



**MINUTES OF MEETING OF WEST CORK MUNICIPAL DISTRICT  
held on MS Teams at 11.00am on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

**Members Present on MS Teams:** Cllrs. Patrick Gerard Murphy, Joe Carroll, Caroline Cronin, Danny Collins, Deirdre Kelly, Finbarr Harrington, Noel O'Donovan, Isobel Towse, Daniel Sexton.

**Council Officials on MS Teams:** Noreen O' Mahony, S.E.O. W.C.M.D.  
Eimear O' Neill S/MDO W.C.M.D.  
John Ahern S.E.E. Skibbereen  
Kevin Lynch E.E. Bantry  
Martina O'Driscoll, Meeting Administrator W.C.M.D.

Cllr. PG Murphy presided.

**Statutory Meeting**

**1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

- (a) ***Minutes of West Cork Municipal District meeting (as circulated) of 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024***  
*Proposed by Cllr. Daniel Sexton, Seconded by Cllr. D. Collins*

Resolved:

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

- (b) ***Minutes (as circulated) of 'In Committee' West Cork Municipal District meeting dated 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024.***  
*Proposed by Cllr. D. Collins, Seconded by Cllr. D. Sexton*

Resolved:

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

**MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

Cllr. D. Collins requested a suspension of standing orders and the members agreed, to allow for a discussion on the water break on the N71 in Glengarriff.

Cllr. Collins reported that approx. 84 houses had been without water for the past 10 days and there was a significant delay in resolving the issue due to the location of the water break on the N71 and also the issue of determining which authority was responsible for the repairs as this was a private community water scheme. He called for the Council to work with the TII and Uisce Éireann on repairing the water break as a matter of urgency. Cllr. F. Harrington noted that following a public meeting last Saturday that Daniel O' Donovan E.E. was working on a plan to repair the water break. Cllr. Harrington called for discussions with Uisce Éireann to take over the water scheme to be expediated. Noreen O' Mahony S.E.O. noted that as this was a Group Water Scheme it was under the remit of the County Engineer and she would discuss it with John Slattery and get a report for the members on the matter. Cllr. PG. Murphy concurred that the matter was critical and requested that the members be filled in after the meeting following her discussions with the County Engineer.

## **2. REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE**

### **Municipal District Officer's Report – 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

#### **1. Cork County Council Attractions**

##### **Skibbereen Heritage Centre**

Skibbereen Heritage Centre had a very busy 2024 with visitor numbers at 16,400, up 10% from last year. The genealogy service also provided to be as popular as ever with 4,208 emails responded to in addition to dozens of in-person appointments, attracting many visitors 'home' to holiday in West Cork area.

The Centre was placed in the top 10% of Visitor Attractions worldwide by TripAdvisor, having been granted the prestigious 'Traveller's Choice Award' again in 2024. This high level of visitor satisfaction is also reflected in its Visitor Book and Google Maps reviews.

The Centre was also awarded the overall 2024 Cork County Award by the Heritage Council for its Heritage Week events, which hundreds attended, and the Centre also hosted a lively night the approximately 150 attendees at the Comhaltas session to celebrate Culture Night 2024.

Outside of its core activities, Skibbereen Heritage Centre is continuing its digitisation process of the Cork County Council burial records with over 82,700 burial records from 128 graveyards across Cork now available worldwide on its website. Centre staff are working hard to add even more records from North Cork to the online database in 2025.

Skibbereen Heritage Centre staff also featured in a TV documentary, 'Abandoned Engineering' on the Discovery Channel in 2024, which is continuously broadcast to millions of people internationally. The Channel Four programme 'Julia Bradbury's Irish Journey', featuring Skibbereen Heritage Centre, was also shown across Australia and New Zealand to millions more viewers this year and the show was also repeated in Ireland and the UK in December. Centre staff also compiled a series of genealogy podcasts in 2024 and brought three US colleges to the Skibbereen area for the Study Abroad programmes, some of whom stayed for up to 6 weeks in this area.



