

Minutes of Special Meeting of West Clare Municipal District held on the 16th July, 2019 at 3.15pm. in Kilrush MD Offices, Kilrush

Cathaoirleach sa Cathair:

Cllr. B. Chambers.

I Láthair:

Cllr. S. Talty, Cllr. R. Garvey, Cllr. G. Keating, Cllr. J. Killeen, Cllr. J. Garrihy, Cllr. I. Lynch, Cllr. C. Murphy

As Láthair:

Cllr. P.J.Kelly.

Officials present:

Mr. Leonard Cleary, Area Co-Ordinator & Director of Service
Mr. J. O'Malley, A/Senior Executive Engineer ,West Clare Municipal District
Mr. M. Lahiffe, A/Senior Executive Engineer ,West Clare Municipal District
Mr. Adrian Kelly, Chief Fire Officer
Mr. J. Corry, Administrative Officer & Meetings Administrator.
Mr. T. Dooley, T.D.
Mr. M. Harty, T.D.
Senator. M. Conway,
Ms. M. Cusack (representing Minister P. Breen).

1. Review of Council contribution to Dubai Duty Free Irish Open Lahinch.

At the outset of the meeting L. Cleary welcomed everyone and referred to the great success of the Dubai Duty Free Irish Open held in Lahinch. He acknowledged that the event had been a tremendous success and he acknowledged the work done by A. Kelly in managing the organisation of the event on behalf of Clare Co Council, M. Lahiffe for undertaking all the public realm works around Lahinch , Roads Administration for dealing with issues surrounding car parking, road closures etc and to the various other sections in the Council who facilitated the smooth operation of other aspects of the event. He acknowledged the interagency co-operation of a no of different agencies which was essential to the smooth running and operation of the event. He also acknowledged the community support for the event which was critical for its success.

A. Kelly went through a Presentation for the members. He outlined that the event was watched worldwide in over 500 million homes which was a great opportunity to promote tourism to Lahinch and West Clare. He acknowledged that the preparation for the event had involved many stakeholders, European Tour, Lahinch Golf Club, An Garda Siochana, Clare Co Council, HSE, and Fáilte Ireland. He outlined that the challenges in preparing for such an event included having an effective Traffic Mgt Plan, appropriate Event Parking, enhancing the Public Realm, managing

a family Friendly Festival etc. He added that it was essential to keep the message out there that Lahinch was open for business while at the same time trying to utilise the exposure to promote the area. It was therefore essential to communicate with and have a working relationship with the businesses & the local community. He advised that over the course of the tournament that over 87,000 attended the event. He mentioned that some of the public realm works which were done to prepare for the event were the provision of pedestrian crossings, the completion of the coastal works, the surfacing and lining of the public car parks, the provision of upgraded public toilets and the extension and surfacing of the Promenade walk.

M. Lahiffe indicated that he was delighted with how the event and the preparation for same had turned out. He added that a great deal of infrastructural works were carried out in the town which greatly improved its appearance and improved the universal accessibility of the town. He added that it had been a great opportunity to invest in the area.

The members acknowledged how successful the event was and acknowledged the work done by Clare Co Council in preparing for same.

2. Impact of job losses at ESB, Moneypoint

Cllr. Chambers welcomed the Members of the Oireachtas who had joined the meeting to discuss the impact of job losses at Moneypoint. He emphasised that it was very important that there was a plan in place for Moneypoint. He opened the item for discussion to the floor.

T. Dooley indicated that all of the Oireachtas members met with the ESB the previous week. He added that they were very surprised at the announcement of these job losses. He indicated that it was accepted that Moneypoint wouldn't be burning coal beyond 2025 however he added that Moneypoint had a great asset with two transmission lines which ran all the way to Dublin. He added that there needed to be a concerted effort to secure an alternative electricity generating source for Moneypoint.

Cllr. Murphy indicated that there was a huge potential to harness wind energy off the coast of Clare and that Moneypoint with its deep water jetty and transmission lines should be used to harness this wind energy.

Cllr. Lynch said that the community needed to come together because there were opportunities and he suggested that a Task Force needed to be set up to look at opportunities for Moneypoint and for jobs in West Clare.

Senator Conway welcomed the opportunity for the Oireachtas members and the elected members to meet to discuss this. He added that the ESB had adopted a commercial semi state attitude here to improve cost efficiencies. He accepted that coal burning was confined to history and that there would be very little coal burning between now and 2025. He added that the options of Biomass and Gas unless commercially viable and environmentally friendly would not happen. He agreed that wind energy was the way forward.

M. Harty indicated that Moneypoint had potential as a Transition port because of its depth.

Cllr. Garrihy mentioned the importance of having a countywide Energy Sustainable Plan and that this was an action that could be undertaken by the Council.

Cllr. Killeen indicated that the Oireachtas members needed to put pressure on the Government to provide the necessary funding to expand the electricity generating options at Moneypoint.

M. Cusack indicated that she was representing Minister Breen who couldn't attend the meeting as he was meeting with the ESB at the same time. She added that he would do whatever he could to support Moneypoint.

Cllr. Lynch indicated that the hand of the ESB needed to be forced to tell what their plans were regarding Moneypoint.

T. Dooley indicated that we were all in this together. He suggested that a Task Force needed to be put in place which would include the Dept of Business, Enterprise & Innovation, the Dept of Communications, Climate Action & Environment, the ESB, the IDA, Enterprise Ireland & local members. He added that the Task Force needed to focus on job losses and address the potential for the reconfiguration of Moneypoint.

Cllr. Murphy suggested that there needed to be a focus on the opportunities which existed.

Cllr. Keating proposed that the following elected members would be included on the Task Force: Cllr. Chambers, Cllr. Killeen, Cllr. Garrihy, Cllr. Lynch, Cllr. Garvey, Cllr. Murphy. This was seconded by Cllr. Lynch.

L. Cleary indicated that Clare Co Council had engaged with the ESB on numerous occasions over the years across a number of Directorates. He indicated that the Council would write to both the Minister for Communication , Climate Action & Environment as well as to the Minister for Business, Enterprise, & Innovation and seek to get them to convene a meeting to set up a Task Force to include both Departments the ESB, IDA, Enterprise Ireland, local Oireachtas members & local elected representatives. The purpose of the Task Force would be to look at electricity generating opportunities at Moneypoint and to address the issue of the potential job losses.

M. Harty mentioned that he had recently met with Minister Shane Ross and he added that the Minister had indicated that he would be visiting Shannon Airport in late August or early September.

Cllr. Garvey enquired as to the protocol in place at public meetings for inappropriate behavior. J. Corry advised that this was covered under Standing Orders.

The meeting then concluded and the Cathaoirleach thanked all for attending.

Signed :

Cllr. B Chambers

Cathaoirleach

Signed :

J. Corry

Meetings Administrator

Dated this the 3rd day of September 2019.