



**Minutes of Rathkeale Area Committee Meeting  
Held in the Rathkeale House Hotel,  
Lower Main Street, Rathkeale,  
on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2007 – 11.00.a.m.**

**Present In the Chair :** Councillor D. Naughton.

**Members Present :** Councillors J. Griffin, T. Neville, J. Sheahan, K. Sheahan.

**Officials Present :** J. Feane, D.O.S., G. Behan, D.O.S., B. Martin S.E.E., G. Liston, E.E.,  
K. McMahon, E.E., T. Breen, S.O., G. Naughton, S.E., T. Tarpey, S.E.,  
R. Gallagher, S.E.E., P. Vallylly, E.E., A. Lahiffe, Tech. II.

**Minute of Area Committee Meeting held on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2007 :**

The Minute of the Area Committee Meeting held on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2007, was adopted. Proposed by Councillor K. Sheahan, and seconded by Councillor J. Griffin.

Councillor K. Sheahan referred to a Planning Group Meeting organised for the public representatives of the Rathkeale Electoral Area by Planning Officials, to discuss amendments to a previously submitted Notice of Motion by Members, regarding the inclusion of the entire Rathkeale Area in the Development Plan as an Area of Structural Weakness. Councillor Sheahan informed Officials he had not received notification of the Group Meeting, and voiced his dissatisfaction at the agreements/decisions taken.

Councillor J. Griffin acknowledged the professional advice of Officials to the elected Members at the Group Meeting, and confirmed his support of the recommendations given. Councillor Griffin urged caution in any further amendment/s to what had been agreed.

Councillor D. Naughton spoke on the unity of the elected Members in the Rathkeale Electoral Area that transcended politics, the ultimate goal of all Members being to maximise any potential benefit accruing for their constituents, and had been demonstrated in this instance.

**St. Joseph's Burial Ground, Rathkeale – Update on Works Programme :**

B. Martin, S.E.E., informed Members the works undertaken at St. Joseph's Burial Ground had been undertaken from the Area Burial Ground budget, with the proposed car park macadam overlay undertaken from a Development Fund allocation - no additional funding or special allocation had been provided in 2007. General maintenance works were ongoing, and included removal of the conifer trees to the northern side of the burial ground, due to safety concerns and potential risk of damage to headstones. The cleared area would be re-planted in the coming weeks. The old trees that were removed have been mulched for use by the Council's Horticultural Section. It is proposed that the trees to the southern side of the burial ground may be removed and the area re-planted in the future, but will be subject to available funding.

Councillor J. Griffin queried the status/progress of the water connection for the burial ground, and if discussions had taken place between Officials and the Cappagh Group Water Supply Scheme. Councillor

Griffin also requested that “burned-out” cars at the St. Joseph’s Burial Ground, Curraghchase, and Liskilleen, Ardagh, be removed.

B. Martin, S.E.E., informed Members that substantial works had been undertaken in the St. Joseph’s Burial Ground during 2006 and to date in 2007, with available funding for further works limited. Mr. Martin agreed to examine and cost the extension of the water supply to the burial ground.

### **Litter/Dumping Proposals for Rathkeale Town and Environs :**

B. Martin, S.E.E., outlined the works programme for Rathkeale Town and environs, introduced by the Environment Section. These works included weekly inspections of the litter/dumping blackspots, with a dedicated crew assigned to remove and clean all feeder roads on Tuesday mornings.

Councillor J. Griffin spoke of the substantial littering and dumping between Rathkeale and the Railway Bridge towards Cappagh, suggesting the vast quantities being dumped could not be generated locally.

Councillor Naughton recommended the Council utilise mobile cameras in the problem littering areas, and adopt a “zero tolerance” approach on enforcement. Councillor T. Neville also voiced his support for such measures.

