

# Comhairle Contae Chorcaí Cork County Council

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## MINUTES OF MEETING OF WEST CORK MUNICIPAL DISTRICT held at Bantry Courthouse and MS Teams at 11.00am on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Members Present:** Cllrs. Joe Carroll, Paul Hayes, Deirdre Kelly, Caroline Cronin, Declan Hurley, Danny Collins, Karen Coakley, Patrick Gerard Murphy, Chris Heinhold

**In attendance:** Noreen O'Mahony, S.E.O. W.C.M.D.  
MacDara O'Hici, S.E.O. Housing  
Helen O'Donovan, A.O. Housing  
Jacqueline Mansfield, M.D.O. W.C.M.D.  
John Ahern S.E.E. Skibbereen  
Ruth O'Brien, S.E.E. Bantry  
Martina O'Driscoll, Meeting Administrator W.C.M.D.

Cllr. J. Carroll presided.

### Housing Briefing

The Chair advised members that the Housing Department wished to give a brief update on a housing matter in Clonakilty.

MacDara O'Hici, Housing S.E.O. advised the members that currently in Cork county there are 146 adults and 31 families with children staying in emergency accommodation in hotels and B&B's with no supports. Cork County Council with the support of the Department of Housing has purchased a former B&B in Clonakilty to provide supported accommodation for families in need of emergency housing. The facility will provide supported temporary accommodation solutions to families who are homeless and may require additional supports. The hub will be operated to prepare families for more permanent accommodation. The services will be delivered on behalf of the council by Good Shepherd Cork who have a 50 year record of successfully providing this type of accommodation and assistance to women and families in the Cork region. The facility will provide 8 family rooms and support services. The facility will have communal rooms including cooking and laundry rooms on the same footprint of the existing building. Some non-structural works will be required to the facility, rewiring and internal fit out mostly. Suitably qualified staff will be recruited for the operation of the facility. The local staff will be part of the wider Good Shepherd Organisation.

It is estimated that the works and recruitment will be finalised in the short to medium term. Families will be referred to the hub by Cork County Council.

The members welcomed the update and queried whether it would be persons on the housing list who would be accommodated in this accommodation, the S.E.O. noted that it would be people who are in homeless emergency accommodation in County Cork only. He advised that this was a pilot scheme and it should meet the short term needs of some families. In response to a query on whether there were more houses being given out in North Cork than West Cork the S.E.O. acknowledged that more houses were needed in West Cork and the council were looking at a number of potential sites in West Cork and were also looking at acquisitions.

A member reported that there were premises in Bantry run by the Peter McVerry Trust and Clúid and requested that the Housing Dept organise a meeting with both of these voluntary housing organisations to discuss their housing policy, in reply the S.E.O. noted the request for follow up. Members queried whether there would be an official opening for the Clúid housing development in Bantry and the S.E.O. advised that dates in April were being reviewed. In response to members queries on how the voluntary housing bodies make allocations to their accommodation the S.E.O. noted that the council make nominations from which the VHB make their allocations.

*The briefing ended and MacDara O'Hici and Helen O'Donovan left the meeting.*

## **Statutory Meeting**

### **1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

#### **(a) *Minutes of Municipal District meeting (as circulated) of 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024***

*Proposed by Cllr. Karen Coakley, Seconded by Cllr. Deirdre Kelly*

#### **Resolved:**

*"That the minutes of Municipal District meeting (as circulated) of 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Cathaoirleach."*

### **MATTERS ARISING**

A member reported that there are holes in the matting at Skibbereen Playground, and other areas of the playground are in a state of disrepair. It was noted that the newly constructed playgrounds in Bantry and Dunmanway have modern and updated equipment. The member inquired whether the community could organise a fundraising effort to update the equipment at the Skibbereen playground. Additionally, a request was made to review a report on the condition of other playgrounds in West Cork at the next MD meeting.

## 2. STATUTORY BUSINESS /GNO REACHTUIL

### (a) Section 183 –Notices

In accordance with the provision of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, the disposal of the property as shown hereunder shall be carried out in accordance with the terms specified in the notices circulated to members.

<b><u>Situation:</u></b>	Grant of wayleaves in favour of Uisce Éireann at Dunmanway, Co. Cork.
<b><u>Area:</u></b>	Wayleaves coloured yellow – Plot 4, 14, 22 and 26 as per maps attached.
<b><u>Acquired From:</u></b>	Unknown, in CCC ownership since 1984.
<b><u>Proposed to Grant To:</u></b>	Uisce Éireann.
<b><u>Consideration:</u></b>	€1.00

On the proposal of Cllr. Deirdre Kelly, seconded by Cllr. Joe Carroll, members approved the above grant of wayleave and recommended it to full plenary Council for consideration.

