

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Mtek Building, Armagh Road, Monaghan on Monday 13th April, 2015 at 2.00 p.m.

Chair: Cllr Padraig McNally, Cathaoirleach

Present: Cllrs. Bannigan, Bennett, Campbell, Carthy, Connolly, Coyle, Crowe, Gallagher, Keelan, McElvaney, B. McKenna, McPhillips, O'Hanlon, P. Treanor and S. Treanor.

Mr. E. Cummins, Chief Executive, Mr. A. King and Mr. P. Clifford, Directors of Services, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, Mr. A. Hall, Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. L. Bradley, Museum Curator, Mr. N. O'Connor, Environmental Education Officer and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

Apologies: Cllrs Conlon and Maxwell.

Urgent Business:

The Cathaoirleach informed the meeting that a notice of urgent business had been submitted, as follows:

That Monaghan County Council calls on the Government to reverse the reduction in qualifying age limits for parents in receipt of One Parent Family Payment, applicable from 2nd July 2015.

If this change goes ahead, thousands of lone parent households will suffer a significant loss from their weekly incomes, including lone parents in further education who will no longer be able to receive the maintenance portion of the SUSI grant as a direct result.

Under the new rules, recipients of one parent family payment will be transferred to a new transitional job seekers payment after their youngest child turns 7 – this will result in a loss of up to €86 per week.

Across the country, almost 12,000 lone parents will suffer a financial loss – 6,400 lone parents would lose up to €36.50 per week; 4,500 lone parents would lose up to €57 per week and 800 lone parents would lose a staggering €86 per week.

It was unanimously agreed that the motion be taken as urgent business and would be dealt with before the end of the meeting.

1. Confirmation of Minutes:

- (i) *On the proposal of Cllr. P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna, it was agreed that the minutes of Council meeting held on 2nd March, 2015, be confirmed.*

2. Correspondence

The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda for the meeting:

- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture in relation to the Council's resolution regarding a meeting with the CEO of Bord Bia and representatives of the poultry sector.

- Letter from the Minister for Social Protection in relation to the PSC office in Ballybay and the branch office in Clones.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Justice and Equality in relation to the Direct Provision system of accommodation for asylum seekers.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for the Environment in relation to the Councils resolution regarding the proposal to amalgamate library services in Monaghan and Cavan.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in relation to the PSC office in Ballybay.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Primary Care, Social Care and Mental Health regarding the Council's resolution relating to the fluoridation of water.
- Letter from the Office of Public Works regarding the North Western Neagh Bann Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study.
- Letter from Bus Eireann in relation to school bus route in south Monaghan.
- Letter from the National Oversight and Audit Commission outlining the Commission's work to date and plans for 2015.
- Email from the Secretary of the Monaghan Association Beds & Herts (Luton) inviting two representatives from the Council to attend the annual dinner dance of the Association.
- Resolution from the Carrickmacross-Castleblayney M.D., calling on the Minister for Jobs, the IDA and Enterprise Ireland to ensure that any new factories that are opened are not sold to private commercial groups but are kept in the ownership of State Agencies.
- Resolution from Offaly County Council calling for a change in legislation to allow Council's benefit from the revenue generated by unpaid parking fines which go to court – currently this money is retained by the State.

The following correspondence was circulated at the meeting:

- Letter from the Minister for Transport in relation to the 2015 regional and local road allocation and the local improvements scheme.
- Resolution from the Carrickmacross-Castleblayney M.D., calling on the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to ensure that decisions regarding the removal of school bus services are not taken without a four week period of prior consultation with the local authority.
- Letter from the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in relation to funding for protected structures and insurance for privately owned heritage structures.

Proposals arising out of correspondence:

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Bennett, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council expresses deep concern at the closure of the Social Welfare Office in Clones and the closure of the Social Protection Office in Ballybay. That we seek a meeting with Minister Burton so that we can clarify and correct some of the assertions made in her correspondence to the Council.

On the proposal of Cllr McNally, seconded by Cllr O'Hanlon it was agreed that Monaghan County Council seeks an urgent meeting with Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Mr. Richard Bruton, T.D., to discuss the replacement of jobs in the BOSE plant, Carrickmacross, as well as all of Co. Monaghan.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr O’Hanlon it was agreed that Monaghan County Council expresses its total outrage, disappointment and abhorrence at the failure of the Monaghan Fine Gael Oireachtas representatives – Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys, T.D. and Sean Conlan, T.D. - to confirm Ministerial direction of the continuance of the Social Protection Office in Ballybay.

