

KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of Council

held at 2.00pm

Monday 19 December 2016

Áras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare

Members Present: Councillor I Keatley (Mayor), Councillors M Aspell, A Breen, A Breslin, F Brett, K Byrne, B Caldwell, D Callaghan, M Coleman, R Cronin, I Cussen, M Dalton, S Doyle, T Durkan, D Fitzpatrick, B Hillis, C Kelly, P Kennedy, A Larkin, M Lynch, M McCabe, P McEvoy, J McGinley, F McLoughlin-Healy, M Miley, T Murray, J Neville, N O’Cearúil, S O’Neill, J Pender, R Power, S Power, T Redmond, D Scully, M Stafford, M Wall, P Ward and B Weld

Apologies: Councillors S Moore and B Young

Also Present: Mr P Carey, Chief Executive, Messrs P Minnock, T McDonnell, J Boland, N Morrissey, Ms S Kavanagh (Directors of Services), Ms E Hanlon, Head of Finance, Ms M McIvor (Meetings Administrator) and other officials.

01/1216

Vote of Sympathy

The Mayor welcomed the members to the meeting and he extended sympathy to the families of the late

John Talbot, father of Orla Talbot, Water Services

Joan Power, mother of Geraldine Power, Chief Executive’s Office

The Mayor recalled that the first anniversary of the late Councillor Willie Crowley and the second anniversary of the late Councillor Willie Callaghan occur around this time and on his own behalf and that of the members, he extended his condolences to the families of both men.

A minutes silence was observed.

02/1216

Adoption of minutes

The council considered the minutes of the budget meeting of 21 November 2016 and the monthly meeting of 28 November 2016 together with the progress report.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Wall, seconded by Councillor Caldwell that the minutes of the budget meeting of 21 November 2016 and the monthly meeting of 28 November 2016 be adopted and the progress report noted.

03/1216

Disposal of Land

339B St Mary's Park, Leixlip

Consent is sought for the disposal of the property 339B St Mary's Park, Leixlip to Nobert and Mariana Zamardi subject to the conditions attached to the notice.

In accordance with Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, statutory notice dated 6 December 2016 was circulated to the members.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Larkin, seconded by Councillor Caldwell, pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 that the Council consent to the disposal of the property in accordance with the statutory notice dated 6 December 2016.

04/1216

Vacancy on the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee

Correspondence dated 23 November 2016 from Kildare Traveller Action Ltd advised the members that Kildare Traveller Action nominated Ms Ann O'Donnell to fill one of the vacancies on the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Cussen, seconded by Councillor McGinley that Ms Ann O'Donnell be appointed to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.

05/1216

Management Report

The members considered the monthly management report.

Resolved That the management report be noted

06/1216

Performance Indicators

The Chief Executive referred to the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) report on the performance of local authority functions across a broad range of services in 2015. He informed the members that Kildare had been selected for audit during July 2016. Overall, he said that while he was happy with the report, that there are some areas that can be improved upon, and the report will be a useful management tool having regard to each performance indicator.

Resolved that the members noted the NOAC report on Performance Indicators in Local Authorities 2015.

07/1216

Section 85 Agreement

Mr Boland, Director of Service referred to the Section 85 Agreement circulated to the members. Kildare County Council is designated a Competent Authority for the purpose of carrying out official controls to ensure verification of compliance with food law. This responsibility is discharged on behalf of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) through a service contract. Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001 allows for an agreement to be put in place regarding the carrying out of functions by one local authority on behalf of another and Schedule 2.1.20 of the service contract with the Food Safety Authority requires that South Dublin County Council shall enter into a Section 85 agreement with at least one other city or county council. The purpose of the agreement is to facilitate request/s for assistance in the provision of veterinary services should the need arise due to unplanned circumstances. Mr Boland recommended the approval of this agreement.

Resolved that Kildare County Council enters into an agreement under section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001 with South Dublin County Council for the provision of veterinary services on behalf of South Dublin County Council, in the event of unplanned circumstances.

08/1216

Mayor's Business

The Mayor suggested the date of Wednesday 1 February 2017 at 2pm to consider the Chief Executive's report on the submissions to the material alterations to the Draft County Development Plan.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Miley, seconded by Councillor Fitzpatrick the date of 1 February 2017 at 2pm was agreed.