## 3. NOTICES OF MOTION/ FOGRA RUN

### (a) *Proposed by Cllr. Karen Coakley, seconded by Cllr. Joe Carroll*

***'I call upon Cork County Council to prioritise road resurfacing on the streets of Skibbereen as they are in an appalling state.'***

#### Report from John Ahern S.E.E.

It is acknowledged that the surface of sections of the streets in Skibbereen Town have deteriorated significantly over the last 5 months in particular following the very wet Winter period. A programme of repairs and resurfacing is planned as follows:

Full kerb to kerb re-surfacing of the top end of Main St, The Square and a section back along North St has been included in the 2024 Restoration Improvement Programme following the announcement of the Department grant allocations last week. This work will be undertaken by Contract and is being managed by staff from Cork County Council's Region and Local Road Design Office.

Re-surfacing of the localised worst damaged sections of Townsend St and Bridge St will be undertaken by Cork County Council staff in the coming weeks. It is our intention to complete the new footpath at the opposite side of Bridge St this year thus enabling a major kerb to kerb re-surfacing of the entire street to be included in the 2025 Restoration Improvement programme subject to funding.

The condition of roads across West Cork was discussed by the members, who reported that some roads in the towns posed a serious health and safety risk for both motorists and pedestrians. John Ahern S.E.E. mentioned in response to a query that the 2024 funding allocation for re-surfacing in the Skibbereen part of the West Cork MD would cover about 2% of all the roads in that area and that this was similar for other MD's. The cost of resurfacing all the main streets of Skibbereen town would

cost substantially more than the total allocated for the Skibbereen sub-engineering area of the MD.

The members emphasised that the funding allocation from Central Government had been inadequate for many years, noting that county Cork was receiving less funding per km than any other county in Ireland. They recalled that in 2021, after a meeting with Minister McGrath, a commitment was made to further examine the AIRO Report (All-Island Research Observatory). The members reached an agreement that a motion should be issued to Full Council to request an increase in the funding allocation from Central Government for the West Cork MD area.

The members requested a full report of the funding received since 2018 and queried whether there were any funding changes since the meeting with Minister McGrath in 2021. They requested that letters should be issued to the 3 local TD's to bring attention to the issue, as well as to Minister McGrath to enquire about any progress made since their meeting with him on the issue. Members also requested a letter should go to Junior Minister Jack Chambers to request a meeting with him to discuss the issue.

**(b) Proposed by Cllr. Caroline Cronin, Seconded by Patrick Gerard Murphy**

**'I call upon Cork County Council to kindly consider the installation of bus shelters in West Cork towns and villages wherever there is adequate space for safe allocation and in accordance with our existing Roads Policy.'**

Report from Niall Healy, DOS Roads

*Cork County Council is rolling out the installation of bus shelters on a phased basis having regard to funding availability from the National Transport Authority. As part of Phase 2 of the programme, the Council installed new shelters in Bantry, Dunmanway & Baltimore. There are proposals to install new bus shelters in Clonakilty and Castletownbere subject to funding availability and the council securing the necessary consents.*

*Furthermore, the Council welcomes the recent allocation by the National Transport Authority of €500k to the Council (countywide) for the development of hard stands at rural bus stop locations. This is a new initiative. The Council has commenced work in relation to developing a programme for same.*

The members discussed the need for bus shelters on bus routes across West Cork and highlighted that in the UK bus shelters are in every town and village. The members discussed the promotion of Active Travel and queried why bus shelters were not prioritised as part of this initiative. The members were advised to send submissions for bus shelters locations to Cormac O'Súilleabháin.

## **REPORTS & CORRESPONDANCE**

### **Municipal District Officer's Report – 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

#### **Municipal District Meeting times and dates for the next three months**

Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2024	Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2024
Hybrid	Hybrid	Hybrid	Hybrid
Teams & Location TBC	Teams & Location TBC	Teams & Location TBC	Teams & Location TBC

#### **1. Community Fund Scheme 2024**

The Community Fund Scheme closed on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February. The process of assessing applications has begun, with the intention of presenting our recommendations to the members when the assessment is complete. West Cork MD received a total of 115 applications this year, this figure is an increase of approximately 20 on last year's number.

#### **2. West Cork Islands Community Grants Scheme 2024**

Cork County Council is committed to supporting the West Cork Islands through its Island Community Based Grant Fund for 2024. This scheme funds island community development with small scale capital and amenity projects, with a minimum of €1,000 and a maximum of €25,000 per project to improve the range and/or quality of community-based facilities on the Islands. Following this notification to the Members of the 2024 Scheme, information will be forwarded this week to West Cork Island groups. The closing date for submission of applications is Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March. Any queries in relation to the scheme can be forwarded to the MD Office in Clonakilty, 023 8833380.

