

**Minutes of Special Meeting of Youghal Town Council held on 24th January, 2014 in the Mall House, Youghal at 9.30 a.m.**

**Present:**

Mayor Sammy Revins presided. Cllrs. Linehan-Foley, Hennessy, Burke, O' Connell & O' Sullivan.

Apologies were received from Cllr. Murray.

**Officials Present:**

Derek O'Gorman, Town Manager.

Mrs. Helen Mulcahy, Town Clerk.

Mr. Paul Murray, Town Engineer.

Mrs. Geraldine O' Connell, Clerical Officer.

Mr. Colin Brennan, David Kelly Partnership.

**Opening Prayers:**

The members and officials recited the opening prayers.

**Update Regarding Re-construction of the Boardwalk:**

Cllr. Burke presented to the Members a small section of the Boardwalk which was passed on to him by a member of the public. Cllr. Burke expressed his concerns about the manner in which the timbers were fixed to the panels – namely with screws.

Cllr. O' Connell informed the Members that she felt the construction did not seem strong enough and was not secured properly.

Cllr. Linehan Foley stated that the damage caused could not be foreseen and rather than name and blame, the allocation of funding and the reconstruction of the Boardwalk should be a priority. Cllr. Linehan Foley queried if a structure could be put in place that could be removed and stored away in light of the forecast of severe weather. The Town Clerk said that the costs of this would be prohibitive.

The Town Clerk stated that it was very remiss to suggest shortcuts were taken at the initial construction of the Boardwalk and how money was heavily invested for this project with the best possible intentions.

Cllr. Burke asked if the report on the initial construction of the Boardwalk was independently assessed and what risk factors were identified. Cllr. Burke asked if the report took into account structural damage by storm waves.

Colin Brennan informed the Members that the original Boardwalk was designed to the highest specifications and approved by Failte Ireland. Colin informed the members that there had been a 10m surge in the Atlantic on the night of the storm which caused a succession of storm waves.

Cllr. Burke reported seeing a rush of water after the break of the waves and jets of spray being thrown in between each joint of the Boardwalk causing the entire decking panel to lift.

The Members asked if the design of the Boardwalk should have been incorporated to allow for such a rush of incoming water underneath the Boardwalk and also could provision be made for steps along the whole of the Boardwalk.

The Town Clerk informed the Members that the cost of reinstating the Boardwalk could not be taken lightly and also stated that the members should be cogniscant of the fact that 12 months ago sand levels were annihilated and regardless of what could be put in front of the Boardwalk the same problem with sand could reoccur.

Colin Brennan informed the Members that the cost of each set of steps would be €5,000 and the cost of running steps along the whole of the Boardwalk would cost more that the actual Boardwalk itself.

The Town Clerk stated that while some amount of timber had been salvaged it is still not known how much would have to be sourced for the reconstruction stage.

The Members queried the possible use of a steel frame for the revised structure - The Town Clerk informed Members that the study done by John Cronin was very specific and due to the fact that the Boardwalk was eco friendly the contractors were not permitted to use a steel frame.

The Town Manager also stated that the Coastal Management Unit had submitted a substantial claim for storm damage to Central Government and was hopeful that some funding may be made available to Youghal Town Council.

The Town Clerk informed the Members that she would keep them briefed at all times. The Town Clerk also stated that while the outpouring of support from the local community was very welcome due to restrictions re Health & Safety & Insurances volunteers could not be permitted to work on the reconstruction of the Boardwalk. Fundraising could be permitted provided that correct procedures were followed.

**Any Other Business:**

Cllr. Linehan Foley informed the Members that she had received a letter from the A.M.A.I. informing the Members that they had written to President Higgins asking him to use his powers under the Constitution to refer the Local Government Reform Bill to the Supreme Court to test its constitutionality and requesting each Councillor to do the same. Cllr. Linehan Foley requested that a copy of this letter be sent to each Councillor urging the President not to sign the Local Government Reform Bill 2013 into law.

This concluded the business of the meeting.