*Students and Staff from Maryland University who came to Skibbereen for 6 weeks in 2024 on a 'Study Abroad' programme facilitated by Skibbereen Heritage Centre.*



*Skibbereen Heritage Centre was placed in the top 10% of Visitor Attractions worldwide by TripAdvisor, having been granted the prestigious 'Traveller's Choice Award' again in 2024.*

### Dunmanway Pool

The income as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024 was up by 5% compared to the same period in 2023.



**Gym facility at Dunmanway Pool Complex**

### Dursey Cable Car

Dursey Cable Car welcomed 21,448 visitors between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 30<sup>th</sup> November this year.

## Skibbereen Town Hall

Cork County Council hosted the Bridgerton Symphonic in Skibbereen Town Hall on 21<sup>st</sup> November. The Glas Quartet treated locals to an immersive string quartet performance of music from the hit Netflix series Bridgerton.

A dedicated email address has been set up for queries regarding the Town Hall – [skibbereentownhall@corkcoco.ie](mailto:skibbereentownhall@corkcoco.ie). We are liaising with our in-house design team to streamline the booking process and develop an online booking system for groups to book the Town Hall. Skibbereen Town Hall will shortly have a dedicated page on Cork County Council’s website – which will include links to book the hall and all related information.

## Michael Collins House

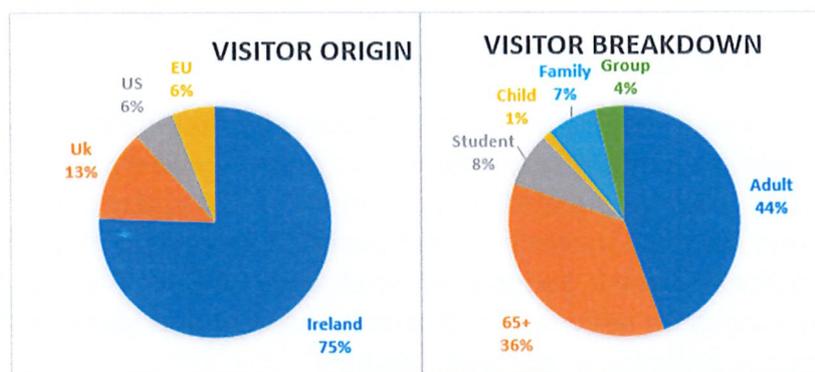
In 2024 Michael Collins House welcomed just under 20k visitors to the museum. This is on par with 2023 figures and a positive sign with many heritage sites visitor figures reported down in 2024 (Failte Ireland).

2024	Visitor Numbers
January	455
February	734
March	1056
April	1529
May	2042
June	2290
July	3048
Aug	4425
Sept	2074
Oct	1236
Nov	774
Dec	266
<b>Total YTD</b>	<b>19929</b>

In August Michael Collins House Museum teamed up with the National Archives of Ireland, once again, to host the Michael Collins Diaries Exhibition. Two of the famous Michael Collins Diaries came from the Archives in Dublin for display along with a digitised touchscreen on which visitors can explore and read the daily organisational diaries from 1918-1922. Over 4425 people visited the exhibition over the course of the month, a slight increase on 2023 figures (4250).

The museum has added a number of new artefacts from loans, donations and acquisitions. Among these are the Michael Collins Handkerchief which was on Michael Collins person when he was killed at Beal na Bláth and a briefcase used by Michael Collins and Eamon De Valera in a daring prison escape in 1919. Both items will be part of the permanent collection in 2025 and hope to attract more visitors to the museum.

On Culture Night Michael Collins House hosted an open evening with special guided tours. Over 250 people visited the museum and took part in tours over the course of the evening.