#### **3. West Cork Islands Minor Capital Works**

Cork County Council recently submitted 5 no. applications to the DRCD for consideration, along with detail of 9 no. projects carried over in to 2024, to either grant claim, finish or start projects that could not be done during 2023 due to late approval and adverse weather conditions:-

##### **Projects Submitted to DRCD for 2024:**

##### **Bere Island, Road L-49227-1:**

Overlay of 945m with asphalt concrete, sealed with surface dressing. 4m width road. Received funding in 2023. Further funds sought in 2024 to ensure completion of project.

##### **Heir Island Pontoon - Phase II:**

Works involve modifications to landing platform, access gate and folding ramp. Inclusion of safety equipment, life rings, signage etc. Installation of recessed egress ladder. Additional fendering to facilitate smaller boats.

**Heir Island, L-8493-0:**

Overlay of 730m with 70mm of AC 14 close surf 70/100 rec, sealed with surface dressing. AA screening is required due to SAC and was provided to the Department in 2023.

**Bere Island Cloughland:**

To plane out road surface and remove bends, realign vertical and horizontal alignment and widen road, drainage improvements to be carried out. Width of road is 4m. Road in Council ownership.

**Sherkin Slievemore L8201-15:**

60mm Asphalt Concrete. Clearing drainage and removal of overgrowth. DBM - Material, transport, lay and compact. Seal and Surface dress.

**2023 Projects carried forward to 2024:**

**Cunnamore Pier Carpark:**

Funding of €10,000 to clear, level and surface the area for parking to be used by pier users and persons travelling to Heir Island. Works complete, 2023 expenditure to claim in early 2024.

**Sherkin Island, L-8202-0 Phase III:**

Roadworks complete, final claim to be submitted to Department in early 2024.

**Sherkin Island, L-8201-0 (Kilmoon) Phase III:**

This is a continuation of the 2023 project. Surface dress 830m that was DBM surfaced, first sealed and funded in 2023. Surface preparation brush and clean road surface. Surface dress

**Bere Island, L-49227-0:**

Overlay of 600m asphalt concrete, sealed with surface dressing. 4m width road. Work could not take place in 2023 due to weather conditions which would have adversely affected any surface dressing carried out late in 2023

**Bere Island, Road L-49227-1:**

Carry out roadworks as listed above under 2024 list. Work could not take place in 2023 due to weather conditions which would have adversely affected any surface dressing carried out late in 2023

**Bere Island, DOD Road adjacent to L-8959-0:**

Overlay of 755m asphalt concrete, sealed with surface dressing. 4m width road. Drainage improvement works to be carried out. Work could not take place in 2023 due to weather conditions which would have adversely affected any surface dressing carried out late in 2023. This project is 100% funded by DRCD.

**Dock Pier Sherkin:**

Dock Pier Slipway: Concrete Works to Face of Pier to include steel and pinning to existing rock armour supporting the pier deck. Provide T bars and toe rails where required. 1-2 nr recessed ladders. The depth and thickness varies depending on profile of the faced rock. Work could not take place in 2023 due to weather conditions and contractor delays. Contractor now on site since last week.

#### **4. Outdoor Dining**

As we enter into the spring summer season we are encouraging all business who avail of outdoor dining to engage with the Skibbereen Municipal District office for an application form. Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate applications where possible there will be situations where licenses cannot be granted due to their location and the adverse impact it may cause for the health and safety of pedestrians. Each decision is treated independently with input from the engineers and Municipal Department.

#### **5. Skibbereen Heritage Centre - Cork County Council Burial Registers**

Skibbereen Heritage Centre has successfully uploaded a further c.23,000 previously - unavailable Cork County Council burial register records to its online database from 18 graveyards throughout the county. This brings the total number of burial records now available on this site to over 82,700, all of which are available to access free of charge from anywhere in the world.

This latest upload includes graveyards from West and East Cork, as well as the Macroom and Carrigaline areas, with some records from North Cork available for the first time too.

The digitisation project is supported by Cork County Council and the small team at Skibbereen Heritage Centre have been diligently working on it for some years now, bringing these records into the public realm for the first time.

The information available includes burial details such as name, date of death, date of burial and address, and a map of all sites covered to date. The original pages from the registers are also available to download in PDF format when they are available.

The team at Skibbereen Heritage Centre hope to continue this project over the 2024/5 winter period, with the support of Cork County Council, to upload more records next spring, primarily from the North Cork area.

#### **6. Blue Pool Glengarriff**

Blue Pool Glengarriff Trails project was a recent recipient of a national award from LAMA. Congratulations to all involved to make this project a success.



#### **7. Bantry Library External Conservation Works**

Cork County Council recently completed the external conservation works including window replacement at Bantry Library. The project received funding from the Heritage Council and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage under the Historic Towns Initiative 2023.