On the proposal of Cllr O’Hanlon, seconded by Cllr Coyle it was agreed that this Council calls on Minister Pascal Donohoe, TD, to increase the funding of €7.1 million - the lowest level of funding in 12 years for local and regional roads. Unfortunately some of our local roads are almost impassable and this issue needs to be urgently addressed.

On the proposal of Cllr O’Hanlon, seconded by Cllr McNally it was agreed that this Council adopts the motion from Carrickmacross-Castleblayney M.D., that any new factories are kept in the ownership of State Agencies and not sold to private commercial groups.

On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr S. Treanor it was agreed that the Council adopt the resolution from Offaly County Council from Offaly County Council calling for a change in legislation to allow Council’s benefit from the revenue generated by unpaid parking fines which go to court – currently this money is retained by the State.

On the proposal of Cllr McKenna, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was agreed that the Council accept the invitation from the Monaghan Association of Beds and Herts (Luton) to attend the annual function on 2nd May and that it be represented by Cllr Paudge Connolly.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Keelan it was agreed that the Council accept the invitation from Fort Augustus Irish Descendants, Prince Edward Island to attend the annual Settlers Day Celebrations from 20th to 25th May and that it be represented by Cllr Sean Conlon and a Council official (Museum Curator).

Replying to comments from the members regarding the condition of the road network in the county, Mr. E. Cummins, Chief Executive stated that Council officials were undertaking a survey of the condition of the roads in the county. This survey, when completed, would form the basis of a submission to the Department of Transport for additional funding for the upkeep of the county’s roads. Mr. Cummins stated that he would bring a report on the matter to the next meeting of the Council.

3. Audit Committee:

(i) To receive Audit Committee Report on the 2013 Annual Financial Statement and the Local Government Auditor’s Report.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Connolly it was agreed that the Audit Committee Report on the 2013 Annual Financial Statement and the Local Government Auditor’s Report be noted.

(ii) To receive Annual report of the Audit Committee for year ended 31 December, 2014

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Connolly it was agreed that the Audit Committee Report for the year ended 31 December, 2014 be noted.

4. Management Report – March 2015.

The members considered the Management Report for March which had been circulated with the agenda.

The Chief Executive, Head of Finance and the Directors of Service responded to issues raised by the members.

In response to queries from members in relation to the proposed amalgamation of the administration of the library service in Cavan/Monaghan, Mr. E. Cummins, Chief Executive explained that discussions were currently taking place in relation to this matter. Mr. Cummins stated that a shared service would not result in the closure of any branch library in the county. The service would remain the same – only the management of the library service would change. The general public would see an improvement in terms of a greater selection of books as a result of a more efficient purchasing system. The changes proposed were about efficiencies and effectiveness.

5. To adopt the Monaghan County Council Draft Annual Report for 2014

Mr. A. King, Director of Services, outlined the main contents of the Draft Annual Report for 2014. The Annual Report highlights the work and the outputs achieved across the Council's functional areas in 2014. It also includes details of particular policies, programmes, services and other activities undertaken during the year by the local authority including the three MD's in the county.

He referred to the main highlights for 2014, as follows:

- Huge amount of change that occurred during 2014 such as the abolition of Town Councils, the establishment of the new Municipal Districts.
- The Local elections.
- The incorporating of the County Enterprise Boards into the local authority in the form of the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs).
- On the 1st of January 2014, Irish Water assumed responsibility for water and wastewater services to homes and businesses connected to a public water supply.
- Greater linkages between the local authority and the community and voluntary sector have been made through the establishment of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and the Public Participation Network (PPN).

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed to adopt the Draft Annual Report of Monaghan County Council for the year 2014.

6. East Border Region Members Forum –

- (i) To fill vacancy on the East Border Region Members Forum arising from the resignation of Cllr David Maxwell.**

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Campbell, it was agreed that Cllr Eugene Bannigan be nominated to fill the vacancy on the East Border Region Members Forum, arising from the resignation of Cllr David Maxwell.

- (ii) **To nominate two additional members to the Board of EBR Ltd., from among the Monaghan County Council membership.**

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Crowe, it was agreed that, in addition to Cllr Crowe, Cllrs Campbell and O'Hanlon be nominated as Directors to the Board of EBR Ltd.

7. To approve final membership of County Monaghan Joint Policing Committee

On the proposal of Cllr McPhillips, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was agreed to approve the membership of the County Monaghan Joint Policing Committee, as per the report of the Director of Governance and Corporate Affairs dated 19th February, 2015.