The Mayor congratulated all those involved in McAuley Place, Naas who won an award in Category 6, the Age Friendly Community Initiative award at the Pride of Place awards ceremony which took place recently at a gala event in the Belfast Waterfront Hall, Belfast.

The Mayor informed the members that on Saturday 9 September, 9 centenarians from County Kildare received lapel pins and certificates here in Aras Chill Dara. Councillor Keatley said that he was honoured to make the presentation and he congratulated the County Librarian and her staff for organising this rewarding occasion.

On the same day Luke Hand, a 9 year old student at St Brigid's national School, Ballysax was awarded first prize for his design of a lapel pin in the 1916 County Arts Competition.

The Mayor paid tribute to the work of the Decade of Commemoration Committee which was not only recognised in the county but had also received national recognition.

The Mayor congratulated Athy, Kildare, Naas, Celbridge and Maynooth on their excellent achievement in the Bank of Ireland Enterprise awards.

The Mayor congratulated Declan Keogh, Road Safety Officer on his recent award from the National Road Safety Authority.

The Mayor wished Councillor Moore a full and speedy recovery from his recent illness.

Finally, the Mayor wished all members and staff a safe Christmas.

09/1216

Correspondence

The Meetings Administrator informed the members of a letter dated 7/12/2016 from Minister Katherine Zappone, T.D., Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in response to a motion in the name of Councillor O'Neill carried at the February 2016 meeting of Kildare County Council. This letter was circulated to the members for their information.

The Meetings Administrator referred to a letter of congratulations dated 28/11/2016 from Senator Robbie Gallagher on the recent success in the Sustaining the Arts award.

10/1216

Conferences and Training

The Meetings Administrator referred to report dated 15 December 2016 circulated to the members.

Resolved that having regard to Section 142(5) of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended by Section 53(2) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 the following retrospective approval is granted for the attendance of

Councillor P Ward on 15 September 2016 at AILG training in the Longford Arms Hotel, Co Longford

Councillor J Neville on 13 October 2016 and 14 October 2016 at the AILG Autumn Seminar in the Amber Springs Hotel, Gorey, Co Wexford

Councillors P Kennedy and M Miley on 18 October 2016 at the AILG Module 5 training in the County Arms Hotel, Birr, Co Offaly

Councillors M Dalton, M Aspell, J Neville and B Hillis on 22 October 2016 at the AILG Module 5 training in the Radisson Hotel, Rosses Point Road, Sligo.

Councillors M Dalton and J Neville on 19 November 2016 at the AILG Module 6 training in the Red Cow, Moran's Hotel, Dublin.

Councillor S Power on 24 November 2016 at the AILG Module 6 training at the Shearwater Hotel, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.

Councillor M Miley on 9 June 2016 to 12 June 2016 at the Sean MacDiarmada Summer School 2016 in the Kiltyclogher Heritage Centre, Kiltyclogher, Co Leitrim

Councillors M Dalton and M Aspell on 20 and 21 October 2016 at the ICSH Conference on Housing and Finance in the Newpark Hotel, Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny.

11/1216

Policy on Bonfires

The following motion referred from the Celbridge-Leixlip Municipal District was considered

That the council's policy on bonfires be reviewed and a public awareness campaign be included.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Larkin and seconded by Councillor Caldwell.

A report from Mr Boland, Director of Services outlined the legislative background and advised that the most effective way of dealing with bonfires is through community engagement. The report urged the members to encourage local community events around Halloween which might include supervised bonfires. An initiative in Athy last month whereby a local parade/festival was organised and funded by the municipal district represents good practice and could be replicated in other areas.

In proposing the motion, Councillor Larkin said that that there had been a good debate at the Celbridge-Leixlip Municipal District meeting and he was asking the members to support a review of the policy through the Environmental Services and Water Strategic Policy Committee.

The members contributed to a discussion with broad support for the motion and the initiative in

Athy in 2016 under the direction of the Director and Municipal District manager was commended. **Resolved** on the proposal of Councillor Larkin, seconded by Councillor Caldwell, that this motion be referred to the Environmental Services and Water Strategic Policy Committee for consideration and report back to full council.