*Visitor origin & visitor breakdown of Michael Collins House*



*Acquisition of the Linen Handkerchief*

## **2. Cork County Council's Municipal District Community Fund Scheme 2025**

Cork County Council is committed to supporting local communities across County Cork. Financial assistance for community and voluntary groups, and local organisations is available through the Community Fund Scheme 2025. This scheme is administered by the Municipal District Office and there are three separate funding streams depending on the nature and cost of the proposal.

- Capital Fund Scheme
- Community Contract
- Amenity Fund Scheme

Applications for the scheme opens on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and the deadline for receipt of completed applications is 4.00pm, Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

### **3. Cork County Council's Local Festival & Events Fund 2025**

Cork County Council has launched its Local Festival and Event Fund for 2025. The fund is designed to support festivals and events that celebrate local culture, stimulate economic growth, and attract domestic visitors to Cork County.

This funding programme has been developed to support a wide variety of festivals and events across the county. Organisers can apply for grants of up to €6,000 to help extend the tourism season, attract domestic visitors, and create long-term value for their communities. The programme also benefits from a funding contribution from Fáilte Ireland under the former Regional Festival Fund.

The fund is open to a wide variety of events, including heritage festivals, music, food, family festivals, Halloween festivals and sporting events. To be eligible, applicants must meet specific criteria, such as generating a minimum of 150 visitor bed nights in paid accommodation and having a minimum event expenditure of €7,500. Additionally, the event must take place within the geographic boundaries of Cork County. The event programme should focus on delivering high-quality content and showcasing the region's cultural and economic potential to domestic visitors.

In addition, an optional supplementary grant is available for festivals and events that demonstrate a commitment to sustainable practices, supporting environmental and social sustainability across the region.

The fund is open for applications at 9.00am on **Friday, 13 December**, and the closing date for submissions is **Monday, 20th January 2025**, at 5.00pm

### **4. Cork County Council's Creative Communities Programme Fund 2025**

Cork County Council's Creative Communities Programme Fund 2025 is now open for applications and may be of interest to the island communities. This year's programme will focus on new and ambitious projects that establish cultural and creative activities in communities across Cork County.

The Creative Communities Programme is funded by Creative Ireland, a government initiative designed to promote creativity as a strategy for wellbeing, social cohesion, and economic success.

Applications for the fund can be made by clicking the link at the bottom of the page. Applications are open until Thursday the 23rd of January 2025.

Applications can be made for projects that will be one, two, or three years in duration. There will be a maximum award of €10,000 for a one-year project, €20,000 for a two-year project, or €30,000 for a three-year project, with a minimum award of €2,000, €4,000, and €6,000, respectively.

### **5. Neuro Functional Training Programme in Dunmanway Pool**

The Neuro Functional Training Programme (NFTP) is a collaborative effort between Cork County Council and the HSE to support people with a neurological impairment. The initial pilot began in September 2023, and we have continued to expand and develop it since

then. The HSE provided training to Cork County Council staff in Dunmanway Pool (Exercise Professionals) to enable them to support participants during their scheduled sessions.

Cork County Council supported the initiative by making all staff in Dunmanway Pool available for training and assigning staff to the gym during the scheduled training sessions under the NFTP – Tuesdays and Thursdays. We also provide access to the gym for participants at the reduced rate of €5 per session.

These patients with neurological impairments are vulnerable to health decline & lengthy episodes of unscheduled care. The NFTP assists and motivates them to optimise their health status and functional mobility. With the input of their HSE physiotherapist and the support of the Exercise Professionals (CCC) they can safely and effectively exercise in the public gym setting.