8. To approve recommendations and minutes of Corporate Policy Group

(i) CPG meeting held on 24 February, 2015

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr R. Gallagher, it was agreed to adopt the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 24th February, 2015.

(ii) CPG meeting held on 26 March, 2015

- **Annual Service Delivery Plans 2015:**

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Bannigan, it was agreed that the Annual Service Delivery Plans for 2015, as circulated, be noted and approved.

- **Draft Litter Management Plan – recommendation from SPC**

Mr. N. O'Connor, Environmental Education Officer outlined the recommendation from the Environment SPC, which had been considered by the CPG, in relation to the spending of an additional €25,000 to deal with littering.

Cllr B. McKenna expressed his disappointment that the Council was proposing to spend more money cleaning up after people who were littering along the roads and in the towns in the county. He stated that the Council needs to focus on enforcement and the issuing of fines by using additional CCTV cameras to generate more prosecutions. A number of members supported Cllr McKenna's comments. Members expressed concern at the fact that the Council had spent circa €500,000 last year on litter related activities, whilst the problem seems to be getting worse – this money could be better spent on the county's roads or on housing projects.

Cllr Gallagher suggested that the Council write to the Courts/Probation Service seeking additional hours under the community service programme to assist with the problem of litter.

Mr. O'Connor stated that he welcomed the debate as a means of publicising the problem. The Council currently have 3 mobile and 2 fixed cameras and are looking to purchase 4 more cameras to utilise on the N2 project. It is difficult to identify people who litter – currently it is only possible to identify the car registration numbers. He noted that Monaghan Town had

gone up in its standing in the IBAL Anti Litter League. He commended the voluntary bodies who engaged in litter picking and looking after their areas.

Cllr B. McKenna proposed that the €25,000 is not spent in the manner outlined by the SPC/CPG and that the SPC re-examine the possibility of introducing extra cameras.

Cllr Gallagher said the effectiveness of deploying cameras was not as simple as it might seem. He referred to the detailed presentation given by the Environmental Patrol Warden to the SPC and said it would be beneficial for the Council to see it.

Mr. A. King, Director of Services said it was very hard to bring a successful prosecution through the Courts. It was virtually impossible to capture a moving vehicle on CCTV and 90% of the refuse on motorways and lay-bys was thrown out in this way.

On the proposal of Cllr B. McKenna, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was agreed that the funding allocated would be predominantly used for the deployment of cameras in additional locations for a period of two/three months, following which a review would be undertaken on the success of the initiative and a report brought to the September Council meeting

A query from Cllr McPhillips, in relation to the breakdown of the twinning budget, was clarified in committee.

- **New Museum facility:**

Mr. L. Bradley, Museum Curator, outlined draft proposals for the provision of a new County Museum. He stated that the Council intends to carry out a study to prepare a design for a new building. He stated that it was intended to have the study completed in time to allow an application to be made for PEACE IV funding in 2015. Regarding the location of the proposed building, Mr. Bradley stated that ten sites over each of the towns in the county were considered an analysis carried out on each looking at constraints and, in particular, in relation to the limited timeframe available to undertake a study and prepare a design to allow a suitable application to be made. Sites for inclusion in the study include the current Museum; Town Library; Machinery Yard site; O'Neill's Farm site on the bypass; Monaghan Town Council building and the site next to Mtek Buildings on the Armagh road.

Following his presentation, Mr. Bradley responded to comments from the members.

Cllr O'Hanlon proposed, Cllr McElvaney seconded that the Council seek a meeting between the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys, T.D., and a delegation from the Council to discuss funding options.

Mr. A. King, Director of Services referred to an opportunity for funding such a project under the Shared Open Spaces element under Peace IV. However, an application for such funding would require a fully completed application, an identified site, a building design and planning permission. The project would have to be completed in strict conformity with the submitted Peace IV application. The Council did not have funding to identify all possible locations in the county or the timeframe. Having regard to the fact that Monaghan town and North Monaghan was significantly affected by the N.I. troubles, it is felt that this project could deliver on the requirement of Peace IV, but a lot of work will have to be done to make a

successful application. Mr. King added that the Council was not seeking funding for the project from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

On the proposal of Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was agreed that the Council proceed with the proposal to undertake the feasibility study for a new County Museum in Monaghan Town.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Bannigan, it was agreed to adopt the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 26th March, 2015.