12/1216

Accounting System

The following motion in the name of Councillor McLoughlin-Healy was considered
That the council provide an update on the implementation of the new accounting system which allows for an aged analysis of debtors, initially piloted by Fingal County Council, and projected to be in place in the council by October 2015. How has this new accounting system helped us in terms of reporting and analysis by comparison to our previous system? The update should include but not limit itself to an aged debtor listing of the development levies outstanding in the financials, for both the councils long term and short term debt.

The motion was proposed by Councillor McLoughlin-Healy and seconded by Councillor Dalton. A comprehensive report from Ms Hanlon, Head of Finance stated that all 27 local authorities that use the Agresso Financial Management System are part of a countrywide upgrade which commenced with Fingal County Council as the pilot site. The key changes to the new system is that it is a web based application where requisitions are raised and approved before a purchase order is given to a supplier. The report outlined the phases of the project and stated that the aged debtor reporting will be examined as part of Phase 4 which is the Sales/Debtors module. Councillor McLoughlin-Healy said that this is a follow up to an earlier motion that she submitted in 2015. She said that her query was why this did not happen in the timeline outlined at that stage. With €17m in arrears it is not possible to make an informed decision without an aged debtor analysis.

Ms Hanlon explained that the delays were a national issue. The scale of the project, the roll out period and the availability of the appropriate IT expertise were factors which contributed to the timeframe being underestimated at a national level. The only delay in Kildare was because of the scheduling of the project nationally.

Resolved that the report be noted.

13/1216

Roads and Services Letter

The following motion in the name of Councillor Stafford was considered
That the council review the fee for a letter confirming whether of not roads and services are in charge and consider reducing it from €75 to a more reasonable €40 in circumstances where an increase in the number of such letters sought as a result of greater activity in the property market and a recent Law Society recommendation means that the proposal should be cost neutral.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Stafford and seconded by Councillor Durkan.

A report from Mr Morrissey, Director of Services stated that a letter confirming that services are in charge is an important legal document that requires substantial research prior to being issued. The report stated that the €75 administration charge is well justified and represents excellent value for money. If any change to this charge is to be considered, this can only be done in the context of the annual budgetary process and any reduction in income will have repercussions for expenditure in another area.

Councillor Stafford said that he considers that his proposal would be cost neutral because of the greater activity in the property market. He referred to the Law Society recommendation and said that he considered €75 a bit expensive. He said that the charge varied across the country with Longford charging €125 and Dublin City Council charging €30 - €36. Councillor Stafford said that as this is the season of goodwill, some reduction might be considered.

Mr Morrissey said that the comments were well noted but that the document was an important one which must be accurate. He said that a request for such a letter was referred to five different individuals and in his opinion €75 represented good value for money.

Resolved that the report be noted.

14/1216

Clean up on Good Friday

The following motion in the name of Councillor Sean Power was considered

That the council agree to lead a major clean up throughout the county on Good Friday in 2017, providing equipment and support to tidy towns and communities who agree to participate in the project.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Power and seconded by Councillor Fitzpatrick.

A report from Mr Boland, Director of Services stated that Kildare County Council actively welcomes and supports all efforts made by communities to carry out clean-ups in their areas.

During spring clean month there are existing arrangements whereby the Environment section have staff available to collect materials gathered by local communities. The report stated that this motion has merit and should be supported. However, Good Friday may not be an ideal day as arrangements to collect materials will be delayed due to the Easter holiday arrangements.

Councillor Power thanked the Director for the report. He said that it was important that the county council lead this initiative as this will encourage greater participation. He suggested talking to the private sector to see if they would work with us towards making Good Friday the clean up day and he asked that the suggestion be explored to the fullest extent possible.

The members contributed to a discussion with broad agreement for the spirit of the motion but questions about the specific day.

Mr Boland undertook to look at the proposal again and with help and assistance from other departments, he gave a commitment to leading a clean up day in 2017. He said that he would keep Councillor Power, Chairman of the Environmental Services and Water Strategic Policy Committee who tabled the motion and the members informed of progress.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Power, seconded by Councillor Fitzpatrick, that a clean-up day be organised by Kildare County Council in 2017 – date to be confirmed.

15/1216

List of funding applications

The following motion in the name of Councillor McLoughlin-Healy was considered

That the council provide a list of applications made in the last 2 years for funding projects in Kildare from external bodies including but not limited to the National Transport Authority

The motion was proposed by Councillor McLoughlin-Healy and seconded by Councillor Dalton.

