handball Club in recognition of their achievements at all levels.

The Meeting then concluded.

Signed _____
Mayor

Dated: _____ 2009

Signed _____
Acting Town Clerk

Dated: _____ 2009