

**Minutes of the New Ross Municipal District Monthly Meeting
held on the 8th January 2025 at 14:30hrs in the
Council Chamber, The Tholsel, Quay Street, New Ross.**

Presiding: Cllr Brídín Murphy – An Cathaoirleach

Councillors: Cllr John Dwyer – Leas Cathaoirleach
Cllr Pat Barden
Cllr John Fleming
Cllr Marty Murphy
Cllr Michael Sheehan

Officials: Alan Fitzhenry – District Manager
Eamonn Hore – District Director
Liz Hore- Director
Angela Lawless- Administrative Officer
Padraig Lyng – Senior Executive Engineer (District)
David Murphy – Executive Engineer (Roads)
Michelle Duffin – Assistant Staff Officer
Seán Connick- SEC
Yvonne Byrne- SEC

Remote: Deputy George Lawlor
Martina Donoghue – Administrative Officer (Housing)
Melissa Goff – Senior Staff Officer (Environment)
Eoghan Nolan- Executive Planner

Apologies: Clinton Donovan – Community Climate Action Officer

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr Brídín Murphy, confirmed that the requisite quorum was in place, welcomed all those in attendance and commenced the meeting.

Cllr Michael Sheehan proposed the suspension of Standing Orders for a presentation on the SEC programme followed by a discussion on the Advance Factory project. Seconded by Cllr John Dwyer, standing orders were duly suspended.

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr Brídín Murphy, requested the order of business to be reflected in the minutes.

4. Other Business

4.1 New Ross Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) Group- Schedule of Events

Dr Yvonne Byrne & Seán Connick presented the Members with the SEC Group - Schedule of Events before responding to queries and questions arising.

Yvonne Byrne confirmed groups currently involved in the SEC network are at various stages of progress and she implored Members to sign up any groups that would be interested in the SEC Programme.

Cllr Barden raised a query in relation to plans to address the lack of fast charging points in the town which Ms Byrne advised could be incorporated into an Energy Master Plan for New Ross.

Cllr Sheehan sought clarification on the terms of the grant aid to which Ms Byrne confirmed applicants must be the home-owner and cannot apply for items previously funded by grant aid but the working status of the applicant is not applicable. Only registered contractors should be employed to carry out works.

Directors Eamonn Hore & Liz Hore praised the work of the SEC group while noting the vast experience of Dr Byrne.

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr Brídín Murphy thanked Dr Byrne & Mr Connick for their presentation who duly departed the meeting.

4.2 Advance Factory

An Cathaoirleach welcomed Director Liz Hore & Angela Lawless to the meeting to discuss the current status of the Advance Factory.

Director L. Hore commenced the discussion by advising the Members that given the current uncertainty around the government administration in the US, in particular with regards to tariffs, the Advance Factory is still a priority for the Economic Development section. However, they are not in a position to progress with the project at this time.

Director L. Hore advised that another potential investor has approached the LEO office, but this needs further investigation and following up.

Cllr Sheehan thanked Director L. Hore and Ms Lawless for attending the meeting and expressed his disappointment that the Advance Factory project has stalled, noting that the other 3 major projects approved by the Council Members in 2017 are either completed or under commencement, and that the Advance Factor is no closer to being started. Cllr Sheehan proposed readvertising and finding other developers to bring this project to completion.

Cllr Dwyer supported Cllr Sheehan's sentiments and raised a query concerning communication with local businesses regarding the change of administration in the USA and the possible effects on these businesses.

Cllr Fleming thanked the Director for their presentation and raised a query regarding the Council's offer to developers that express interest in the Advance Factory. Cllr Fleming expressed the importance of the work of the Council behind the scenes to get this project over the line.

Cllr Barden noted that New Ross's image as a destination/tourist town in recent years may have detracted from the industrial centre it was once known to be, and that there seems to be an opinion that the area lacks an educated workforce and proper infrastructure. Cllr Barden notes that this is not true, with a university within 15 minutes of the town, we have a well-educated workforce but a lack of housing for any workforce. Cllr Barden requests further support from Government and the IDA to progress this project to completion and to support small businesses also.