A report from Ms Kavanagh, Director of Services stated that the information sought is not readily available in the format requested and will require input from all departments. Members should be aware that requests of this nature require significant resources which have implications in relation to re-assignment of resources within departments. The request has been referred to all departments and Corporate Services will collate the responses and report back as soon as the report is finalised. In the meantime, if there is a particular area the councillor is looking for details of funding applications made, this can be prioritised.

Councillor McLoughlin-Healy said that she was happy to receive the information as it became available. She said that she would like to start with the National Transport Authority and requested that the item be kept on the progress report.

Mr Morrissey, Director of Services stated that the 2015 and 2016 applications to the National Transport Authority (NTA) will be circulated to the members, but he explained that not everything is sent to the NTA.

There was a lengthy discussion on the spirit of this motion, whether it could be dealt with at municipal district level, the responsibility of checking the criteria for European funding and where exactly the responsibility rested.

Ms Kavanagh said that this information is available; it will take time to collate in the manner that the member has requested.

The members responded complimenting the council, in particular Mr Boland and Ms Kavanagh, who kept members briefed on such funding sources as the Town and Village Renewal scheme, the REPS grant and others. It was acknowledged that the members needed to observe caution in requesting information which required significant resources, and in particular they needed to be mindful that there needs to be a useful purpose in obtaining such information.

The Chief Executive intervened to state that there was no difficulty in making the information with regard to any application for grant support available and that it would be helpful to be specific in the request so that there is no waste of staff resources. He explained that the Directors work across the programme groups and unless we are precluded from making an application, applications are made in accordance with the terms of the particular scheme. The Chief Executive assured the members that they could approach the Directors at Municipal District level where appropriate.

Councillor McLoughlin-Healy said that she was happy to re-focus her request and perhaps limit it to major infrastructural projects. She said that she will work with Ms Kavanagh, Director of Services to narrow the parameters of her motion.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor McLoughlin-Healy, seconded by Councillor Dalton, that the motion be revised in consultation with Ms Kavanagh, Director of Services.

16/1216

Local Property Tax

The following motion in the name of Councillor Pender was considered

That Kildare County Council expresses its opposition to the use of a self funding element of Local Property Tax (LPT) to pay for certain pre-existing Capital Loan Subsidy Schemes (CLSS) and other housing services that were previously paid for by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. The members resolve to write to the Minister to request that this money (€3.2m approx per year) is retained by Kildare County Council to use at its discretion to provide public services to the people of Kildare.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Pender and seconded by Councillor Redmond.

Councillor Pender stated that the purpose of this motion is not to debate the Local Property Tax. She apologised for her incorrect use of language at a previous meeting where she said that she did not have confidence in the administration. Her frustration is at the change in government policy and not with the administration. The background to the motion is as follows:

Circular Fin 04/2016 states

‘Since 2015, all authorities’ minimum provisional LPT allocations were linked to the former General Purpose Grant (GPG) 2014 baseline figure. For 2017, the main change in the mechanism around LPT allocations will be the inclusion of the Pension Related Deductions (PRD) in a revised LPT baseline. This new LPT baseline (minimum requirement for funding) incorporates PRD equivalent to the levels retained by local authorities in 2014 along with the former GPG 2014 baseline level.....PRD deductions currently retained by local authorities as an income stream will, from 2017 on, be remitted directly to the exchequer. Accordingly, there will be no further compensation, similar to that provided in 2016, to assist local authorities to meet the costs arising from changes in PRD under the Landsdowne Road agreement. Kildare County Council’s new baseline is €11,755,790.’

The self-funding element refers to the amount of Local Property Tax collected by Kildare County Council over and above the baseline General Purpose Grant and the 20% surplus for our own use. This money is used to ‘self-fund’ services in housing and roads that would normally have been provided in central government funding. Councillor Pender circulated a table showing that the self funding element of Local Property Tax for 2017 is €1,151,986 but in her opinion, this figure should report €3,220,852 because included in this is the Pension Related Deduction of €2,068,866 that was not funded through LPT. Instead, those Pension Related Deductions that were being retained by Kildare County Council will be sent to the Exchequer and the people who pay the LPT will replace that income.

Had the Department not made this amendment, it would show that the self funding element is greater than stated and therefore results in a loss of the use of that income to provide public services to people in Kildare.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Pender for her comprehensive explanation of the background to this motion.

