

**Minutes of meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Mtek Building,
Armagh Road, Monaghan on Monday 2nd April, 2012 at 10.00 a.m.**

Chair: Cllr S. Coyle, Mayor.

Present: Cllrs Bannigan, Carthy, Carville, Conlon, Connolly, Crowe, Gallagher, Keelan, Maxwell, McElvaney, B. McKenna, McNally, McPhillips, Murray, O'Brien, O'Hanlon, P. Treanor and S. Treanor.

Mr. D. Fallon, A/County Manager, Mr. P. Clifford, Mr. D. Treanor, Mr. A. King, Directors of Service, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner, Mr. L. MacCinna, Executive Engineer and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

Apologies: Cllrs Carthy and S. McKenna

The Mayor advised the Members that he had received three notices of Urgent Business as follows:

1. Notice from the Fine Gael Members in relation to new policy for access to Rossmore Forest Park
2. Notice in the names of the Fianna Fail Members in relation to the closure of the GAME shop in Monaghan Town
3. Notice in the names of the Sinn Fein Members in relation to the closure of the GAME shop in Monaghan Town

It was agreed that the Council would deal with the three notices at 2.30 p.m.

The Mayor then advised that he had received a notice to suspend Standing Orders, as follows:

Notice in the names of the Fianna Fail members:

“ That the Council suspend Standing Orders in accordance with S.O. 25 to discuss the Household Charge ”

It was unanimously agreed to suspend Standing Orders to discuss the Household Charge.

Mr. D. Fallon, A/County Manager outlined the background to the Household Charge. He stated that County Managers were only advised in the days before Christmas that local authorities would be required to collect the charge. Monaghan Local Authorities had complied fully with the legislation and had undertaken the campaign as directed. He stated that County Monaghan had performed reasonably well in the collection rates.

A lengthy debate then followed to which a number of the Members contributed. The following proposals were dealt with during the course of the debate.

Cllr Connolly proposed, Cllr S. Treanor seconded that the Council write to the Minister for the Environment and An Taoiseach requesting a three months extension of the payment deadline for the €100 Household Charge for those who wish to pay the charge

Cllr Murray proposed an addendum, as follows, which was agreed by the proposer and seconder of the motion - 'and that an instalment system of payment be put in place.'

A recorded vote was taken on Cllr Connolly's proposal which resulted as follows:

For Cllrs Bannigan, Carville, Connolly, Coyle, Gallagher, Maxwell, McElvaney, McNally, McPhillips, Murray, O'Brien, O'Hanlon and S. Treanor. Total 13

Against Cllrs Conlon, Crowe, Keelan, B. McKenna and P. Treanor Total 5

The Mayor declared the motion carried.

Cllr B. McKenna proposed, Cllr P. Treanor seconded, that the Council write to the Minister for the Environment Phil Hogan, T.D., calling for the repeal of the Household Charge and the bringing in of a Supplementary Budget to address the shortfall as a result of repealing this legislation.

A recorded vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For Cllrs Conlon, Crowe, Keelan, B. McKenna and P. Treanor Total 5

Against Cllrs Bannigan, Carville, Connolly, Coyle, Gallagher, Maxwell, McElvaney, McNally, McPhillips, Murray, O'Brien, O'Hanlon and S. Treanor. Total 13

The Mayor declared the motion defeated.

1. Confirmation of Minutes:

On the proposal of Cllr Crowe, seconded by Cllr Connolly it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 5th March, 2012, be confirmed.

2. Correspondence:

The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda -

- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Social Protection in relation to funding for Community Employment schemes.
- Letter of acknowledgement from Minister Fergus O'Dowd in relation to the proposed takeover of water services by Water Ireland.
- Letter from the Monaghan Association Beds and Herts (Luton) inviting the Council to be represented at the Annual Dinner Dance on 5th May, 2012.
- Letter from Michael Egan, formerly of NRA, thanking the Council for its good wishes on his recent retirement.
- Letter from Rossmore Coarse Angling Club in relation to the International Pike Challenge competition being held later this year.

- Letter from Monaghan Sports Partnership updating the Council on the activities undertaken since the beginning of the year.
- Letter from Cavan County Council in relation to undocumented Irish in America.
- Resolution from South Tipperary County Council in relation to underage drinking.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Health in relation to the Feasibility Study on North/South co-operation in Health and Social Care.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Finance in relation to Council's resolution regarding distressed mortgage holders.
- Letter from the Irish Postmasters Union – Cavan/Monaghan Branch in relation to the launch of a new campaign 'Post Office-Open for Business' to highlight the new services that are being provided and to draw attention to the many additional services that Post Offices could provide.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the Council re-issue the invitation to representatives of the Irish Federation of Pike Angling Clubs to make a presentation regarding up-coming major angling events in County Monaghan and also present a SWOT analysis of this considerable natural resource.

Cllr Gallagher proposed, Cllr B. McKenna seconded that the Council adopt the resolution from South Tipperary County Council calling on the Minister of State for Primary Care to adopt a public health act that will end the scourge of underage drinking and requesting the Government to impose a minimum cost price that alcohol can be sold for to aid attempts to stop the abuse of alcohol by certain sections of society.