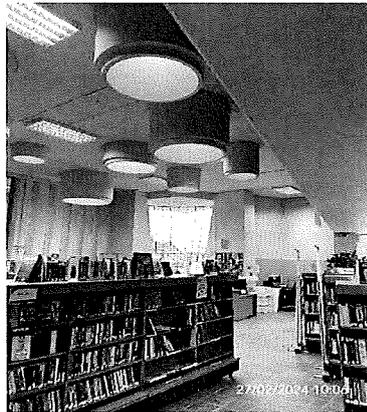
The project involved the careful conservation of several necessary external elements to safeguard the building from falling into further disrepair and ensure the building remained in use as a public library.

- Specialist repair of leaded curved bow window
- Replacement of all external windows and doors
- Repairs to upper and lower roofs
- Replacement of existing rooflights

The project was managed by Cork County Council - Architects Department in collaboration with Cook Architects, Design Forum Conservation, DMCA, Griffen Brothers and Palmer Conservation.

With funding and careful conservation works, Cork County Council have stopped water ingress, increased natural daylight, upgraded universal access to the building and improved the thermal performance of the library.

The Architects Department will give a presentation at our next MD meeting in April.



## **8. Skibbereen Town Hall**

There are a number of upcoming events planned for the Town Hall in Skibbereen over the coming months including plays and musical events.

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The members requested that the contact details for Aoife Power, the individual responsible for promoting Skibbereen Town Hall Theatre, be provided to them.

The Heritage Centre in Skibbereen was acknowledged by the members for the significant credit they deserve for the work they have done behind the scenes.

In response for an update on the Steam Mill building in Skibbereen the S.E.O. Noreen O'Mahony noted that a recently completed Future Usage report and Conservation Plan were being reviewed.

In response to a request for an update on the Marsh Car Park bridge the S.E.O. Noreen O' Mahony noted that there was no further update at present.

Members queried the process for civic receptions in the West Cork MD and S.E.O. noted that there is a procedure in place for MD civic receptions and any proposals should be sent to her or the MDO.

A request for an update on the twinning project between Skibbereen and Scituate was noted by the S.E.O.

A member requested an update on progress at Rosscarbery playground and Chateaulin Orchard, the MDO advised that with regards to Rosscarbery Playground, Cork County Council's Legal Department is awaiting a response from the Chief State Solicitor's Office. Cork County Council awaits a tree condition report for Chateaulin Orchards, it is expected to receive this report within the next few days.

An update was requested for the signage at the wheelchair swing in Clonakilty Playground, the MDO noted that the Irish language was being finalised for the signs.

In response to a query on when the 2024 Community Fund proposed allocations would be brought before the members, the MDO advised that similar to last year, an 'in committee' meeting would be organised, either immediately prior to the next MD meeting, or by mid-April, depending on when the assessment of applications is complete. Approval of the overall allocations for General Municipal Allocation, Town Development Fund and Village Enhancement Scheme would occur at the May West Cork MD meeting.

The members extended their congratulations to Ruth O'Brien and Aidan Prendergast and their team for their recent win in the overall Best trails waterway project in Ireland at the National LAMA Awards for their work on the Glengarriff Blue Pool trails.

## **5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A member reported that household rubbish was being put into litter bins in towns and villages and queried whether signage could be put on bins to discourage this. John Ahern S.E.E. noted that signs could be put on street bins but cautioned it was difficult to change this kind of behaviour.

A member reported that the timber fencing along the riverwalk in Skibbereen was reported as missing in parts of the pathway and this was posing a health and safety issue.

The members discussed Skibbereen Post Office building which has been put up for sale and highlighted that An Post were looking for an entrepreneur to take over the running of the Skibbereen Post Office.

A member reported that a bad crash had occurred at the Clonakilty Hospital junction and requested an update on whether the TII had assessed the issues at this junction. John Ahern S.E.E. noted that a study of the 2011 Traffic and Transportation was ongoing and updates on present vehicle numbers and layout was being reviewed.

A member queried the 'yield right of way' line markings at Ardcahan Bridge in Dunmanway which have faded and requested that it be reinstated. John Ahern S.E.E. noted the request and advised that there was a Yield Right of Way sign in place and also coloured asphalt on the roadway.

In response to the MDO's confirmation that no reply had been received from Uisce Éireann, the members expressed their frustration at being treated so disrespectfully and said it lacked courtesy to public representatives.

In response to a query on the South Harbour at Cape Clear which was damaged during recent storms, Ruth O'Brien noted that the section damaged was on private property. Following a request for it to be repaired as it was used by locals the S.E.O. Noreen O'Mahony noted the matter for follow up.

The members agreed to hold the April WCMD meeting in the Clonakilty Chamber on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 11.00a.m.

**VOTE OF SYMPATHY**

Members extended a Vote of Sympathy to Cllr. Danny Collins on the death of his nephew Michael John Lynch RIP.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**CATHAOIRLEACH** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_