

NAAS TOWN COUNCIL 2006

The town of Naas has had a long and colourful history and was the seat of the Kings of Leinster up to 904. Naas Urban District Council was established under the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898 and officially came into being on 1 April 1900. It was a quiet beginning for the new Town Council with no elections and sitting members of the old Town Commission elevated to Urban Councillor status.

In 2001 the Local Government Act 2001 changed the Urban District Council status to that of Town Council. Naas was also a smaller town in 1900 with a population of just 3,836, compared to a bustling, vibrant town with a population of 20,044 today.

Elected Members & The Executive

Naas Town Council has nine elected Members as follows:

Cllr. Anthony Creevey
(Mayor)



Cllr. Pat Clear
(Deputy Mayor)



Cllr. Paddy Behan



Cllr. Pat McCarthy



Cllr. Willie Callaghan



Cllr. Mary Glennon



Cllr. Seamie Moore



Cllr. JJ Power



Cllr. Darren Scully



Councillors Callaghan, Glennon and Power are also members of Kildare County Council.

The Town Council meet on the third Tuesday of each month in Naas Town Hall on the Main Street, where meetings are open to the press and public. The administrative staff were also based in the Town Hall until April 2006 when they moved to the new Council offices located at Áras Chill Dara, Devoy Park.

The Community Hall in the Town Hall is hired out to a number of community groups for a diverse range of activities from karate to weight watchers, not to mention the Naas Country Market.

The Town Clerk, the first lady Town Clerk for Naas, Maura McIvor took up office in February 2005. The Town Engineer, Colm Flynn, also arrived in 2005. Mr John Lahart, Director of Services, Kildare County Council, took up the office of Town Manager in March 2006 from Mr Tommy Skehan, Director of Services.

Budget

The budget for 2006 was €9,567,776, that represented a 7.91% increase on 2005. The housing budget increased by €75,194 to address repairs to vacant properties, a planned maintenance programme for the Council's housing stock of 302 and an increased provision for open spaces in the Council's housing estates. The Council also saw the merit in hiring an additional School Traffic Warden for the town, bringing the total to four school traffic Wardens. Work also commenced on a new street name programme for the town and it is hoped that this will be finalised in 2007.

Considerable work was carried out on the installation of meters for commercial properties to comply with the Polluter Pays Principle and €20,000 was allocated for the supply and installation of bulk meters in old estates to monitor water usage and detect leakages. Water was charged at €1.10 per 1000 litres for commercial usage.

A new allocation of €5,000 was provided for graffiti removal, however, due to elevated incidents of graffiti around the town this sum was quickly utilised. There were also a number of new provisions in the budget for 2006, such as provision of lighting in our parks, imaging of cemetery records, boundary treatments to Monread Pumping Station and Ryder Cup Festival to name a few.

Projects

2006 was a significant year for new projects with the commencement of the public consultation on the following projects:

■ **CCTV Proposals for Naas**

It is expected that a decision on the Part 8 for CCTV cameras on the Main Street in Naas should be made mid-2007

- **Naas Urban Renewal Project to the front of the Courthouse and at Poplar Square**
It is anticipated that the Urban Renewal Project will be completed mid-2007
- **Civil Improvement Scheme at Fleming's Lane**
Works completed in 2006
- **Closure of the Pathway at Roselawn**
Works completed in 2006
- **Naas Southern Interceptor Sewer**
The Part 8 process also commenced on the proposed Naas Southern Interceptor Sewer and two pumping stations at Ballymore Road and the Blessington Road.
- **New Swimming Pool & Leisure Centre**
Considerable progress was made on the provision of a new swimming pool and leisure centre at Carragh Road in 2006. The Council had completed the public consultation at the end of 2005 and, under a section 85 Agreement, Kildare County Council took over the procurement for the project.
- **Skateboard Park**
The Council have set aside money towards the provision of a skateboard park for Naas and set up a sub-committee to progress the project. The committee have met with the Minister to discuss funding and it is anticipated that this project will be advanced in 2007.