### **Update on progress of Shannon Estuary Water Supply Scheme Extension :**

Councillor K. Sheahan spoke on the recent disruption by members of the Bleach Lough Water Retention Committee that led to the adjournment of a full Council Meeting, and described the occupation of the Council Building by the protestors as an illegal action. Councillor Sheahan requested confirmation on the number of person’s injuncted following this incident. He reminded Area Committee Members they had entered an agreement to permit Council Management to deal with the protestors, and expressed disappointment that one elected Member of the Area Committee had seen fit to break with this agreement, and engage with the protestors. Councillor Sheahan stated the Rathkeale Members have traditionally taken decisions and made recommendations for the greater good of the community and constituents, and this applied in this instance. Councillor Sheahan described the insults, actions, and conduct from the public gallery, by the protestors, as unacceptable in a democracy, and a desecration of the Council Chamber. He requested Management to prepare proposals, for consideration by the elected Members, to prevent a re-occurrence of such behavior in the Council Chamber. Councillor Sheahan stated it was his understanding that roadside water valves were being interfered with by person’s unknown, thus depriving constituents of a water supply, and was both vandalism and a criminal act. Such conduct should not be tolerated and be referred to the Garda Siochana immediately for action. The Area Committee had recommended and been promised on a number of occasions, that P.R. services would be engaged by the Council to clarify issues arising, and contest any/all misrepresentations by other parties.

B. Martin, S.E.E., confirmed there had been ongoing interference with water supply valves in the vicinity of Castletown, Pallaskenry, and the Garda Siochana at Askeaton had been informed.

Councillor D. Naughton, complimented Management in their dealings with the Bleach Lough Water Retention Committee members. He confirmed the protestors had been offered, through the Chairman, and subject to their withdrawal from County Hall, a Meeting with the Electoral Area Committee – this offer was refused. Councillor Naughton agreed that the business of Council should not be interrupted by lobby or protest groupings in the public gallery, and spoke of the need to introduce procedure deal with/prevent a re-occurrence.

K. McMahon, E.E., informed Members valves on the pipeline had been closed by unauthorised person/s on the previous Saturday and Sunday nights in the Summerville/Castletown areas of Pallaskenry, and referred to the safety implications/issues in the event of Emergency Services being required in the locality.

Councillor J. Sheahan was critical of the Bleach Lough Water Retention Committee's behavior in the public gallery, at the monthly Council Meeting. He suggested the Council were losing the public relations battle, with media coverage unbalanced and blatantly one-sided. Councillor Sheahan stressed the importance and need for Officials to convey publicly the reality on the ground, where the actions of a minority grouping were depriving large areas and people of a quality water supply. He expressed concern that the failure/lack of Garda response in removing the protestors from County Hall, set a dangerous precedent for other protest groupings in the future.

Councillor J. Griffin opined the Water Retention Committee protestors were not entitled to the best of both worlds, where in one instance they follow due process and the democratic route through local / public / European representatives, and in the next instance attempt to undermine and disrupt the democratic process, as recently demonstrated. He stated the Council had through the years, been both reasonable and honorable in their dealings with the Bleach Lough Water Retention Committee, and their recent conduct in the Council Chamber was unwarranted. Councillor Griffin suggested Officials review access to the public gallery, with consideration given to limiting entry by either invitation, or permission of an authorised Officer. He recommended the media be advised of the interference with the water supply valves and this interference publicised.

J. Feane, D.O.S., cautioned against over-reaction in limiting access to the Council Chamber's Public Gallery following the conduct of the Bleach Lough Water Retention Committee. Mr. Feane agreed no one wished for a repeat episode in the Chamber, and would brief the Management Team on the concerns expressed by Members. He advised any amendment to existing protocol would need the full agreement of all Members, and would refer back in due course with outline proposals.

G. Behan, D.O.S., informed the Area Committee that four of the Water Retention protestors had been permanently enjoined by High Court Order. The Council prior to the protest had engaged a professional P.R. consultant. Following the interruption of the Council Meeting, the Water Retention protestors had been requested by Officials to leave the building, but had refused and contacted members of the media to highlight their protest - the Garda Síochána were requested to remove the protestors. Officials were informed the Gardai could not act unless a Court Order was in place to remove the offending parties. A private security company had been engaged for the duration of the protest, from close to opening of business.

#### **Update on Councillors' Public Lighting in the Rathkeale Electoral Area :**

Members agreed this item be deferred to the June Rathkeale Electoral Area Committee Meeting.