9. To fix dates for the following Sub-Committee meetings

(i) Ireland 2016 – Steering Committee

It was agreed that the following members would be nominated to sit on the Ireland 2016 Steering Committee –

Cllr Padraig McNally
Cllr Ciara McPhillips

Cllr Seamus Treanor
Cllr Pat Treanor

It was agreed that should any of the above members not be available to attend a committee meeting that a substitute could be nominated in advance to the Meetings Administrator.

(ii) Coiste Gaeilge

It was agreed that a meeting of An Coiste Gaeilge would be held on 6th May at 4pm

10. Armagh Monaghan Memorandum of Understanding - Update.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that the Council approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Armagh City and District Council and Monaghan County Council.

11. To receive reports from Members attending Conferences/Training events

It was agreed that the reports received from Cllrs Conlon, Keelan, McElvaney, McKenna, and McNally, in relation to their attendance at the following conferences/training events:

- URBACT National Information Day, Maynooth, Co. Kildare
- AILG Training Seminar, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
- AILG 2nd Annual Conference, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan.
- ICLRD/CCBS Conference, Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh.
- Renewable Energy Conference, Santry, Co. Dublin
- The future of L.G. in Ireland, Gartan, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.

12. Business submitted by Chief Executive.

There was no business submitted.

13. Matters arising out of the minutes of Council meeting held on 2nd March, 2015

This item was not dealt with.

14. To receive update on North South Interconnector project

Cllr N. Keelan updated the meeting in relation to the current status of this project. He stated that a planning application for the proposed Interconnector will soon be submitted to An Bord Pleanála. He also stated that the people of Cavan and Monaghan were not being treated the same as those affected by the Grid Link and Grid West projects, where plans provided for possible undergrounding of powerlines.

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that in light of Eirgrid's new draft Strategy and Review document, that this Council writes to our Constituency Minister, T.D.'s Senators, Minister Alex White, T.D., and also to the Chairperson and members of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Transport and Communication and EirGrid Plc, requesting that no further work is carried out on the North South Interconnector, and that a full review is carried out on this project, using advances in technology and other options. And that the overgrounding of this project using a 400 kv Pylon option is not considered as an option.

15. To receive update on Ulster Canal project

A copy of the Press Release from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and the Gaeltacht was circulated with the agenda. The press release outlined details of a meeting between Monaghan County Council and Waterways Ireland to discuss the development of off-road cycling and walking facilities along the route of the Ulster Canal between Castle Saunderson and Clones.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Bennett, it was agreed that this Council writes to Minister Heather Humphreys, TD, and Minister Carál Ní Chulín seeking a joint meeting to consider advancing the re-opening of the Ulster Canal.

16. Questions:

Cllr P. Connolly asked:

1. In view of the announcement by Government on the 6th March this year that a campaign is being prepared to tackle mortgage arrears by expanding the Mortgage-to-Rent Scheme by making it easier for borrowers who cannot make repayments to switch from owning their own home to renting the home as social tenants:
 - a) What level of discussion/engagement has there been from the Dept of the Environment regarding the scheme?

Reply: The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government have issued a number of circulars, most recently: Housing 4 of 2015. The Department have outlined the various procedures to be followed in respect of the operation of the scheme including treatment of the Local Authority Mortgages.

b) What additional funding is being made available to implement the scheme

Reply: The Department have not indicated formally to the local authority any additional funding for the operation of the scheme

c) How many homeowners avail of the current Mortgage-to-Rent Scheme on an annual basis?

Reply: Since the scheme begun there has been a total of 38 cases, submitted by the respective lending institutions for the Monaghan area. This is out of a total of 2,805 cases. Of these 38 cases submitted, 6 have been submitted in 2015.

2. To ask Monaghan County Council for an update in relation the new rural speed limit signage and when it is hoped to have the signs on our local roads?

Reply: The signs are in stock and arrangements are underway to have the signs put in place.

Clr C. Carthy asked:

3. Has there been any update on the task force (set up by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Richard Bruton TD) to see if alternative employment could be created in Carrickmacross following the closure of the Bose Manufacturing Plant in the town?

Reply: Enterprise Ireland has hosted two meetings with other statutory bodies in relation to the upcoming closure of the Bose plant in Carrickmacross. The meetings are designed to co-ordinate the activities of statutory services such as Intreo, Education and Training Board, Enterprise Ireland and I.D.A. in relation to the plant's closure, sourcing alternative employment opportunities for staff and marketing the facility to prospective manufacturing investors.