- 16 Patients from PCC Physiotherapists local caseload participated in the initial 10-week pilot in September 2023 with measurable success in all outcomes.
- Qualitative outcomes included participant attendance (87%) and participant feedback (Overwhelmingly positive for every individual).
- 33 patients are now attending weekly, this represents a 106% increase in people availing of NFTP @ €5 per attendance paid to Dunmanway Pool generating a dependable revenue stream. Many participants have become regular users of the gym and pool, outside of the programme hours.
- The average age of participants is 65 years, ranging from 23 to 82 years.
- The majority of participants to-date are living with Parkinson's Disease. It is hoped to extend the programme further in 2025 to accommodate more participants with MS.
- NFTP facilitates HSE Physio to proactively support the health and wellbeing of these vulnerable patients in larger numbers in a non-clinical environment.

Liz O'Sullivan, Physiotherapy Manager, HSE SouthWest recently attended the Physical Activity for Health Symposium in the Sport Ireland Campus and gave an oral presentation on this initiative, titled: *Developing A Neuro Functional Training Programme for patients with neurological impairment in West Cork PCC Physiotherapy Service.*

## **6. Community Recognition Fund 2024 – Window 3**

Cork County Council is inviting community groups to apply for the latest round of funding under the Community Recognition Fund. The scheme supports the development of community infrastructure and facilities in recognition of the contribution being made by communities across the country in welcoming and hosting significant numbers of arrivals from Ukraine and other countries.

Earlier this year, the Department of Rural and Community Development announced details of €50million in funding under the Community Recognition Fund 2024 with Cork County Council receiving an allocation of €2,014,691 to deliver projects over 2024 to 2026, with funding allocated across three application windows. The third and final window is now open to applications.

Applications that were not successful in Window 1 or 2 may be given further consideration in Window 3, but the application must satisfy all the qualifying criteria. ***The Department of Rural and Community Development has not yet issued the outcome of Window 2 applications, an announcement is expected shortly.***

Community groups can apply for between €50,000 and €500,000 in funding for capital projects. Projects are required to be shovel ready (with full planning permission and/or consents in place at the time of application), be capital in nature and deliver medium-long term benefits for the communities in which they are located and be capable of being delivered over the course of 2025 and 2026.

For projects over €200,000, additional information must be provided at the application stage giving further details on the needs identified in the location, the engagement and collaboration that resulted in the selection of the location and specific project and the capacity of the community to progress the proposed project.

Applications for Window 3 must be submitted online by clicking the link below by 5.00pm on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025. Queries in relation to the Community Recognition Fund can be made through your local Municipal District Office or by email to [CRF@corkcoco.ie](mailto:CRF@corkcoco.ie)

---

End of MDO Report

---

Cllr. J. Carroll welcomed the performance of Bridgerton at Skibbereen Town Hall recently but highlighted the ongoing issue with the lack of heating in the Town Hall. He noted that in 2014 the monies were put aside for refurbishment works in the Town Hall and the heating issue had never been addressed since that time. Noreen O' Mahony acknowledged the issue with the lack of heating in the Town Hall but highlighted that this performance had unfortunately coincided with one of the coldest evenings of the Winter in 2024. She noted that a review was underway to identify the best heating system for the Town Hall.

#### **4. NOTICES OF MOTION/ FOGRA RUN**

**(a) Proposed by Cllr. Danny Collins, seconded by Cllr. Finbarr Harrington 'I am calling on the Council to put The Ropewalk and Scarth Road under a programme of resurfacing for this year also to install speed signs to slow down traffic'.**

Cllr. D. Collins informed the meeting that the Ropewalk serves as a primary thoroughfare into Bantry and is frequently used by individuals traveling to Bantry Hospital and the Primary Care Centre. He highlighted that the bad road condition caused considerable difficulties for road users who had to navigate the bottleneck on the road as well as the bad condition of the road. The members all supported the motion and agreed that the road needed immediate upgrading.