#### **New Housing Development at Pallaskenry :**

G. Naughton, S.E., briefed Members on the proposed house design and site layout plans on display for the Pallaskenry development of ten houses that formed part of the Council's Three-Year Housing Plan. It was hoped, subject to Members agreement, to proceed to Part 8 planning in the near future. Mr. Naughton confirmed the design and layout of the proposed development was undertaken in-house by the Council's Housing Technical Staff – a number of housing schemes were being prepared in-house by staff, without reference to consultancy services.

Councillor J. Griffin complimented Officials in utilising in-house expertise for the design and layout plans presented to the elected Members, and welcomed the Council's departure from the practice of engaging external consultancy services.

Councillor D. Naughton suggested fuel sheds be located adjacent to the back door of the houses to facilitate the elderly.

Councillor J. Griffin proposed the new Housing Development at Pallaskenry, proceed as shown/outlined. Councillor T. Neville, supported by Councillors D. Naughton and J. Sheahan seconded the proposal.

### **New Housing Development at the Ballingarry Road, Rathkeale :**

G. Naughton, S.E., briefed Members on the proposed house design and site layout plans on display for the twenty-five-unit housing development at the Ballingarry Road, Rathkeale. The roadway had been specifically designed to permit future access to the housing lands at the rear of the proposed development.

Councillor J. Griffin referred to the derelict house on the Ballingarry Road, fronting the proposed development, recommending the owners be pursued with vigor to remedy the dereliction.

G. Naughton informed Councillor Griffin, it was his understanding a planning submission had been received from the owner of the derelict property.

Councillor J. Griffin proposed the new Housing Development at the Ballingarry Road, Rathkeale, proceed as shown/outlined. Councillor T. Neville, supported by Councillors D. Naughton and J. Sheahan seconded the proposal.

### **Disposal of Lands at Gurteen East, Ballingarry, Co. Limerick :**

The disposal of lands at Gurteen East, Ballingarry, Co. Limerick, was proposed by Councillor J. Griffin, and seconded by Councillor T. Neville, with Councillors D. Naughton and J. Sheahan supporting the proposal.

### **Nomination of One Member from the Electoral Area Committee to represent Limerick County Council on deputation to the N.R.A. :**

R. Gallagher, S.E.E., outlined strategic issues that could form part of an Agenda for the Council deputation being received by the National Roads Authority. Mr. Gallagher confirmed consultants had been appointed for the Adare By-Pass, with a brief to allow for a potential future link towards Askeaton/Foynes.

Councillor K. Sheahan expressed disappointment that the previously agreed Meeting, between the Rathkeale Electoral Area Committee and the National Roads Authority, had been hijacked by the other electoral areas, this view having been expressed at a recent Party Leaders Meeting. Councillor Sheahan informed Members background work and representations to the National Roads Authority contacts were ongoing. Councillor Sheahan also spoke of the urgency in removing, straightening, and re-aligning the road bends on the N69 at Bolane and Borrigone.

Councillor J. Griffin referred to the traffic corridor linking the N21 and N69 between Adare and Askeaton, stating his original proposal on this item had not been supported by full Council, but was gratified the proposed traffic link was now being given serious consideration. Councillor Griffin spoke on the strategic importance of the traffic corridor and the potential to facilitate future linking of other road sections on the N69. Councillor Griffin questioned if the traffic corridor, when completed, would have downgrading implications for sections of the N69, and expressed concern if this could potentially be the case.

R. Gallagher, S.E.E., informed Members that proposals for road straightening/re-alignment and removal of bends on the N69 at Bolane, Kildimo, would be available for discussion at the June Area Committee Meeting. Some additional lands were required for the proposed works, and it was anticipated the proposed project would be funded and completed within a three/four year time frame. A full set of proposals for upgrading/improvement works to the N69 at the Ferrybridge, Bolane, and Borrigone, would

be brought before Members later in the year. Mr. Gallagher informed Councillor Griffin that it was unlikely a traffic corridor from the N21 to the N69 would impact on the status of the N69 as a national road, there being no precedent elsewhere to date. He informed Members the Road Design Office were currently working on proposals for an N21 dual-way that would incorporate adequate traffic carrying capacity to cater for an N69 road link. An Environmental Impact Study for the N21 By-pass had been prepared and submitted to the National Roads Authority, with a response awaited. Mr. Gallagher spoke of the substantial pedestrian traffic in Adare, and also informed Members that consideration would be given to examining alternative traffic flow systems at the roundabout/junctions of Main Street and Station Road.