4. Can Monaghan County Council confirm if there has been any update from Central Government on a Local Authority Swimming Pool Programme with regards to:

a) The re-introduction of this program?

b) An evaluation being carried out in Carrickmacross for the necessity of such a facility in the south of the County?

Reply: The Local Authority Swimming Pool Programme Grant aid from the Exchequer was made available to local authorities and bodies supported by local authorities, towards the cost of providing new swimming pools or refurbishing of existing pools. The last closing date for receipt of applications under this programme was 31 July 2000 and since then some 57 applications have been or are being dealt with. The current programme is closed to new applicants. There is no indication from Government to reopen this scheme. The former Town Council had set up Swimming

Pool Sub-Committee. No evaluation for a new swimming pool in Carrickmacross has been undertaken.

Clr C. Carthy asked:

5. Can the Council clarify what the procedure is for taking privately built housing estates into the care of the Local Authority?

Reply: The procedure is laid out in the Monaghan County Council policy document 'Taking in Charge Procedures for Private Housing Developments' (November 2010), which is available online on the Councils website, or in hard copy format at Planning Section reception.

6. How many valid applications/responses has Monaghan County Council received from their recent advertisements requesting property and land to both buy and/or lease in the County?

Reply: Monaghan County Council has received a reasonable number of responses to the recent advertisements seeking expressions of interest in the sale and/or lease of property for housing purposes. The exact number of valid applications/responses cannot be divulged as it is commercially sensitive information and the assessment process is ongoing. When all properties have been assessed each person that has submitted an expression of interest will receive a letter stating whether or not the Council is interested in pursuing the matter further. It is envisaged that the level of funding available for house purchases will be known by the end of April 2015 and a final decision will then be made with regard to which houses will be targeted for purchase.

Clr S. Conlon asked:

7. What is the total number of housing applications on file for social housing throughout the county giving a breakdown per urban centre? Please include also the number of former applicants who have been transferred to and accommodated through the RAS and HAP schemes?

Reply: There are a total of 1233 housing applicants. Of this number there are 73 households seek housing in Ballybay; 299 households seeking housing in Carrickmacross; 192 households seeking housing in Castleblayney; 96 households seeking housing in Clones and 432 seek housing in Monaghan town. 57 of the above applicants have been accommodated through HAP and 23 accommodated through RAS.

8. Regarding the 'Fibre To The Business' (FTTB) rural broadband scheme recently piloted in Claremorris, Loughrea, Ardee and Kilkenny for the purpose of bringing broadband to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in rural towns and villages, have Monaghan County Council engaged with providers Enet to express interest in availing of this €25 million scheme?

Reply: E-net did seek to engage with businesses in Castleblayney town centre to roll-out its broadband service in early 2014. However, there was insufficient interest to

allow the project to advance. E-net require at least 50% of the businesses along the route to commit to the project before advancing to the installation stage.

Clr R. Gallagher asked:

9. Has the Council identified any suitable lands for the construction of much needed social housing, has the Government allocated any funding for same and does the council intend to invest in building passive houses with a view to reducing energy use and energy costs for its tenants into the future?

Reply: As recently advertised Monaghan County Council is actively seeking suitable land for the construction of social housing and has been in direct contact with parties in possession of suitable land in the areas where the demand for social housing is highest. On the 1st of April 2015 the Government announced that €1.5 Billion will be provided to reach Social Housing Targets for Local Authorities up to year 2017. The official press release states that Monaghan County Council is to receive a budget allocation of €11,546,622 for the provision of 205 dwellings by the end of 2017. The details regarding the means by which the dwellings are to be provided is not available yet however the announcement mentions Capital (construction & acquisition) and Current (leasing).

Any houses to be built under the Council's construction programme are required to comply with the Building Regulations and associated Technical Guidance Documents and Department guidelines that are in place at that time. The higher levels of insulation, draught proofing and renewable energy measures now required in house building are moving towards passive house design and will result in lower than average energy usage in any such houses that are built.

10. With regard to the landfill facility at Scotch Corner what are the future plans for same following the review and has the council investigated the feasibility and cost of harvesting energy from the methane gases at the site?

Reply: With the assistance of RPS consultants Monaghan County Council have substantially advanced a major review of the Scotch Corner Landfill. The output from this review will provide key data and analysis which will guide and inform future decisions relating to the site. Matters under review include the viability of developing further cells, complying with current licence requirements, a long term solution to the disposal of leached and the options for the use of the gas arising from the decomposition process. The contents of a preliminary report were presented to the Landfill committee in March and a further meeting is propose for early May at which the various options for each issue will be presented for consideration.

