



**Minutes of Rathkeale Area Committee Meeting
Held in the Loughill Heritage Centre, Loughill,
on 9th May, 2006 – 11.30.a.m.**

Present In the Chair : Councillor T. Neville.

Members Present : Councillors J. Griffin, J. Sheahan, K. Sheahan.

Officials Present : B. Martin S.E.E., G. Liston, E.E., T. Breen, S.O., G. Naughton, S.E.,
M. Griffin, A.O., J. O'Carroll, Landfill Manager.

Apologies : Councillor D. Naughton.

Deputation : E. Griffin, Loughill Development Association.

Election of Meeting Chairperson :

Councillor T. Neville was proposed by Councillor J. Griffin, and seconded by Councillor J. Sheahan.

Minutes of Area Committee Meeting held on Monday, 24th April, 2006 :

The Minutes of the Area Committee Meeting held on Monday, 24th April, 2006, were adopted. Proposed by Councillor J. Sheahan, and seconded by Councillor J. Griffin.

Deputation : Loughill Development Association :

Councillor T. Neville thanked the Loughill Development Association for their invitation to host the May Rathkeale Area Committee Meeting in their new Heritage Centre, and complimented the Development Association on their work, dedication, and commitment to the Loughill Community.

Councillor T. Neville outlined procedure in accordance with Standing Orders relating to the attendance of a Deputation at an Electoral Area Committee Meeting, and invited the Loughill Development Association representative to make his submission to the Committee.

Mr. E. Griffin, Loughill Development Association, welcomed the elected Members and Officials to the new Loughill Heritage Centre for their Meeting, and acknowledged the support and assistance of the Council and Councillors in making the Centre a reality. Mr. Griffin outlined a list of works that included the following :- the construction of steps at the N69 bridge, maintenance works to the second bridge upriver that was completely overgrown and of historical significance, an extension to the footpath towards the Heritage Centre and the roadway re-surfaced, tarring of the surface adjacent to the new houses, warning lights for the school, Heritage Centre Signage at the main N69 road junction, leveling and cleaning of the ground near Pound Cross. Mr. Griffin stated there had been complaints of high chlorine levels in the local water supply, and the Association was anxious that consideration be given to the construction of a sewerage treatment plant that would benefit the entire village. He confirmed there was an outstanding loan balance of €75,000 following construction of the Heritage Centre, and was

hopeful the Development Association application for funding under the 2006 Amenity Grant Scheme, would be considered favorably, in order to reduce this debt.

Councillor K. Sheahan opined that any planning applications for private development at Loughill, would be subject to provision of a sewerage treatment plant under a public/private partnership type arrangement, with the Council providing 50% funding, with villages like Loughill benefiting from this policy. Further planning was being restricted in towns and villages pending the provision/upgrading of services. Councillor Sheahan complimented the Loughill Development Association Committee, who he stated, had acted as guarantors for the loans used to fund the construction of the Heritage Centre. He described the Loughill Development Group as being extremely active, and suggested the requested works at Loughill Village be undertaken on a phased basis.

Councillor J. Sheahan complimented the individual members of the Glin Development Association, who he stated, had given so much to their local community through the years.

B. Martin, S.E.E., informed Members that substantial works had been completed in the Loughill district during the previous two years – these works included provision of safety bollards to the surround at Kilttery Pier, tarring of the picnic area to the western side of the town, installation of telemetric equipment on the reservoir, burial ground signage, drainage works, re-shaping and asphalt overlay of the N69 at Mount Trenchard, and litter bin renewal.

G. Liston, E.E., informed Members the N69 roadway was the responsibility of the National Roads Authority, who would be commencing a survey of the N69 roadway and bridges during 2006. Mr. Liston assured Members the National Roads Authority would be made aware of the Development Association's concerns in relation to the bridge at Loughill.

Proposed Rathkeale Electoral Area Village Renewal Grants 2006 (Population less than 500) :

M. Griffin, A.O., informed Members the proposed Village Renewal Grants for the Rathkeale Electoral Area, totaled €29,000 for 2006, with grants of €5,000 each allocated to groupings at Coolcappagh, Creeves, Kilcoleman, Shanagolden, and Pallaskenry. A €4,000 allocation was also recommended for Shanagolden.

Councillor T. Neville questioned when road restoration works would be undertaken at Cappagh, and expressed concern at the roadway condition, following works to the Cappagh Group Water Scheme. Councillor Neville also queried when the installation of the flashing amber lights could be expected.

Councillor J. Griffin noted the submission from the Cappagh Community Council - for the provision of footpaths - had been refused, and would cause disappointment locally. He requested the Rathkeale Area Senior Executive Engineer and Executive Engineer, Roads, draft proposals/plans to address the local community needs.

