

Minutes of October Meeting of Cashel Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Cashel on Monday 4th October 2011 at 7.30pm.

Chair: Councillor Maribel Wood

Members Present: Councillor Eddie Bennett
Councillor Martin Browne (Non-Party)
Councillor Martin Browne (Sinn Fein)
Councillor Dan Dillon
Councillor Eoghan Lawrence
Councillor Sean McCarthy
Councillor Joe Moloney
Councillor PJ Quinlan

Officials Present: Mr. Pat Slattery, Acting Town Manager
Ms. Marie McGivern, Town Clerk
Mr. Willie Corby, Town Engineer
Ms. Mairead Ryan, Staff Officer

1. Minutes of September Meeting held on 5th September 2011

The minutes of the September Meeting held on 5th September 2011 were adopted on the proposition of Councillor Sean McCarthy and seconded by Councillor Dan Dillon.

Matters arising from the Minutes

Councillor Sean McCarthy said that he was disappointed with the lack of response from the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in securing a replacement company in Cashel following the closure of Cordis.

The Mayor reminded the members of the Civic Reception for the Girl Guides to be held in the Council Chamber on Friday 7th October 2011.

The Mayor proposed that a Civic Reception be hosted for Dylan Fitzell and Gearoid Slattery, members of the All Ireland Winning Minor Football team 2011. This was supported by Councillor Joe Moloney and Councillor Martin Browne, Sinn Fein and agreed.

2. Architectural Heritage Assessment City Hall, Cashel Presentation by Gareth O'Callaghan, Jack Coughlan Associates

The Mayor welcomed Mr. Gareth O'Callaghan of Jack Coughlan Associates, Architects & Conservation Consultants to the meeting.

Mr. O'Callaghan began his presentation by giving the background to the Architectural Heritage Assessment Report for the City Hall. He outlined that his company Jack Coughlan Associates had been commissioned by Cashel Town Council with grant aid from the Heritage Council to prepare the Report.

He gave a brief history of the City Hall, details of the current building along with its current condition and the overall significance of the building.

He outlined recommendations for the repair and conservation of the building in terms of short, medium and long term repairs. He concluded that the building which is prominently located in the centre of Cashel could with appropriate conservation works provide an even more interesting and informative stop for visitors in town.

On a query from Councillor PJ Quinlan regarding the locating of a band stand on the plaza, Mr. O'Callaghan said that his initial thoughts would be to locate a band stand away from the building.

Councillor Joe Moloney welcomed the report but expressed concerns about the availability of funding for this type of work.

Councillor Sean McCarthy also welcomed the report and suggested that the Council should arrange costings for the proposed works and check what funding might be available for the project.

The Mayor said that this was a detailed and informative presentation. She expressed the view that this is a first step for this important building in the centre of town.

Councillor Eddie Bennett welcomed the recommendation that an entrance be created on the South gable to facilitate pedestrian access from the building directly onto the Plaza.

Councillor Eoghan Lawrence also welcomed the report and added that he had just commenced leasing an office in the building. He queried if some of the proposed works will be undertaken on the building.

The Town Engineer indicated that the Council had sought funding for works to the building and were advised that the first step would be to complete a conservation report in order to have a basis to seek funding. He indicated that the Council will now make an application for funding to the Heritage Council for the building.

3. Draft Commercial Incentive Scheme

The Town Clerk referred to the Draft Commercial Incentive Scheme which was circulated with the Agenda. She said that this draft Scheme had been prepared as a response to queries/ notices of motion by the members in relation to what could be done to promote the use of ground floor vacant properties in the town. She indicated to the members that a workshop could be held on the scheme if the members wished. Councillor Joe Moloney welcomed the proposal but said that he considered it would be useful to discuss the details at a workshop. It was agreed that a workshop meeting would be held on Thursday 27th October 2011 at 6.30pm in the Conference Room.

4. Smarter Travel Funding 2011

The Town Engineer informed the meeting that the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport has invited applications for projects from the Smarter Travel Fund. He indicated that Cashel Town Council will be making an application through South Tipperary County Council for the provision of cycle parking at the 3 locations as follows:

The Library/Civic offices,
Rock Car Park and
Main Street Car Park.