11. In relation to Irish Water has the Council passed on the details of local authority tenants to the company?

Reply: Under section 26(1)(a) and(b) of the Water Services Act 2013 Irish Water have made a request for tenants data; under Sections 26 (3) and Section 26 (5) (a) of the same act the Local Authority is obliged to comply with this request. Tenants were informed of this requirement and the fact that their name and address were being forwarded to Irish Water in a letter issued on 24th March 2015.

ClIr R. Gallagher asked:

12. What plans are in place for this year's National Spring Clean, particularly with regard to roads connecting our towns which are now included in IBAL inspections?

Reply: Monaghan County Council is actively promoting Spring clean within the community and voluntary sector with a target of 50 communities participating. With specific regard to National Routes it was agreed at SPC level to give an additional funding to each Municipality to litter pick along the National Routes. This activity will be taking place over the next number of weeks.

ClIr C. Bennett asked:

13. In relation to the tenant purchase scheme, can Monaghan County Council please provide the general public with the information needed and the criteria needed to avail of this scheme?

Reply: The Government has not introduced a new Tenant Purchase Scheme since the previous scheme concluded. Under the National Housing Strategy 2020 it is set out that a new Tenant Purchase Scheme will be introduced in Q2 of 2015 however at the time of this report the details are not available. Tenants will be informed directly when the details of the scheme become available.

14. Can Monaghan County Council please contact Bus Eireann and address the following issue. Presently no direct bus service is available from Ballybay to Dublin. Could Monaghan County Council please investigate the possibility of changing this as this presently leaves Ballybay very inaccessible.

Reply: Details of the issue referred to by the Councillor will be forwarded to Bus Eireann for consideration.

15. Can Monaghan County Council please provide a list of vacant council houses and which areas they are located in? Can Monaghan County Council also provide reasons as to why these houses are not occupied when so many people are on the housing list?

Reply: In relation to the areas involved there are the following in the individual Municipal District areas

	Vacant Properties	Offered
Carrickmacross/Castleblayney MDC Area	4 long term voids in Castleblayney awaiting comprehensive repair scheme. Funding being sought from Department 3 short term voids subject to reletting works (Corcreagh/Castleblayney/Oram)	4 units – 2 offered (Carrickmacross (2)/Inniskeen) and 1 occupied under a caretaker agreement whilst works ongoing in a tenants house.
Ballybay-Clones MDC Area	4 short term lets requiring reletting works (Ballybay (2), Clones (2))	1 caretaker agreement entered into whilst house being repaired (Clones)

Monaghan MDC Area	4 short term voids subject to reletting works (Emyvale(2)/Monaghan (2))	3 units offered – Monaghan (1), Glaslough (1), Emyvale (1) 9 units in Mullaghmatt will be ready imminently and expressions of interest sought from tenants and general offers made to applicants.
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16. In relation to Irish Water, has Irish Water any authorisation to come onto private properties to install water meters. This is causing conflict for many residents in Ireland. This is leading to issues such an inequality, as not everyone is being treated the same or being charged fairly.

Reply: This query should be referred to Irish Water. Local Representatives can contact Irish Water directly by calling 1890 178 178 and requesting the Local Representative Support Desk or by e-mail to localrepsupport@water.ie.

17. Regarding the implementation of the Derelict Sites Act 1990, can the Council advise:
- If any derelict site notices have been served on owners of individual derelict houses and, if so, how many with a breakdown by electoral area?
 - If not, do the Council intend to proceed with issuing same to owners of individual derelict houses and if so can timelines for action be provided?
 - If not, what service do they intend to provide to residents who reside beside abandoned derelict houses to help them alleviate the issues outlined above?

Reply: No Derelict Site Notices have been issued on individual derelict houses in recent years. Notifications of derelict premises under the terms of the Derelict Sites Act 1990 (as amended), may be submitted to the Planning section, for investigation and, if necessary enforcement under the Act.

CIlr N. Keelan asked:

18. In relation to the provision of a number of new bore-wells/abstraction points, for the Carrickmacross public water supply, what consultation has taken place with landowners/farming community, adjacent to these abstraction points, Given that no organic fertiliser, slurry etc, can be spread within a 200metre distance of these points, which is understandable, will these landowners be compensated in any way, given that they can no longer use their land to the optimum degree?