M. Griffin, A.O., informed Councillor Griffin the Cappagh submission had been refused, in part, due to the ongoing roadworks associated with the Group Water Supply Scheme. There were also concerns in relation to the effect on road width and safety, if a footpath were to be provided at the locations indicated. Mr. Griffin confirmed a future application would be considered on completion of the Group Water Scheme, and the agreement of the Area Roads Engineer.

G. Liston, E.E., informed Members road re-instatement works - following the installation of piping for Group Schemes - was the responsibility of the Group Scheme Contractor – the Council could not undertake any road works prior to completion of a Scheme. The Water Services Section on an ongoing basis had monitored the works undertaken by the Cappagh Group Scheme contractor. Mr. Liston stated it was his understanding there was another Phase to the Cappagh Scheme planned that would include the Ballingrane Area.

The Rathkeale Electoral Area Village Renewal Grants Scheme for 2006, was proposed as recommended, by Councillor J. Griffin, and seconded by Councillor J. Sheahan, supported by Councillors Neville, and K. Sheahan.

Construction of Four New Houses at Ballingarry :

G. Naughton, S.E., circulated the site layout plans and house designs to Members, and confirmed the Part 8 Planning process would be undertaken later in the year.

Councillor K. Sheahan informed the Senior Engineer, Housing, his support for the Ballingarry proposals, or any housing development in the Rathkeale Electoral Area, would not be forthcoming until the issue of the one-off Council house at Ballyhahill, located in the middle of a private housing development, was resolved. Councillor Sheahan stated he had voiced his dissatisfaction with the Council's one-off housing development at Ballyhahill on a number of occasions, and was being ignored. He accepted there was no deliberate intent on the part of the Housing Section to cause potential devaluation of the existing private homes, but suggested the mistake be remedied through sale of the property on the open market. Councillor Sheahan stated his support for the people of Ballyhahill, and was critical of the Housing Section in their failure to utilise the local knowledge available through the elected Members.

G. Naughton, S.E., informed Councillor Sheahan the housing issue at Ballyhahill would be discussed with the incoming Director of Services, Housing. Mr. Naughton stated the one-off housing development would not, in his opinion, devalue other properties in the immediate area, with the design/construction and finish to this house, being to highest standards.

Councillor T. Neville queried if the proposed housing development at Ballingarry was part of a previous housing submission/strategy for the town.

Councillor J. Sheahan expressed his concern that the construction of the one-off Council house at Ballyhahill could potentially displace the existing three households, and that he would be supporting Councillor K. Sheahan on the issue.

Councillor J. Griffin welcomed the provision of an additional four houses in Ballingarry. He stated his support for the stance taken by Councillor K. Sheahan in relation to the Ballyhahill house. Councillor Griffin proposed, that in order to facilitate compromise, a Special Area Committee Meeting be called to address the Ballyhahill Housing issue, with the Director of Services and Senior Engineer, Housing, requested to attend. Councillor J. Sheahan, with Councillors Neville and K. Sheahan supporting the Motion seconded the proposal.

Councillor K. Sheahan thanked the elected Members for their support, and withdrew his objection to the proposed Ballingarry Housing Development.

Councillor J. Griffin formally proposed that the construction of the four new houses at Ballingarry proceed as recommended. The proposal was seconded by Councillor T. Neville, and supported by Councillors J. Sheahan and K. Sheahan.

Councillor J. Griffin proposed a Vote of Sympathy be extended to the O'Connor Family, by the Rathkeale Electoral Area Committee, following the recent bereavement of Pat O'Connor, former Assistant County Manager, and Director of Services, Housing. The proposal was seconded by Councillor T. Neville, and supported by Councillors J. Sheahan, and K. Sheahan.

G. Naughton informed Members, the process for the appointment of consultants, for the construction of a further twenty new houses on Council lands at Cois Daoile, had commenced.

Preliminary Inspection Report on Deel Bridge, Rathkeale :

B. Martin, S.E.E., briefed Members following the preliminary inspection of the Deel Bridge by Rathkeale Area Technical Staff. Mr. Martin circulated photographs of the bridge with both river and road views, and identified “pinch points” that narrowed the footpath, with some initial works undertaken by the Area Roads staff from a Member’s Discretionary Funding. He confirmed the pedestrian footbridge at Athea had cost between €340,000 and €350,000, and had been funded with assistance from West Limerick Resources (€60,000), Limerick County Council (€30,000), and Members Discretionary Funding (€12,500). The local Community through a lottery and loan had raised the remaining monies. Mr. Martin stated the bridge span at Athea to be twenty-two metres (22m), with that of the Deel Bridge being forty-five metres (45m). Estimated construction costs associated with a pedestrian walkway inside the Deel Bridge would be in excess of €500,000.

