WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
Comhairle Chontae na h-Iarmhí

PART XI OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (as amended) PART 8 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, 2001 (as amended)

PART 8 PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the requirements of the above, notice is hereby given that Westmeath County Council proposes to undertake the following works:

Proposed development at Athlone Castle, Saint Peter's Terrace and Bigmeadow, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, N37 A6D7 (a Protected Structure, RPS No. 70, and a National Monument Heritage Site Reg.No. 15000352), comprising enhancement works aimed at improving interpretation, visitor facilities, and the overall visitor journey, to enhance public engagement with the historic site.

The proposed development will include the following:

1. Localised external restoration and adaptation to existing fabric to facilitate ticketing, coffee kiosk new staircases and relocation of existing staircase
2. New flooring and joinery / painting works
3. Provision of new internal exhibition spaces
4. Installation of new entrance airlocks for environmental control of collection
5. Internal refurbishment works including upgrades to electrical and mechanical systems
6. New external interpretation, lighting, wayfinding and signage works
7. Small scale demolition works to widen openings, removal of non-original elements to reveal original features
8. Fabric conservation works where required
9. Ancillary Works

The proposed site includes the Athlone Castle external areas, historic buildings and modern additions which all are contained on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) (Ref.No. 70) under the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020, and furthermore on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) (Reg.No. 15000352) with Archaeological, Architectural, and Historical categories of interest. The site is bounded by Athlone Town bridge, also known as Shannon Road Bridge (a regional Monument and protected structure - Reference Number RPS 004) to the North, The Shannon quays to the East and Market Place to the West. The site is also located within an Architectural Conservation Area (Athlone Town). An Archaeological Impact Assessment and Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment Report have been prepared having regard to the proposed development and is available for inspection with this application.

The proposed Part 8 development has undergone **Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening** under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and an **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening** under Directive 2014/52/EU (as amended). No likely significant effects were identified during the AA and EIA Screening processes. Therefore, there is no requirement to proceed to the next stage of AA or for a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) to be produced. In addition, the proposed development is not a type of development that triggers the requirement for an EIA and subsequent preparation of an EIA Report as per the prescribed classes of development and thresholds set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). Any person may, within
4 weeks from the date of this notice, apply to An Bord Pleanála for a screening determination as to whether the proposed development would be likely to have significant effect on the environment

Plans and Particulars of the proposed development are available for inspection at https://consult.westmeathcoco.ie/en and can be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the following Offices:

- Athlone Municipal District, Civic Centre, Church Street, Athlone, Co. Westmeath N37 P2T.

Between the Hours of 9.30a.m. to 4.00p.m. each day, excluding weekends and Bank Holidays, from **28 July 2025 up to and including 26 August 2025**.

Submissions:

Submissions or observations with respect to the proposed development, dealing with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which the proposed development would be situated, may be made via the Council's Consultation Portal at https://consult.westmeathcoco.ie/en or a written submissions or observations in relation to the proposed development, may also be submitted to the Administrative Officer, Planning Department, Aras an Chontae, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath N91 FH4N to arrive not later than 4.00pm on Monday **9. September 2025**.

Submissions should be labelled 'LAA 9 Athlone Castle Enhancement'.

Written submissions or observations received will form part of a statutory report to be presented to a meeting of Westmeath County Council and also will form part of a public document. The information contained in submissions may be available for public inspection, to be published on the Councils website and available at the Council's public counter. Details, including the names of those making submissions may be shared with relevant Council Departments or their agents involved in this Part 8 process.

SIGNED: Jean Ryan, Director of Services,
Áras an Chontae, Mullingar **Date: 25. July 2025.**

Nose of Tralee finalist 'is my rock' says Athlone woman

VOTING will open on Thursday for this year's Nose of Tralee final, with the owner of Westmeath's representative describing the dog as her rock.

Apollo, a one and a half year old Collie Shepherd mix, had been selected as one of 32 finalists after two rounds of public votes involving some 1,550 competitors.

Amanda Murniece, from Athlone, said: "Apollo, my beautiful Collie Shepherd mix, deserves to win the Nose of Tralee because he's so much more than just a handsome face - he's my rock.

"Apollo has helped me through so much within the year and a half I've had him and I am forever thankful to have the best boy by my side," she explained.

Amanda outlined that her 15-year-old collie passed away in January, followed four weeks later by her cat.

"It was the hardest time of my life," she explained. "I struggle with mental health every day and with anxiety attacks."

Amanda soon afterwards came across a litter of collie/shepherd mix puppies. When she saw Apollo she "instantly fell in love with him" and from the first day she said Apollo has been her biggest supporter.

"Apollo brings joy to everyone. You might be having a tough day but he will make sure to make you feel better, whether it is him having his zoomies around, knocking anything in sight and thinking he's a sports car, or bouncing around like tigger, he will brighten your day

Apollo pictured by the River Shannon in Athlone.

"Everyone needs an Apollo in their life. He knows how to brighten anyone's day and he just naturally knows when you need him the most," Amanda said.

She explained how she wanted to spread the message that, even if you feel down, there is always a light at the end of the tunnel which, in her case, was Apollo. "I honestly don't know where I would be without him."

Amanda now intends to have Apollo therapy trained and to bring him to schools and other locations.

"We are going to be spreading awareness about mental health every day because it's so important to us," she said.

Public voting reopens on July 24 and closes on August 18. One lucky pet will be named the 2025 Nose of Tralee on August 19. Voting will be on www.petsittersireland.com/final-nose-2025/

If would like to keep up to date with Apollo's journey, look for the Westmeath dog on Instagram and TikTok, under the handle: @apollo_colliex

"Between 2pm and 4.15pm, you don't leave your house"

KAREN WEBB

ISSUES regarding traffic congestion on Athlone's Brawny Road during school term time have been highlighted by local residents

With work due to begin on Athlone's largest ever housing development in a matter of weeks, one Brawny resident pointed out that traffic congestion is a major issue on the road.

"Between 2pm and 4.15pm you don't leave your house because of the school traffic," Brawny resident Michelle Dowling said. "You would be 40 minutes sitting in traffic. In the height of the school term you have 28 buses coming in there," she said.

She was speaking at a public meeting on the new Plovers Wood development in the Lissywollen area last Thursday *(See Page 6 for full report).*

She pointed out that there is only one road approaching the roundabout for people heading into town. She also used the opportunity to raise the condition of the road with Cllr Frankie Keena, saying there are potholes and three sunken manholes on it.

Cllr Keena said that this was a separate issue to the housing development, but that he had raised the need for a left-hand lane at the roundabout numerous times and would raise it again.

"This came up during all of the discussions on moving the buses (from Retreat Road) and it has been raised numerous times. There is a single lane of traffic on that road and there is ample room for another slip road," Cllr Keena told the *Westmeath Independent*. "That piece needs to be addressed, there needs to be a link in with TII (Transport Infrastructure Ireland) as the roundabout is under the control of TII. Brawny Road is under Westmeath County Council."

He added that the Plovers Wood development would include cycleways along that road.

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SIGNED: Jean Ryan, Director of Services, Áras an Chontae, Mullingar **Date: 25. July 2025.**