Ms Hanlon, Head of Finance said that she understood the point that was being made in the motion and said that if the members were in agreement, that a letter could be issued.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Pender, seconded by Councillor Redmond that a letter be issued to the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government in accordance with the motion.

17/1216

Scheme for Security Locks

The following motion in the name of Councillor Kelly was considered

That this council consider piloting a scheme to provide free high security locks for elderly vulnerable people in our county who are living alone in privately owned accommodation.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Kelly and seconded by Councillor Miley.

A report from Ms Kavanagh, Director of Services stated that the provision of security locks in private houses is not a statutory function of the council. A pilot scheme as proposed would have to be costed and evaluated before consideration could be given to this motion.

Councillor Kelly thanked the Director for the reply and stated that there had been a pilot scheme in South Dublin County Council and she said that she would be happy to have the motion referred to the Housing Strategic Policy Committee for research and consideration.

Mr Mc Donnell, Director of Services stated that there was no provision in the 2017 budget for this scheme.

The members stated that South Dublin County Council got a grant of €44,000 to implement such a scheme and that it specifically targeted private dwellings.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Kelly, seconded by Councillor Miley that the motion be referred to the Housing Strategic Policy Committee for consideration and report back to full council.

18/1216

Staff in the Library Service

The following motion in the name of Councillor Cronin was considered.

Recognising that public libraries are a safe and welcoming space in the heart of our communities and not seeking to undermine the work of our librarians in Kildare that the members of Kildare County Council reject the roll out of staff less libraries across the state and that a letter be issued to Minister Coveney informing him of our stance.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Cronin and seconded by Councillor Cussen.

Mr Minnock, Director of Services outlined the background to the issue. He stated that the grant for the Athy library was conditional on implementing this concept. However, Mr Minnock contended that a workforce plan for the library service in Kildare had been submitted and agreed and that in fact the number of staff in the library will be increasing. He said that there will be no job losses and that the numbers in Kildare were going to grow to 81; at their lowest they were at 52 and are at 57 at present and recruitment is underway.

Councillor Cronin asked Mr Minnock to provide a report in writing. She stated that IMPACT trade

union has grave concerns and she alluded to the concerns in Offaly regarding under age children, swapping cards and anti-social behaviour. She said that Arklow library had to engage a security guard to cope with the change.

The members contributed to a debate on the motion with the library in Athy being welcomed but caution being expressed regarding the staff less concept. The excellent services being provided through the library service in Kildare was acknowledged but 12,000 staff nationwide have voted in favour of industrial action so there was obviously serious concern.

The Chief Executive said that there is a national industrial relations issue here and that this is not just a matter for Kildare.

Councillor Cronin stated that with the greatest of respect to the Chief Executive and the Director, that is how this concept was presented in England and the experience there has been that there have been job losses.

The Mayor called for a vote on the motion

Resolved with 6 members voting in favour, 30 members voting against and no member abstaining, the motion was defeated.

19/1216

Classification of Housing Units

The following motion in the name of Councillor Lynch was considered

In relation to the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) report published last month, were NOAC aware that KCC hold separate “vacant” and “idle/derelict/void” housing lists as we have now been made aware of and if so were these houses included in the published figures last month and if so why do KCC furnish NOAC with one list and councillors another for these

houses? If these homes were not included on the list to NOAC does KCC deem this acceptable?

In relation to this that Kildare County Council provides councillors with a full list of all categories of houses (vacant, void, fire damaged etc.) that are unoccupied and in the ownership of this council.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Lynch and seconded by Councillor O’Neill

A report from Mr Mc Donnell, Director of Services stated that the performance indicators returned to the National Oversight and Audit Commission are compiled in accordance with the guidelines issued by NOAC for report on 2015 activity. The report went on to give a detailed analysis of the information sought and that returned to NOAC in relation to the various categories.