Councillor J. Sheahan informed Members that income from the Athea Community Lottery was funding the interest element of the pedestrian bridge loan only. Councillor Sheahan confirmed the Athea Pedestrian Bridge was constructed under the supervision of the local community, and opinioned costs would have been substantially higher if funded from government resources.

Councillor J. Griffin stated the estimate for the pedestrian walkway to be an extremely reasonable sum, if one considered there were two housing developments to the western side of the bridge, with sixty houses under construction, and permission for a further sixty houses coming online. The National School in Church Street was also being used. Councillor Griffin was anxious that a photograph of the Deel Bridge be taken, showing the current bridge footpath being used by a parent with a pram or buggy, with a large truck approaching the bridge – such a photograph would clearly illustrate his concerns in relation to pedestrian safety. Councillor Griffin declared the Deel Bridge to be an old masonry structure designed for a horse and cart, and not designed for the specification required for the modern heavy goods vehicles. It was imperative at this point that infrastructure – such as the pedestrian bridge at this location – be put in place to cater for the development on the Western side of Rathkeale Town. Councillor Griffin requested the support of all the Electoral Area Committee Members on this issue, with the Director of Services, Transport and Infrastructure, to identify avenues of funding for the project, and report back to the Rathkeale Committee with funding proposals.

Councillor T. Neville spoke of the obligation on the part of the Council to satisfy the infrastructural needs associated with the housing developments to the west of Rathkeale Town, and was formally supporting Councillor Griffin on the project. Councillor Neville stated it was his understanding that the Deel Bridge had been scheduled for replacement/upgrading in 1965 – these proposed works still had not been done some forty years later.

Councillors K. Sheahan, and J. Sheahan confirmed their support to the proposal.

Councillor J. Griffin requested that the slipway access to the river, on the town-side of the bridge, and bridge walls, be cleaned of all overgrown vegetation, and plastics littering the area, removed. Councillor Griffin expressed concern at the visual impact of dead vegetation if sprayed, and suggested that where possible the vegetation be removed.

G. Liston, E.E., stated the Council’s Horticultural Supervisor had been contacted, and requested to source an environmentally safe product for spraying the area adjacent to the river – some cleaning works had already been undertaken, with the remainder to be completed.

Gortadroma Landfill :

J. O’Carroll, Landfill Manager, informed Members the landfill cell capping and lining works were ongoing, and would be completed over the coming weeks. Landfill intake from January to the end of April was 37,382 tons – the landfill intake for 2006 was estimated to be 65,000 tons. He confirmed there had been no operational problems at the site during the previous month, and construction of the electricity

generation plant was proceeding on schedule. Five landfill odor complaints had been received during April. Mr. O'Carroll, in response to Members questioning, confirmed it may be necessary to increase landfill charges, to divert waste from the facility, should the current cell fill too quickly – it was hoped this would not be the case, and that the new landfill cell would be on-line before the current cell reached capacity.

Councillor K. Sheahan requested that the Senior Engineer, Environment Section, advise Members at the June Area Committee Meeting, where in law, was a local authority obliged to provide a landfill facility ? Councillor Sheahan critical at the apparent lack of business acumen in the operation of the Council's landfill operation, that was unable to either prepare or cater for a projected potential increase in business.

Councillor J. Griffin queried the projected gas volume and life span of a 100,000 ton capped cell for electricity generation purposes.

Mr. O'Carroll informed Councillor J. Griffin gas production from landfill was varied, and was dependent on the nature of the landfill material, but would vary between 400m³ and 900m³ per hour, with a potential life span of 25 – 30 years.

A.O.B.

June Rathkeale Electoral Area Committee Meeting Date :

Members confirmed the next Rathkeale Electoral Area Committee Meeting would be held on Monday, 26th June, 2006, in County Hall, Dooradoyle, at 11.00.a.m.

Special Area Committee Meeting with National Roads Authority :

Councillor K. Sheahan informed Members that he had met with Michael Egan of the National Roads Authority who had expressed his willingness to meet with the Rathkeale Electoral Area Members. Mr. Egan had requested a formal letter requesting the Meeting and Agenda, be forwarded by the Committee Secretary.

Members were agreed the following be included in the Agenda for the N.R.A. Meeting :-

N69 : Kilcornan and Glin speed limits, Foynes footpaths adjacent to Brothers of Charity Centre, surveys of the Ferrybridge and Loghill bridges

N21 : Traffic calming at Coolanoran, Smithfield, and Croagh.

Councillor T. Neville requested the safety barrier at Hegarty's Cross (N69) be extended to cover the next house on the Kildimo side of the Cross.

G. Liston, E.E., in response to Councillor J. Griffin confirmed the road margins/verges at the Dark Road, Rathkeale, would be cleaned later in the year.

That concluded the business of the Meeting.

Signed: _____ Chairman.

Dated this **26th** day of **JUNE, 2006**.

_____ Secretary.