Director E. Hore thanked Director L. Hore and confirmed that the Council still fully supports the project, pointing out that there is an issue with building costs and the lack of available developers. However, there is no issue with infrastructure, noting that we have capacity with water/sewage, the new bypass, and that there is private interest in providing housing in Albatross and L.A. interest in social housing in Rosbercon. Director E. Hore agrees that the Council should meet with the TD's and IDA to get a commitment for New Ross.

Cllr Murphy noted that a tenant is needed before a developer for the factory due to the current view that the factory is not viable at present.

An Cathaoirleach agreed that the Council cannot proceed with building a factory without a tenant in place.

Cllr Sheehan put forward that the Council needs to provide a better support package that would give developers the confidence to take on this project.

Cllr Dwyer noted that the Council is acting as a body to attract industry to the area, when this is the role of the IDA and other such bodies, and that the area does not have an affective representational TD which is an issue.

Director L. Hore confirmed that LEO is committed to the Advance Factory project and requested time to follow up with the new potential investor and various business interests.

An Cathaoirleach requested that the Councillors are kept informed of any update in this regard.

Cllr Barden proposed that the LEO Office, Director Eamonn Hore and Chief Executive Officer Eddie Taaffe and the 7 T.D.'s meet with the IDA.

Cllr Sheehan noted that there should be no reason that the Council cannot provide a more lucrative offer to entice developers from the private market to come forward, expressing his concern that the IDA and the T.D.'s will likely prioritise the Enniscorthy factory as it is further along in development than the Advance Factory.

An Cathaoirleach agreed that the IDA and T.D.'s should be invited in, however noted that this may be premature given that there is no developer or tenant at present.

The District Manager noted that the Chamber has invited the T.D.'s to a seminar in February and suggests that the Council could request a side meeting in conjunction with them.

An Cathaoirleach thanked Director Liz Hore and Angela Lawless for attending and requested that the members are kept updated as this progresses. Director Liz Hore and Angela Lawless departed the meeting.

Cllr Sheehan proposed a 5-minute break before proceeding with the rest of the meeting, seconded by Cllr Barden. An Cathaoirleach suspended the meeting for a 5-minute break.

An Cathaoirleach restarted the meeting. The District Manager noted that the meeting is being recorded due to the absence of minute-taker Aine Waters, and that the recording of the meeting will be deleted once minutes are completed.

1. Confirmation of Minutes

1.1 Monthly Meeting

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of 11th December, 2024, were proposed by Cllr John Dwyer and seconded by Cllr Marty Murphy.

Congratulations

Cllr Barden congratulated the District Manager on finally getting the CCTV plan the town approved.

Cllr Fleming congratulated all involved in the Arrow Ceremony, and Charlie Tector who made his debut for Leinster recently.

Cllr Murphy congratulated Matthew O'Hanlon and acknowledged his retirement from inter-county Hurling.

Cllr Sheehan thanked the crews for their hard work in recent days, in particular the District Roads Engineer and the roads crew for keeping the roads safe in sub-zero temperatures and to the frontline staff who have been at different scenes in recent weeks.

An Cathaoirleach added her thanks to the roads crew and District Engineer for the quick response to issues reported over the holidays.

Sympathies

Cllr Dwyer expressed sympathies to the O'Connor and Walsh families.

Cllr Barden expressed condolences to the family of John O'Connor, Jim Gilchrist of Newbawn, Olive Hickey, Colin Tubritt of Saltmills, Rose St Ledger, Tess Ryan, and Tommy O'Connor of Adamstown.

Cllr Murphy expressed condolences to the family of Minnie Cummins in Lower Ballyhack.

Cllr Fleming expressed sympathies to John Handrick of Knockroe, Betty Donnellan of Clonroche, Colin Tubritt, and Olive Hickey.

Cllr Sheehan would like to be associated with the above sympathies and add the family of Mary Carroll.

An Cathaoirleach would like to be associated with all of the above sympathies.

2. Consideration of Reports and Recommendations

2.1 District Managers Report

The District Manager delivered his monthly report and highlighted the following information;

Proposed Festival Budget 2025

Please find attached, the proposed Festival 2025 programme & budget. This is a €100k allocation through the GMA and is a matter for the Elected Members of NRMD to decide for the forthcoming year. The proposal is the same as 2024.

This is a significant investment by the Members in local Festivals in the Community, which also act as significant attractions to the area and promote New Ross on the National and International stage.