Councillor J. Griffin was critical of on-going project delays and approvals at national level, and referred to the traffic tailbacks that extended to the Limerick side of the Lantern Lodge from Adare.

Councillor K. Sheahan described the roundabout in Adare Village as a “disaster”, and was the major contributor to reduced traffic flows through the village. Councillor Sheahan requested Officials to examine and implement improved traffic systems for Adare as an interim solution, pending construction and completion of the Adare By-pass.

Councillor J. Sheahan spoke on the traffic problems in Adare that were years in the making, and the need to implement a strategic solution immediately.

Councillor D. Naughton was insistent that the Speed Limit Reviews on the N69, at Kilcornan, Foynes, and Glin, be included as part of the Agenda to the National Roads Authority. He requested that Members be updated regarding the status of the proposed new private hospital in Adare. Councillor Naughton informed Members there was an accident on the N69 at Bolane, Kildimo, on average every three days, and stressed the need for immediate road re-alignment measures. Councillor Naughton also suggested a 2 : 1 traffic system could operate on the N69 from Askeaton towards Deegarty, and from the Ferry Bridge towards the Barnakyle River.

Members queried the impact of traffic associated with the Irish Open Golf Tournament, and if traffic control measures would be in place.

R. Gallagher, S.E.E., informed Members the new entrance to Adare Manor was complete, with ample parking facilities in the Manor grounds. Road traffic associated with the Irish Open Tournament would be outside of peak hours.

Councillor J. Griffin suggested a similar type traffic system as operating in Boher, be applied on the N21 at Croagh. There had been substantial development in recent years on the opposite side of the Village, with the N21 now effectively cutting the village in half. Councillor Griffin stated there had been twenty-two accidents, a number of which were fatal, on the Croagh stretch of the by-pass. A solution to the traffic problems at both Croagh and Coolanoran were required urgently to prevent further loss of life. Councillor Griffin spoke of no provision being made for traffic entering/exiting the service station at Coolanoran and public lighting at this location was now requested - Members had previously sought public lighting on the N21 at Croagh that was been refused - subsequent to this refusal “strings of public lighting” were provided without reference to the elected Members.

Councillor K. Sheahan spoke of the need to address the safety issues arising at Coolanoran, requesting officials to note that the service station was in place prior to any upgrading works to the N21, and were also ratepayers.

Councillor D. Naughton questioned why slip-roads servicing the national roads were being abandoned, and if this were N.R.A. policy. Councillor Naughton suggested the National Roads Authority were well aware of the road safety concerns of the Rathkeale Electoral Area Members in relation to both Croagh and Coolanoran.

R. Gallagher, S.E.E., confirmed previous submissions on traffic calming at Croagh to the National Roads Authority had been refused, but would again pursue the issue. Mr. Gallagher informed Members traffic

calming measures at Coolanoran could not be justified, with any proposal most likely being rejected by the N.R.A. The provision of public lighting at this location would set a precedent.

Councillor D. Naughton suggested Officials examine the section of the N21 at Coolanoran and refer back to Members with a potential road safety solution.

R. Gallagher, S.E.E., stated that retro-fitting was no longer favored by the National Roads Authority, due to difficulties with entrances and the resulting safety issues. Providing 2 : 1 road systems over short distances were not considered viable, not having worked when trialed. The preference of the National Roads Authority was for new road build where possible.

Councillor D. Naughton was proposed as the nominee from the Rathkeale Electoral Area for the Deputation to meet with the National Roads Authority by Councillor J. Sheahan. Councillor J. Griffin seconded the proposal.

Councillor D. Naughton proposed that Councillor K. Sheahan be included as a second nominee for the Rathkeale Electoral Area. Councillor J. Griffin seconded the proposal.