Reply: This query should be referred to Irish Water. Local Representatives can contact Irish Water directly by calling 1890 178 178 and requesting the Local Representative Support Desk or by e-mail to localrepsupport@water.ie

Cllr N. Keelan asked:

19. In relation to the N2 national primary route, and the large number of accidents that have taken place on this road including many fatalities, and in particular from the Ardee to Castleblayney stretch, what discussions have taken place with the National Roads Authority (NRA) and the Council's Roads Section, in relation to the possibility of extending the 2 plus 1 design solution/or dual carriageway as a design solution, also what plans are in place to improve or redesign the many dangerous junctions, including the junction at (Tullyvaragh, Broomfield) as an example, which is a death trap?

Reply: It is proposed to pilot a road lining scheme that will improve road safety by means of implementing a traffic calming arrangement on the road. The exact parameters of this scheme are being developed and agreed with the NRA. There is no budget allocation currently for constructing a new dual carriageway. The 2+1 type of road arrangement is no longer employed and would not be suitable at this location. An audit of all junctions along the N2 was carried out in 2012 and improvement works was carried out to a number of junctions in 2013. The 2 junctions referred to in the question have enhanced provisions including deceleration lanes and near side passing arrangements. The arrangements are consistent with the current NRA design standards for these junction types. The proposed pilot scheme will once more review junction arrangements along its extents.

20. In relation to the housing situation in the county, and the huge waiting lists, how many families/individuals are in receipt of the new housing assistance payment, (HAPs), how many families/individuals are housed under the rental accommodation scheme (RAS), how many families/individuals are in the mortgage to rent scheme, and in relation to the recent government announcement to provide funding for the provision of homes, has Monaghan County Council received its allocation, and also what plans are in place to build or buy houses in the county?

Reply: To date (1/4/15) 57 applicants – 16 single applicants and 41 family units. There are a total of 274 RAS tenants – 97 of these are housed by Voluntary Bodies. We have no applicants for the mortgage to rent scheme. Monaghan County Council has received provisional funding allocation which includes both current and capital funding in the sum of €11,546,622, which may include purchase, construction, returning vacant houses to use and leasing. The targets for 2015 – 2017 set by the Department is 205 units.

21. Following a recent Department announcement, in relation to the provision of new rural speed limit signs, that are to be placed on minor roads, when has this work to be carried out in the county, how much will it cost, and who is paying for it?

Reply: Procurement and funding for the signs was through the National Roads Authority. Responsibility for erection of the signs which are now in stock is with the local authority. Arrangements are underway to have the signs in place.

22. How many rateable buildings/premises, are paying rates to Monaghan County Council at present, what was the amount of funding collected in commercial rates in 2014?

Reply: 2585 rate demands were issued for 2015. The total collected for Rates for 2014 was €9,770,506 which represented a 64% collection rate.

Cllr S. Coyle asked:

23. (a) What is the current position of Monaghan County Council on the provision of Demountable dwelling's, to housing applicants in rural areas, who can provide a site to the local authority, allowing the applicant to remain in their own immediate area, with dignity and comfortable accommodation, how many Demountable Dwellings have Monaghan County Council provided in the year's 2010, '11, '12, '13 & '14?.

Reply: In the past Monaghan County Council has used and relocated Council owned demountable dwellings from one site to another to accommodate housing applicants. This practice has been discontinued as the demountable dwellings currently owned by the Council do not comply with the current Building Regulations and are being disposed of when vacant. The cost of providing a new demountable dwelling (Modular Home) compliant with the current Building Regulations including the development of a site is approximately €65,000 including VAT. The Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019 limits the use of mobile homes as temporary accommodation to a "maximum period of five years". The provision of demountable dwellings at a cost of €65,000 to be used for five years only would not be considered to be value for money and is therefore not sustainable. Monaghan County Council owns 31no demountable dwellings including twenty-six two-bedroom dwellings and five one-bedroom dwellings. The majority of the demountable dwelling stock is between 10 to 20 years old and no new demountables have been acquired in the time period outlined.

- (b) Has Monaghan County Council confirmed the position of local authorities in adjoining counties, as to their position/provision of demountable dwellings to applicants in rural area's?

Reply: In respect of other authorities Louth County Council and Laois County Council have ceased the provision of demountable dwellings. Cavan County Council and Wicklow County Council provide them on a case by case basis and only under extenuating circumstances.