The District Manager responded to queries raised by the Members and clarified certain matters.

Cllr Fleming and Cllr Sheehan both raised concerns about funding for new festivals. Cllr Murphy requested that the current festivals be reviewed in terms allocation of funding. An Cathaoirleach agreed to carry out a review at a later date. The budget for 2025 was unanimously approved by the Members.

Arts & Amenities and Residents Association Grants 2025

The 2025 Arts & Amenity and Residents Association Grants are soon to be advertised in the newspapers and on the Council's website.

Applications will open shortly and can be made online or a form can be requested by phoning reception at 051 421284. The closing date is **Friday 14th February at 5.00pm.**

The Residents Association grants are for individual private housing estates only. Local Authority housing estates receive their funding directly from the Housing Officer.

The Residents Association funding is €11,000 in total and that is divided by the number of groups who apply, with the maximum amount payable to any group, being

€600. The Budget allocation here on the GMA is €15,000 however the NRMD members have traditionally allocated €4,000 from this fund to New Ross Tidy Towns. The Arts and Amenity grants are for voluntary groups or individuals for works such as community development initiatives, promoting local heritage, promoting an interest in sport or the arts, etc.

Once the Arts and Amenity closing date has passed, each Elected Member will be sent the list of applications and will have €10,000 each to distribute as they see fit.

The report with the allocations for both grants will be brought to the earliest possible meeting, for approval by the Members.

St Patrick's Day Hartford

As the Cathaoirleach will be visiting Savannah and the Leas-Cathaoirleach has informed me he is unavailable to travel, the Members need to decide on two Councillors to travel in their place, to our Sister City of Hartford, Connecticut.

Cllr Dwyer proposed, subject to availability, Cllr Sheehan and Cllr Fleming, seconded by Cllr Barden. Cllr Barden is to travel if Cllr Sheehan cannot due to work commitments.

EVENTS

Nollaig New Ross 2023

Our Nollaig New Ross Christmas programme was a great success. From the extra festive lights to events in the Theatre and on street choirs, a huge effort was made to create a festive atmosphere.

Arrow Ceremony at Hook Lighthouse

We had a very successful Arrow Ceremony at Hook Head on New Years Day, where the Cathaoirleach Cllr Bridin Murphy, cast an arrow off the Headland in the Hook, claiming rights to the Estuary. She was accompanied by New Ross Municipal District Cllrs and the Dunbrody Archers. A large crowd was in attendance and our thanks go to the team at Hook Lighthouse.

PROJECTS

CCTV

I am delighted to announce publicly that the Garda Commissioners Office has signed off on the CCTV Scheme Pack (Phase 1) for New Ross. This excellent news arrived just before Christmas and the confirmation letter has been included under correspondence in the meeting pack.

As a result, WCC has now advertised the tender for the Civil & Electrical works and responses are due back by 17th January. The plan is to see a contractor appointed in February and work commence by March.

Phase 2 of the CCTV Scheme has been worked on over the past months and the plan is to bring more information on these additional cameras to the February meeting.

Brennan's Lane/Shambles

Works restarted this week after the Christmas break. Works at Brennan's Lane are nearing substantial completion with the final area being paved and a covered structure due to be installed over the coming weeks. The Shambles works continue and completion is planned for Q1 in 2025. We plan to open Brennan's Lane first once complete and details will follow in February.

Duncannon Fort Works

Works at Duncannon Fort restarted this week after the Christmas break and are on target to be completed by Q1 2025.

Motorhome Park

The Flood Risk Assessment being completed now allows for final preparations to submit the approved Motorhome Park for Part VIII.

Quay Street Regeneration

A brief has been prepared & submitted to Procurement by the Project Team and is to be released this month for initial tender of a design consultant, with contractor tender then to follow. The plan is to begin construction before the end of this year.

Sports Capital Pearse Park

The District Team is due to meet later this month to begin planning for this project. Works will include the resurfacing of the MUGA and improvements to this area, resurfacing of the long jump area, the extension of a storage building and additional lighting for the park.

The District Manager confirmed the appointment of a Temporary Community Sports Hub Development Officer and will be based in the Tholsel.

In addition, the District Manager confirmed that the Women's Refuge have been in contact with the family of Malika Al Kattib regarding a remembrance evening, and the family would like to hold a remembrance but at a later date as they are still grieving.