### **Update on Financial Settlements to Landowners associated with the Commissioning of the Gas Powered Electricity Generation Plant at the Gortadroma Landfill Facility :**

G. Behan, D.O.S., Environment, informed Members discussions had taken place with farmers and the Irish Farmers Association with agreement reached for a payment in respect of each E.S.B. pole. Mr. Behan understood, from investigations, that payments would be made in all cases to affected landowners.

Councillor D. Naughton stated the connection of the electricity generation plant to the national grid did not fall within the remit of rural electrification, and was a commercial linkage. Councillor Naughton complimented Officials on their dealings with both landowners and Irish Farmers Association, proposing Officials proceed as outlined. The proposal was seconded by Councillor T. Neville, and supported by Councillor J. Griffin, and J. Sheahan.

### **Gortadroma Landfill – recurring item :**

T. Tarpey, S.E., informed Members there had been no operational problems at the landfill facility during April.

### **Question submitted by Councillor John Sheahan :**

*I will ask at the next Rathkeale Electoral Area Committee Meeting that Limerick County Council update Members on the submissions made by interested groups in relation to the use of the Community/Arts Room in the new re-furbished Carnegie Library Building in Rathkeale.*

B. Martin, S.E.E., informed Councillor J. Sheahan it was anticipated the re-furbished former Court Room would become available towards year-end. It was proposed to consult with the Directors of Services, Arts Officer, on issues arising that included caretaking, maintenance, booking management, insurances etc., and would refer back in due course with proposals for further consultation with the elected Members.

### **Question submitted by Councillor T. Neville :**

*I will ask at the next Rathkeale Electoral Area Committee Meeting that the Council provide an update on progress with respect to the provision of a road way in Kilcoleman East Burial Ground.*

Councillor T. Neville confirmed his acceptance of the written response.

### **Question submitted by Councillor T. Neville :**

*I will ask at the next Rathkeale Electoral Area Committee Meeting that the Council provide extra litter bins in Pallaskenry.*

G. Liston, E.E., informed Councillor Neville the Council would provide the additional litter bins requested, the locations of which would be agreed with the local Community Council.

**Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor T. Neville :**

*I will move at the next ordinary Meeting of the Rathkeale Electoral Area that the 2km zone surrounding Gortadroma, in which householders are entitled to free landfill service, will be increased to 3km in light of the forthcoming extension of the landfill".*

G. Behan, D.O.S., cautioned against any extension to the two kilometre "buffer" zone at the Gortadroma landfill facility, and expressed the view that householders outside this boundary would not be impacted by the landfill operations. Any extension to the two kilometre zone would also necessitate discussions and agreement from the White River Development Grouping. Mr. Behan confirmed funding from the White River Fund was being used for the current development of a riverside walk.

T. Tarpey, S.E., informed Members a one kilometre extension to the zone would include an additional ninety three households for a free refuse collection service, the cost of which would be approximately €40,000 annually.

Councillor J. Griffin stated the original purpose of the buffer zone, in the immediate two kilometre radius of the landfill facility, was to compensate local residents for any disruption/disturbance/inconvenience arising from the landfill operations. The package agreed with residents included a free refuse service to households, and establishment of the White River Development Fund - contributions to this fund being based on a fee per ton for landfilled materials. Councillor Griffin insisted no extension to the buffer zone could be considered, or recommended by Members, without the full agreement of residents in the two kilometre zone, and expressed concern regarding the implications for management of the White River Development Fund in an expanded area.

Councillor T. Neville stated there had been odor problems to the western side of the landfill site as a result of problems with a "capping" contractor, and accepted there had not been a re-occurrence since the appointment of a new contractor. Councillor Neville indicated that householders in area of the proposed extended buffer zone were lobbying only for a free refuse service, not access to the White River Development Fund.

Councillor D. Naughton suggested the Councillor's question be discussed further at the June Electoral Area Committee Meeting under the recurring agenda item, Gortadroma Landfill.

**A.O.B.**

*Meeting Date :*

Members agreed the next Rathkeale Electoral Area Committee Meeting would take place in County Hall, Dooradoyle, on Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2007, at 10.00.a.m.

That concluded the business of the Meeting.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_Chairman.

Dated this **29<sup>th</sup>** day of **JUNE, 2007**.

\_\_\_\_\_Secretary.