Mr Mc Donnell suggested a revised template for the presentation of information in relation to vacant houses if the members consider that the existing monthly report is not adequate. This

report would include the total number of dwellings in housing stock; vacant properties requiring major refurbishing; vacant properties requiring minor works; vacant properties awaiting allocation and the % of stock vacant. Alternative templates suggested by the members will also be considered. It is important to note that the council has properties in its ownership which do not form part of the social housing stock, and that it would be inappropriate to include these in the housing report as being available for social housing. Examples include dwellings purchased as part of capital schemes, local authority loan repossessions, properties unsold under the Affordable Homes Scheme and under the management of Approved Housing Bodies, derelict properties or properties no longer fit for human habitation and houses used as community facilities. Full advantage of funding schemes for the restoration of voids has been availed of by the council over the years although voids (i.e. units vacant for six months or longer) are not a significant issue in Kildare. It is intended to deliver some derelict units through the Capital Programme where appropriate and when units are available for occupation they will be added to the housing stock. It has been suggested by some members that where it is not cost effective for the council to return a building to housing stock, that such a property should be disposed of to a purchaser who will be prepared to undertake the necessary works. This is being examined at present and a list of possible disposals will be brought to Council in 2017.

Councillor Lynch thanked the Director for the report and said that it would be helpful if the template was changed as suggested. He requested that the motion be referred to the Housing Strategic Policy for consideration, particularly in relation to the reporting of the figures submitted to NOAC. The Mayor thanked the Director for the comprehensive report and said that it provided an accurate reflection of the vacant and void units. He agreed that the motion should be referred to the Strategic Policy Committee for further consideration and report back to full council.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Lynch, seconded by Councillor O'Neill the motion to be referred to the Housing Strategic Policy Committee.

20/1216

Clár Funding

The following motion in the name of Councillor R Power was considered

That Kildare County Council writes to the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs to express its disappointment that Kildare was one of only three counties excluded from the recent Clár funding allocation. The council requests that if public funds are to be continued for this program that in future a more rigorous set of criteria examining more recent

and relevant factors be examined.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Power and seconded by Councillor O’Cearúil.

Councillor Power said that the recent round of Clár funding which targets rural areas which are disadvantaged was announced on 6 October 2016. The funding excluded Kildare Wexford and Dublin and Councillor Power said that there are areas in Kildare which could benefit from this funding. He said that the sole criterion was that the population should have declined by 35% since 1926 and he advocated writing to the Minister as outlined in the motion.

There was a brief discussion on the motion with the point being made that there have been a number of schemes introduced to promote rural development, such as the Town and Village Renewal Scheme and REPS. The members were in broad agreement to sending the letter as outlined in the motion.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Power, seconded by Councillor O’Cearuil that a letter be issued to the Minister as outlined in the motion.

21/1216

Autism Road Show

The following motion in the name of Councillor O’Neill was considered

That this council invites and facilitates the autism road show called “The autism experience” currently presented from AslAm.ie and that we invite the wider community groups, schools and businesses to visit this road show to create better awareness and understanding of the condition.

The motion was proposed by Councillor O’Neill and seconded by Councillor Redmond.

Councillor O’Neill stated that there were a lot of myths surrounding autism and she asked the members to support the motion. She said the event could be advertised to the public and there should not be a cost attached as the motion merely requires the space to be provided. Councillor O’Neill referred to the Naas Christmas celebrations hosted by the Naas Traders which was a particularly successful event.

The Mayor and members thanked Councillor O’Neill for tabling this worthwhile motion and Councillor Breen was commended for her involvement in the Naas event which took place in the Town Hall on 18 December 2016.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor O’Neill seconded by Councillor Redmond with all the members in agreement, the motion was carried.

22/1216

National Planning Aid Movement

The following motion in the name of Councillor Redmond was considered

That we ask all local authorities to support a call for a national planning aid movement to be established in this state. Whereby qualified planners and legal specialists offer a minimum of 15 minute advice provided to those people who are affected by planning proposals or decisions and who do not have the resources to pay for a planning advice.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Redmond and seconded by Councillor Lynch.

Councillor Redmond stated that the planning process was complex and that individuals and community groups affected by planning proposals or decisions often cannot afford the fees to engage specialists to act on their behalf.

The members debated the motion noting the requirements of the section of the planning legislation yet to be enacted whereby applications for more than 100 units will be referred directly to An Bord Pleanala, the free legal advice already available through the Citizens Information body, the amount of time taken by members to assist the public and finally the fact that to lodge an objection or an observation on a planning application it is not necessary to seek professional advice.

The Mayor called for a vote on the motion.

Resolved with 4 members voting in favour, 27 members voting against and 1 member abstaining, the motion was defeated.

The meeting concluded.