It was noted that these works are part of the Government's Jobs Initiative Programme and works will have to be completed by private sector providers.

Councillor PJ Quinlan welcomed this update and said that cycle parking is very important in a tourist town for both tourists and local people.

Councillor Marin Browne, Non-party said that a cycle track is needed in the vicinity of the town to allow people to cycle safely.

The Mayor said that a safe walking route is also needed in the vicinity of the town.

5. Rent Collection

The Town Clerk informed the members that the rent arrears at the end of September amounted to €13,891. In response to a query from Councillor Joe Moloney, the Town Clerk agreed that the arrears had increased from the previous month but the arrears were less than the amount outstanding at the same time last year.

6. Managers Orders

Councillor Joe Moloney referred to notices issued under the Derelict Sites Legislation in respect of two houses and enquired if the Council might be in a position to purchase these houses. The Town Clerk indicated that commitments had been received from both parties to render these houses non-derelict, she also said that the Council was not in a position to purchase houses in the current year as it has no capital allocation.

On a query from Councillor Eoghan Lawrence regarding the amount of outstanding development contributions due by the proprietor of the Kilkenny Shop, the Town Clerk indicated that the Council were in discussions with a view to agreeing payment on a phased basis.

7. Notices of Motion

Councillor Maribel Wood

“That this Council seeks an urgent meeting with the HSE personnel to discuss concerns at the serious reduction in staffing levels at St. Patrick’s Hospital and the closure threat hanging over the twenty three bedded St. Clare’s Unit”

The Mayor said that St. Patrick’s Hospital is an exceptional facility for South Tipperary but she has serious concerns about its future. She indicated that 20 staff had retired from the hospital and would not be replaced. She also said that there have been no discussions with the staff by management and there are concerns about the future viability of the hospital. She asked that an urgent meeting be sought with the management of the hospital. This was supported by the other members and it was agreed that the Town Clerk would write to the HSE to arrange a meeting.

Councillor Maribel Wood

“That the Council take immediate steps to clean up the very unsightly area adjacent to the Presentation nuns’ cemetery”

A written response was issued as follows

Cashel Town Council will arrange a cleanup of the site before the end of 2011.

The Mayor accepted this response.

Councillor Maribel Wood

“That the path on the eastern side of John Street be included in the footpath programme”

A written response was issued as follows

A section of footpath at St. John's Cathedral will be renewed shortly as part of the 2011 Road Works Programme.

Renewal of other footpaths on John Street will be considered as part of the 2012 Programme.

The Mayor accepted this response.

Councillor Martin Browne, Sinn Féin

“That the Council urgently look at removing the highly dangerous asbestos roof at the old boys’ primary school in the Green, Cashel. The building is currently in use by the local scouts for the last number of years. This building will soon be used by the new boxing club so on health and safety reasons I would strongly urge that the Council would be prompt on moving on this issue before any incident occurs”

A written response was issued as follows

The old primary school at the Green (rear of Ely's Centra Shop) is owned by Cashel Town Council and leased to Scouting Ireland (approximately 8 years of a 61 year lease have expired). The building itself is in reasonably good condition but there is an old shed at the rear which has an asbestos roof in a poor state of repair. The school yard is cut-off from public access by locked gates. A temporary fence was previously in place to cut-off the rear yard from the rest of the premises used by the scouts but this fence has been removed (presumably as part of a recent clean-up).

It is the responsibility of the tenant to undertake all necessary repairs and maintenance of a leased property. However, Cashel Town Council will, in this instance, investigate the cost of removal and disposal of the shed roof by a specialist firm. As there is likely to be a significant cost involved which is not covered by the Town Councils 2011 Budget, it appears that the tenants could apply for Grant Assistance via the South Tipperary Development Company or some other source (e.g. National Lottery). In the meantime we will request the tenants to re-instate the temporary fence and we will arrange for appropriate warning signage to be erected.

Councillor Martin Browne, Sinn Féin, said that he is conscious of the costs involved but asked that this issue be looked at as soon as possible.