The District Manager responded to queries raised by the Members in relation to the above matters.

Cllr John Dwyer proposed the extension of Standing Orders, seconded by Cllr Michael Sheehan. Standing Orders were duly extended.

2.1a Special Projects Report

Noted.

Cllr Fleming requested an up-to-date report, as the last couple of reports have been reiterations. The District Manager advised that Sean Meyler is due to attend the next meeting.

2.2 Roads Report

The District Engineer referred to the previously circulated report before responding to the following queries raised by the Members.

Cllr Barden requested an update on start dates for works at Aughnaglaur and Little Cullenstown Bridges.

Cllr Sheehan requested an update on the Taking in Charge of Parkfield Housing Estate due to the condition of the road surface, and that this is treated as urgent.

Cllr Fleming thanked the District Engineer and his crew for quick response to any issues reported over the holidays.

Cllr Dwyer questioned the agreed protocols between the Council and BAM for an extreme weather event with regards the bypass and the bridge.

Cllr Barden raised a query regarding the possibility of gritting at the entrance of Integer and in relation to public lighting & footpaths along that road.

Director Hore advised the members he will circulate the Winter Maintenance Plan which sets out the responsibilities for maintaining the road network. A discussion ensued.

2.3 Housing Report

The Administrative Officer referred to the previously circulated report before taking queries raised by the Members.

Cllr Dwyer requested the Administrative Officer to attend in-person, if possible, to which the Administrative Officer confirmed she can attend in-person if requested. Cllr Dwyer raised a query regarding the requirement for eviction notices to be checked by Threshold and the anti-social behaviour policy of the Council with regards to a specific case previously represented by Cllr Dwyer.

Cllr Sheehan supported Cllr Dwyer with regards the anti-social behaviour policy and reviewing same. Cllr Sheehan requested Housing Capital dispose of duplex units and rebuild with houses with a view to protecting our tenants from anti-social behaviour.

Cllr Fleming raised an issue regarding maintenance of a newly installed heat-pump in a Council property.

The Administrative Officer responded to the above queries and clarified certain matters raised.

2.3a Housing Report – New Ross Only

Noted.

2.3b Housing Capital

Noted.

2.4 Planning Report

The District Planner referred to the previously circulated report, there was no queries raised by the Members in relation to same.

An Cathaoirleach requested that the newly appointed District Planner circulate his contact details.

2.5 Planning Decisions – Grants

Noted.

2.6 Planning Decisions – Refusals

N/A

2.7 Libraries Archives & Arts Report

Noted.

Cllr Dwyer raised a query regarding the old Town Council records and accessing same. The District Manager advised that all records are with the County Archivist and he will request some information regarding same from Grainne Doran.

2.8 Community Development Report

Noted.

2.9 Environment Report

The Senior Staff Officer referred to the previously circulated report before highlighting the following points.

A contract has been awarded for site investigations at Duncannon Pier.

Grange Beach works are continuing and should be finished this month.

In relation to grants for Domestic Wastewater Treatments systems, the criteria has changed and the grant amount has increased.

Cllr Murphy queried the start date for site investigation at Duncannon Pier.

Cllr Barden queried the length of coastal protection works at Grange Beach.

The Senior Staff Officer advised the Members that she will find out more details on both matters and come back to the Members.

2.10 Fire Services Report

Noted.

2.11 Members Portal

Noted.

Cllr Dwyer noted that there are issues with response times through the Members Portal and the effectiveness of the portal in this regard.

3. Business prescribed by Statute, Standing Orders or Resolutions of the Municipal District Members

None.

4. Other Business

Items 4.1 & 4.2 were dealt with earlier in the meeting.

5. Notice of Motion/s

None

6. Correspondence

6.1 CCTV approval letter from Commissioner's Office, An Garda Síochána

7. AOB

Notification of Meetings

Cllr Barden requested notification of future Chamber meetings through Decision Time which was agreed to by the District Manager.

Normandy

Cllr Fleming outlined the establishment of a New Ross Committee to oversee the "2027 Year of the Normans" Commemorations.

THAT CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

Signed on the 12th February 2025

Cllr Brídín Murphy
An Cathaoirleach
New Ross Municipal District