Naas Ryder Cup Festival

September 2006 was a very busy month for Naas when the county hosted the Ryder Cup for the first time. Kildare Local Authorities staff, in partnership with the Civil Defence and the Gardai, put in a lot of hard work and effort to organise a very successful event. In order to celebrate the occasion Naas hosted a Ryder Cup Festival that included four free concerts on the Main Street and a Family Fun Day at Áras Chill Dara, organised by Naas Town Council with sponsorship from Allianz and with the support of Kildare County Council.

There was a carnival atmosphere at the Market Square in Naas for the concerts, as young and old enjoyed performances by the Rhythm of the Dance, The Fureys and Davey Arthur, Zoo2 and The Sullivan Brothers. There was further fun, thrills and spills at the Civic Park at Áras Chill Dara where the Family Fun Day had something for all the family, where even the sun came out for the party. The death defying "Circus of Horrors" delighted everyone with their amazing and astounding acrobatic performances while Shakers Hip Hop Dancers charmed onlookers between performances throughout the afternoon. Children loved the "The Teddy Bear's Picnic,

Puppet Shows, Balloon Making and Magic Shows. Bouncy Castles and a climbing frame also proved big hits.

Naas Civic Awards

In 1996 the Urban District Council wanted to recognise the outstanding activities and energies of the town's community groups by way of a Civic Award, and the Civic Award tradition was born. On Friday, 24th November, Naas held its Annual Civic Awards Night, where 45 Residents Associations received their Residents Associations Grants and 29 social, sporting and cultural groups were honoured for their contribution to the community. Among the special awards were Naas Lions Club, Naas CBS, Niall "Slippers" Madden, Naas GAA football and hurlers, Naas Boxing Club with Eroline O'Keefe being presented with a special Courage award and Eoin O'Brien being awarded with a special bravery award.

Community Grants

Naas also supports many community groups by means of Community Grants and in 2006 Naas awarded Nás na Riogh Housing Association a capital grant of €300,000 towards the provision of a community centre for the town.

Twinning in Naas

Naas Town Council also help and support the efforts of the very active Naas Twinning Group. Naas is twinned with five towns, Allaire in France, Dillingen in Germany, St. David's in Wales, Casalattico in Italy and Omaha in America. 2006 was a very busy year for the Twinning group who hosted a contingent from Omaha in the summer and another group from Allaire in September. The Twinning Group also made a trip to Dillingen in March where they attended the local trade fair and were guests of honour at a civic reception to celebrate the resilience of the twinning over the decades.

Planning & Development for Naas

Following the adoption of the Naas Town Development Plan 2005-2011, implementation of the policies and objectives included in the plan continued during 2006. The Manager will prepare a report on progress achieved in implementing the Plan and a report will be presented to the members during 2007.

The Development Plan contained commitments to produce a Local Area Plan for Naas and work is under way. In 2006 pre-draft submissions were sought from the public and it is expected that the draft will be completed in 2007, when it will go through a public consultation process.

Work also began on the Action Area Plan for Craddockstown, the North West Quadrant Masterplan and the Masterplan for Devoy. It is expected that these plans will be completed in 2007.

Planning Applications

Naas Town Council received 253 planning applications in 2006. Of these 44 were invalid leaving 209 valid applications. 143 decisions to grant and 13 refusals were issued. 14 appeals were sent made to An Bord Pleanala.

Pre-Planning Meetings

We held 25 pre-planning meetings in 2006 and we will continue this practice, which we consider has benefits both for the organisation and the applicant, in ensuring Naas is developed appropriately and in accordance with the Naas Development Plan 2005-2011.

Planning Enforcement and Prosecutions

Naas Town Council received 40 complaints of unauthorised development in 2006. 25 warning letters were issued with 8 enforcement notices served on unauthorised developments. We instigated legal proceedings in one case and the case was successful

Development Contribution Scheme

Naas Town Council adopted the Development Contribution Scheme on 2 March 2004. Its purpose is to clearly identify the manner in which development contributions are levied and how the amounts collected are spent. A list of projects is being drawn up so that the Council can allocate monies collected in a strategic manner.