Response from Kevin Lynch EE:

*Phase II of the Bantry Relief Road (joining Chapel Street to the N71 at the West Lodge Hotel) may incorporate some or all of the Rope Walk and some of Scart Road. Design of the route has not yet been finalised. It would therefore be premature to expend an appreciable amount of scarce funds resurfacing a road that may be replaced in the near future. Ongoing pothole repairs will be continued. Existing speed limit signs are in place: 60kph signs at the West Lodge, and 50kph further east at the Bantry Enterprise Park.*

Cllr. D. Collins expressed his disappointment that the response given which had ruled out any resurfacing of the road in advance of the proposed Bantry Relief Road. He expressed his concerns that the proposed Relief Road would take too long to deal with the issue and the road surface needed to be addressed in the interim. Cllr. PG. Murphy requested that Mr. Kevin Lynch E.E. refer the members comments on this motion to the Roads Design Office and seek an update for the next meeting.

**(b) Proposed by Cllr. Danny Collins, seconded by Cllr. Daniel Sexton  
'That the council set out a policy when hedge cutting season starts in September that they be first seen to have all their ditches be cut to set a good example'.**

Cllr. D. Collins outlined to the meeting that maintaining hedgerows needed to be better managed and called for Council to be seen to be cutting their own first. He reported that the Council had not cut their own hedgerows in over a year on the Ropewalk, Newtown East and Old Barrack Road. Cllr. Collins called on the Council to carry out hedge cutting on these roads. He expressed his concern on the merit of the Council notifying landowners to cut back their hedgerows when the Council had not done so on their own lands. Cllr. D. Sexton supported the motion and noted that it was important that other state agencies would adhere to their obligations to cut back their hedgerows along with the Council. Cllr. Harrington asked for a serious review of how hedgerows were managed to find a solution in the long term. He reported that trees overhanging the road would be the cause of many incidents of the coming weeks with both branches and trees falling onto the road. He noted that Coillte had to improve on their record on maintaining their forestry lands adjoining roads. Cllr. I. Towse called for hedgerows to be maintained at dangerous road junctions only, and highlighted that trees and hedgerows were vital for biodiversity and also helped to prevent flooding.

Response from Kevin Lynch EE:

Cork County Council has an adopted Hedgecutting Policy in place and would comply with its own obligations on same.

**5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Cllr. C. Cronin called for the Council to support the IFA on the Ash Dieback Scheme. She noted that the current cost of the scheme is excessive and this scheme by the IFA would maintain the health of the ash trees from ash dieback disease. Cllr. F. Harrington reported that a motion had been submitted to Full Council on the matter following an IFA meeting recently.

Cllr. F. Harrington reported to the meeting that it was brought to members attention that there was an IPAS centre being proposed for Schull village. He noted that it was confirmed by reply from Minister O'Gorman that a 40 bed IPAS accommodation centre was being proposed in the centre of Schull village. Cllr. Harrington expressed his concern that local elected members are not consulted with these proposed accommodation centres. He noted that there was a Part 5 planning in process with the Council regarding the premises. Cllr. D. Collins advised the meeting that following a meeting with Michael Collins TD and the owners of the premises that the application for the IPAS accommodation was being revoked. Noreen O' Mahony cautioned the members that as the site was subject to a live planning application that no further discussion should be held on the matter.

Cllr. J. Carroll on behalf of all the members conveyed best wishes to Jackie Mansfield as she resumes her duties after her recent absence. Additionally, Cllr. Carroll extended well wishes to Ruth O'Brien.

Cllr. I. Towse reported that there was no water available on Sherkin Island and she requested that the storage tanks that were on the island be commissioned. She highlighted that the islanders had no water since Sunday and connecting these water tanks was now vital. Noreen O'Mahony advised that this was a matter for Uisce Éireann.

Noreen O'Mahony outlined to the members that Nicola Radley was the new West Cork Municipal District Manager and she will be in contact in the coming weeks with the members to discuss priorities going forward. Cllr. PG. Murphy welcomed the new changes in the organisation which had ensured permanent people were now in permanent positions within the Council Management and the members were looking forward to making progress into the future.

The members agreed that the next meeting of the West Cork MD would be held in Dunmanway Municipal Pool meeting room on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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