



**Minutes of Special Rathkeale Area Committee Meeting  
Held in the Ground Floor Meeting Room,  
Rathkeale Area Office, Aras Sean Finn, New Line, Rathkeale  
on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2007 – 9.30.a.m.**

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

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

**Officials Present :** B. Martin S.E.E., G. Liston, E.E., T. Breen, S.O., E. Griffin, S.E.O.,  
T. Knox, A.O., J. Kennedy, S.E.E.

**Update on the Construction of the New Offices Rathkeale :**

Councillor D. Naughton complimented the elected Members and Officials for their commitment in making the new refurbished Library, Arts Centre, and Rathkeale Area Headquarters a reality, and spoke of the historical significance of the Meeting being the first held in Aras Sean Finn. Councillor Naughton, in reference to the naming of the Rathkeale Headquarters as “Aras Sean Finn”, referred to the necessity and importance in recognising the sacrifices of the past. He spoke of the need to promote local politics in the school-going population, with the new Headquarters being just one example of what can be achieved to the benefit of the community. Councillor Naughton also referred to the special working relationship between the elected Members and Area Staff.

Councillor J. Griffin spoke of his family having lived in Rathkeale for generations, with this Meeting, and the recognition of Sean Finn in the naming of the building, being his proudest moment during thirty years in Council. Councillor Griffin complimented the elected Members for their contribution in making the new Headquarters a reality. He complimented the contractors, Messrs. Brian McCarthy & Co., for the first class workmanship and efficiency, and suggested Aras Sean Finn is a model for other Public Buildings. He spoke of the need to provide both staff and the public of the Rathkeale Electoral Area with proper modern working conditions and facilities. In remembering Sean Finn, Councillor Griffin referred to Sean Finn’s brother, Tommy, and sister Maria, and nephew, Sean Hayes, who had been former Councillors. He suggested discussions take place prior to the Official Opening to agree the location/s for the installations of Sean Finn’s uniform and portrait, currently stored in headquarters, Dooradoyle. Two new oil paintings had also been recently commissioned.

Councillor K. Sheahan suggested contact be made with the Director of the National Museum, from whom items relating to Sean Finn and the time period, may be obtained for display, ideally in the front lobby. He stated the importance of the public being immediately aware when entering the lobby as to why the building had been named Aras Sean Finn. Councillor Sheahan described the Area Office, Library, and Arts Centre development, as being a wise decision/investment that would benefit all constituents in the Electoral Area.

Councillor T. Neville, complimented all involved in the Library, Arts Centre, and Area Headquarters project, and spoke of a new confidence and “buzz” injected into Rathkeale Town and area, with anticipation that the development would encourage further investment.

Councillor J. Sheahan complimented all involved in the project, referring to the previous antiquated conditions for both staff and members of the public, and was glad to witness that the warm friendly atmosphere of the Area had not been lost in the transition.

B. Martin, S.E.E., spoke on the major contribution of the elected Members in making the Area Office, Library, and Arts Centre project a reality, with full credit for the final finish deserved and warranted. He spoke of the project taking approximately twelve months from commencement to completion, with furnishings/fit-out of the building to be concluded in the coming weeks.

J. Kennedy, S.E.E., complimented all involved in the Area Office project, describing the building as a landmark development in the Town. As a native of Rathkeale, he had worked as a Student Engineer in the old Area Offices in 1977/78, and again as an Executive Engineer from 1997 to 2000.

E. Griffin, County Secretary, informed Members the Rathkeale Area Office, Library and Arts Centre project formed part of the Council's Corporate Building Programme. He stated that staff needed good/modern working conditions, and the public deserved the best of what could be offered in terms of customer service. A landmark public building, such as that provided in Rathkeale, offered opportunities to promote the County.

Councillor J. Griffin referred to the previous day's full Council Meeting, where it had been acknowledged at the highest levels, that Rathkeale was unique in not deriving any benefits resulting from the years of the "Celtic Tiger" economy. Councillor Griffin spoke on the set-up of a New Forum for Rathkeale that comprised representatives from various government agencies, and a fulltime-co-coordinator for the project appointed by the West Limerick Resource Group. The Chairman of the Forum Grouping was local businessman, Tadgh O'Connor. He stated Rathkeale Town to be a special case and the Forum represented the best avenue available to promote development. He expressed disappointment, to discover, prior to the previous day's full Council Meeting, that specific funding for the Town Square had been withdrawn, despite commitments given by Officials, at Forum Meetings, that the Council would not be found wanting.

Councillor K Sheahan confirmed the withdrawal of funding for the Rathkeale Town Square had been discussed at the previous day's Meeting. These discussions had resulted in a commitment being given from Senior Officials that the funding for the proposed works would be provided.

Councillor D. Naughton welcomed the appointment of Tadgh O'Connor as Chairman of the newly formed Rathkeale Town Forum, and spoke of the commitment by Mr. O'Connor to the Town through the years. He stated G.V.M. were anxious to develop their site at New Line, Rathkeale, and suggested that Council Planners review zoning on the other G.V.M. lands that extended towards the River Deel, currently zoned as "green area", despite having real development potential. Further to discussion between Members, Councillor Naughton suggested the Official Opening of Aras Sean Finn be performed by the Cathaoirleach, and proposed a limestone plaque be installed in the Atrium for the Official Opening, listing the current Members of the Rathkeale Electoral Area. Councillor J. Sheahan seconded the proposal, and was supported by Councillors J. Griffin, T. Neville, and K. Sheahan.

Councillor K. Sheahan suggested the Official Opening not be rushed, and that Officials bring proposals for the Opening before Members for agreement.

Councillor J. Griffin supported Councillor Sheahan's stance regarding the Official Opening, stressing the need for the Headquarters, Library and Arts Centre be shown in their best possible light, with the building properly furnished and the Library fully stocked.

B. Martin, S.E.E., suggested that April/May 2008 be considered as the dates for the Official Opening, with the initial proposals for the Opening, to be brought before Members at the December/January Rathkeale Electoral Area Committee Meeting, for discussion.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman.

Dated this **13<sup>th</sup>** day of **NOVEMBER, 2007**.

\_\_\_\_\_ Secretary.