24. What is the current position of Monaghan County Council on the provision of "Farm Homes" to housing applicants in rural area's, where a housing applicant can provide to the local authority, a site on a farm holding and how many "Farm Homes" were erected by this local authority in the years 2010, '11, '12, '13 & '14?

Reply: Monaghan County Council has not ceased the provision of Farm Homes to housing applicants in rural areas. However applicants have to provide overriding reasons as to why they are unable to be housed in a village locations close to their area of choice; and where the local authority have existing properties; or where housing can be rented in the private market. The financial restrictions in place have limited the ability of the local authority to construct rural housing and no farm homes were erected between 2010-2014.

25. What is the up to date position, on the introduction of a tenant purchase scheme, for social housing tenants, and what are the indications from government of the introduction of same, as many social housing tenants are expressing an interest in same?

Reply: The Government has not introduced a new Tenant Purchase Scheme since the previous scheme concluded in 2012. Under the National Housing Strategy 2020 it is set out that a new Tenant Purchase Scheme will be introduced in Q2 of 2015 however at the time of this report the details are not available. Tenants will be informed directly when the details of the scheme become available.

26. Can Monaghan County Council confirm to members, when a permanent County Librarian will be appointed for County Monaghan, the retention of Clones Library, as Library Headquarters and the retention of all branch library services/facilities across County Monaghan?

Reply: No, Monaghan County Library cannot confirm when a permanent County Librarian will be appointed as this decision requires the sanction of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. The recommendations on a shared Services programme as set out in "Managing the Delivery of Effective Library Services" has not been progressed and accordingly no decision has been made with regard to the possible location of the proposed shared Library Headquarters for Monaghan and Cavan Library services. The reform proposals for the library sector envisaged no change to the current branch library structures. None of the branches in County Monaghan are under threat of closure and it is proposed to continue to expand and develop the range of services provided to customers in all branches over the coming years.

27. Has Monaghan County Council been requested or provided to Irish Water details of social housing tenants (Names/Addresses etc.), of Monaghan County Council social housing tenants for Irish Water billing purposes?

Reply: Yes, Under section 26(1)(a) and(b) of the Water Services Act 2013 Irish Water have made a request for tenants data; under Sections 26 (3) and Section 26 (5) (a) of the same act the Local Authority is obliged to comply with this request. Tenants were informed of this requirement and the fact that their name and address were being forwarded to Irish Water in a letter issued on 24th March 2015.

17. Notices of Motion:

This item was deferred to the next meeting

18. Votes of sympathy/congratulations.

It was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to P.J. Holland, a member of the Council's outdoor staff, on the death of his wife Marian, RIP.

It was agreed to extend a vote of congratulations to the following:

- *Michelle Caulfield, Scotstown on being selected as the Monaghan Rose 2015 and wish her well in the regional finals.*
- *Caitríona Ní Chléirchín, formerly of Gortmoney, Emyvale, on being selected as joint winner of the Michael Hartnett Poetry Award for 2015.*

- *Our Lady's Secondary School, Castleblayney and Carrickmacross High School on reaching the McLernon Ulster School's Final and to Our Lady's on winning the Final.*

19. Conferences/Training.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Coyle, it was agreed that the Council be represented at the following conferences/training events by the members listed.

Promoting Authority	Subject/Theme	Venue	Dates	Members Selected
LAMA	Spring Training Seminar	Ard Ri House Hotel, Tuam, Galway	10 & 11 th April	Padraig McNally Hugh McElvaney Jackie Crowe Brian Mc Kenna David Maxwell Paudge Connolly
AILG	Training Day	Limerick	18 th April	Cathy Bennett
AILG	Training Day	Clayton Hotel, Galway	23 rd April	Sean Conlon Noel Keelan Jackie Crowe Hugh McElvaney Eugene Bannigan Paudge Connolly Padraig McNally Seamus Coyle
AILG	Training Day	Sligo	16 th May	Pat Treanor Brian Mc Kenna Noel Keelan Jackie Crowe Hugh McElvaney Eugene Bannigan Padraig McNally Seamus Coyle

Urgent Business:

Cllr P. Treanor proposed, Cllr Carthy seconded

That Monaghan County Council calls on the Government to reverse the reduction in qualifying age limits for parents in receipt of One Parent Family Payment, applicable from 2nd July 2015.

If this change goes ahead, thousands of lone parent households will suffer a significant loss from their weekly incomes, including lone parents in further education who will no longer be able to receive the maintenance portion of the SUSI grant as a direct result.