Councillor Martin Browne, Sinn Féin

“That the Council review the matter of the removed speed ramp at the entrance of the Rock Lane. This is a serious safety issue for those living in this area, and that if replacing the ramp is not in the best interest of those people that the Council look into installing some other measure to slow traffic down here.”

A written response was issued as follows

Rock Lane is a narrow lane of historical significance. Traffic is only permitted to flow in a one-way direction from the Kiln toward the Rock Car Park. Any incidents of traffic flowing in the wrong direction should be brought to the attention of An Garda Síochána. Provision of a ramp has been the subject of debate and correspondence between local residents, elected members and officials for the past year. A decision was recently taken by the Town Engineer with the agreement of elected members that a ramp or other traffic calming features will not be installed at Rock Lane. There are various technical and legal issues involved and various parties are opposed to ramps and/or other traffic calming features being introduced.

The Town Engineer said that he is very reluctant to revisit this issue as agreement was reached on the matter. He asked the members to consider that there is huge opposition to the installation of ramps while at the same time there was a request from others for the installation of the ramps.

Councillor Eoghan Lawrence stated that he was unhappy that the impression given was that the elected members had agreed to the decision. He said that no vote had been taken on the matter.

Councillor Martin Browne, Sinn Féin

“That the Council provide a pedestrian crossing at Upper Friar Street to cater for the large number of people especially young children who use both the public playground and the handball alley.

A written response was issued as follows

A warrant analysis (pedestrian traffic count) will be undertaken at Upper Friar Street. If the figures suggest that a pedestrian crossing is warranted, this matter will be considered when the 2012 Road Works Programme is being prepared. It should be noted that the siting of a pedestrian crossing can cause difficulty for local residents and may result in loss of on-street parking spaces.

Councillor Dan Dillon expressed his concerns about the pedestrian crossing at Bank Place, he is concerned that a serious accident could occur here. He asked the Town Engineer to examine the crossings at Bank Place and Abbey Road.

Councillor PJ Quinlan said that there have been a number of locations suggested for a pedestrian crossing on Friar Street which include near the Church, near the Dualla Road junction and now on Upper Friar Street. He asked the Town Engineer to consider agreeing the location of the pedestrian crossing as a first step.

8. Seminars and Conferences

The list of Seminars/Conferences was circulated to the members. On the proposition of Councillor Sean McCarthy and seconded by Councillor Martin Browne, the attendance by members to Conferences was agreed.

9. Correspondence

The correspondence was noted and supported.

10. Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations

A vote of Sympathy was extended to

- Kerwick Family, Oliver Plunkett Park on the death of James Kerwick
- O’Riordan Family on the death of Eddie O’Riordan, St Patricks Garden
- Kelly Family, Dublin Road, Cashel on the death of Helen Kelly
- Staff Of St Patricks Hospital on the death of Jimmy McCormack
- O’Connor Family, Rock Abbey on the death of Bidy O’Connor

11. Other Matters Raised

Councillor Joe Moloney raised the matter of the privatisation of the Council’s refuse scheme. He expressed his concerns about the waiver scheme into the future. He said that he understands that the waiver scheme will be in place for 12 months but asked what happens after that time. These concerns were echoed by Councillor Martin Browne, Sinn Féin.

Mr. Pat Slattery, Acting Town Manager, told the meeting that a review of the refuse collection service was undertaken last year. It was found that the number of customers with the Council service had dramatically reduced from 13,000 to 8,000. It was further found that over half of the 8,000 customers were in receipt of a waiver from the Council. He said that the decision was taken to tender out the service, this process included the retention of the waiver scheme for 12 months and the collection of community bins for 12 months. This tender was awarded to a company based in Co. Clare called Clean Ireland Recycling Ltd. In relation to the waiver scheme he said that this is a national issue which is being looked at by the Minister for the Environment.

In response to a query from Councillor PJ Quinlan, the Manager indicated that there is currently 18 staff directly working on the collection service and these would be re-deployed to other sections of the Council.

There being no other business the meeting then concluded.

Signed/ _____
Mayor

Dated/ _____ October 2011

Signed/ _____
Town Clerk

Dated/ _____ October 2011