Urban Renewal

The public consultation process was completed in 2006 for Naas Urban Renewal Scheme for Poplar Square and the Courthouse. It is expected that work will be completed by August 2007.

Derelict Sites 2006

Naas added two properties to its Derelict Sites Register in 2006 and will actively pursue other sites in 2007.

Controlling Development

Considerable progress is being made in the area of taking-in-charge. We commenced consultation on 31 estates, including 3 roads in Naas, and it is envisaged that further progress will be made on taking these estates in charge in 2007.

Waste Management

Disposal

Naas Town Council does not operate a refuse collection for Naas. The refuse collection service is provided by private operators, who are licensed by Kildare County Council.

Naas Town Council are responsible for 4 recycling centres at the following locations:

- Fairgreen
- Ballycane Church Car Park

- Áras Chill Dara
- Tesco Shopping centre

Enforcement & Fines

Our Environment Department operate an environmental complaints Database whereby all complaints are logged for report and an appropriate action assigned. In 2006 we received 97 complaints and all 97 cases were investigated. Following investigation appropriate action, whether through statutory notices or warning letters, was taken. Naas Town Council collected approximately €21,000 in litter fines in 2006. We also now operate a “Name and Shame” campaign, where future convicted offenders will be publicly named in the local press.

Education and Awareness

Naas are very fortunate to have five Community Wardens who champion the Council’s fight against Litter. Naas Community Wardens operate a Litter Education and Awareness Programme in the schools, which has been very successful. A number of schools have set up litter picking teams and hope to work at achieving Green Flag status.

In 2006 the Community Wardens in Naas received permanent status. Naas has five Community Wardens who provide an essential link between the Town Council and the Community. While one of their key roles is the enforcement of the town’s pay parking system and the Litter Pollution Act, they also liaise with Residents Associations, the local Gardai and businesses

Housing

The housing function of local authorities has developed over the years. While we are often considered accommodation providers, the Council now has a greater role in developing the life of housing estates. In 2006 Naas Town Council commenced the recruitment of a Tenant Liaison Officer who would actively liaise with Tenants, build relationships and encourage and promote good estate relations.

Naas Town Council at the end of 2006 had a housing stock of 302 houses that include a good mix of single and family type accommodation. In 2006 14 new tenancies were allocated. We had 77 new applications for housing in 2006, bringing the total number looking for housing to 354 at the end of 2006.

We purchased one property in 2006 and commenced design for 125 social and affordable units for the site at Devoy. It is envisaged that the public consultation process will commence in 2007 on this project.

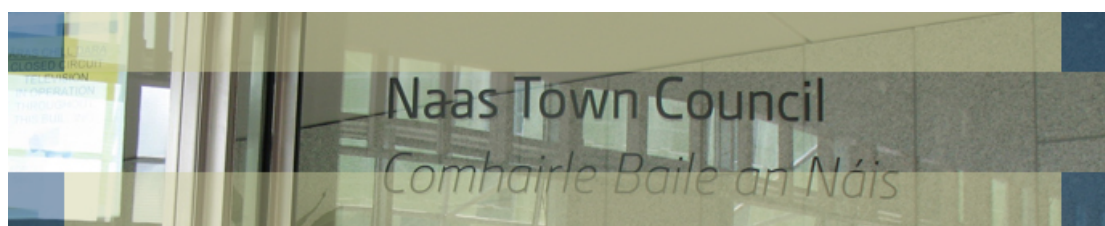
Part V

Negotiations with private developers continued in 2006 to secure affordable units for citizens and it is expected that these units will start to come through in 2007.

Roads

A number of improvement works were carried out on roads in 2006, with the assistance of Kildare County Council, including the realignment of the Caragh Road, construction of the Jigginstown Bridge and construction of the Millenium Link Road, which opened in October 2006. Works on completing the network of inner relief roads will continue into 2007.

Naas Town Council also completed road improvement works in Naas to the value of €587,000 in 2006.



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