A vote by show of hands resulted in 15 for, 3 against. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr S. Treanor it was agreed that the Council write to An Taoiseach and the Tanaiste requesting them to re-commence a programme similar to the Morrison and Donnelly visa programmes in the 80's and 90's thus enabling the 50,000+ undocumented Irish in the U.S. formalise their residency and apply for US citizenship.

On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr S. Treanor it was agreed that Monaghan County Council write to the CEO of the Industrial Development Authority in this region and invite him to the next monthly meeting of this Council to outline what steps he has taken to attract jobs to County Monaghan over the previous 5 years and what plans he has to attract jobs to County Monaghan in the coming 5 years.

On the proposal of Cllr O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr O'Brien it was agreed that the Council accept the invitation from the Monaghan Association in Luton to attend the annual function on 5th May, 2012.

On the proposal of Cllr O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr McNally it was agreed that the Council investigate the way in which social housing rents are calculated.

On the proposal of Cllr B. McKenna, seconded by Cllr Crowe it was agreed that a meeting of the Housing SPC be held as soon as possible to deal with the matter of the housing rents.

Cllr B. McKenna proposed, Cllr Conlon seconded that on any Member of the Council becoming aware of a Government Minister visiting the county that they notify the Meetings Administrator who will, in turn, request a meeting with the visiting Minister in relation to Monaghan General Hospital.

A vote by show of hands on Cllr McKenna's proposal resulted in 16 for 1 against and 1 abstention. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

Cllr O'Hanlon complimented all involved with the official opening of the new fire station in Monaghan Town. He stated that he had handed a letter to Minister Hogan that day in relation to the NPPR charge. He proposed that a letter of good wishes be sent to Cllr Sheila McKenna for a speedy return to good health. This was agreed.

On the proposal of Cllr O'Brien, seconded by Cllr Coyle it was agreed that representatives from the Irish Postmasters Union be invited to a future meeting of the Council.

3. Part VIII Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations 2001

- (i) To consider granting permission for the construction of new access roads, parking bays & the upgrading of existing access road and all associated culverts and drainage together with the provision of fishing pegs/stands and connecting paths at Concra Wood, Castleblayney (Reference: 11/8009)
- (ii) To consider granting permission for the construction of new access roads, parking bays & the upgrading of existing access road at Black Island and White Island and all associated culverts and drainage together with the provision of fishing pegs/stands and connecting paths and the construction of a causeway to White Island. (Reference 11/8010)

Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner outlined the content of the Directors reports dated 29th March, 2012. The reports recommended that the Council proceed with the developments, as outlined therein, subject to a number of conditions.

Cllr O'Brien welcomed this development and commended all involved in the project as well as the angling groups and the Tourism Officer on securing funding. He welcomed the fact that major National and European Angling competitions will be held at Lough Muckno in 2012 and 2013. Cllrs Carville and Crowe supported the sentiments expressed by Cllr O'Brien.

- (i) *On the proposal of Cllr O'Brien, seconded by Cllr Carville it was agreed that the Council approve the construction of new access roads, parking bays & the upgrading of existing access road and all associated culverts and drainage together with the provision of fishing pegs/stands and connecting paths at Concra Wood, Castleblayney (Reference: 11/8009) to comply with*

the Director's Report dated 29th March, 2012 and in accordance with Part VIII of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations 2001.

- (ii) *On the proposal of Cllr O'Brien, seconded by Cllr Carville it was agreed that the Council approve the construction of new access roads, parking bays & the upgrading of existing access road at Black Island and White Island and all associated culverts and drainage together with the provision of fishing pegs/stands and connecting paths and the construction of a causeway to White Island. (Reference 11/8010) to comply with the Director's Report dated 29th March, 2012 and in accordance with Part VIII of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations 2001.*

On the proposal of Cllr O'Hanlon seconded by Cllr McNally it was agreed that the Mayor make contact with Failte Ireland prior to his departure to Luton, in relation to the promotion of the Fishing Competition in Castleblayney in September and all other festivals being held in the county in particular the National Festival in Carrickmacross in June.

4. To receive recommendations from CPG meeting on 20th March, 2012

The Members considered the recommendations from the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 20th March, 2012.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna, it was agreed that the recommendations from the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 20th March, 2012, be approved.

5. Litter Management Plan 2010 – 2012 – Progress Report 2011:

The Members noted the Progress Report on the prevention and control of litter as per Article 10(3) of the Litter Pollution Acts 1997 – 2009.

A number of members expressed disappointment at the figure of €846,500 that had been spent on street cleansing programmes in 2011 whereas it could have been better spent in other areas. They commended the activities of the Council's staff in the various initiatives and awareness campaigns undertaken during the year and they also paid tribute to all the voluntary work being done by members of the public and by Tidy Towns groups in litter picking, etc.

Cllr O'Hanlon proposed, Cllr Gallagher seconded that the Council write to the Tidy Towns Committees commending the good work done by them in County Monaghan over the past number of years.

Mr. P. Clifford stated that a public notice in the local newspaper might be considered as an alternative to writing to groups in case some groups were omitted. This was agreed.

6. To adopt Draft Annual Report for Monaghan County Council 2011:

The members considered the draft Annual Report for Monaghan County Council for 2011 which had been circulated with the agenda.

Cllr Keelan called on the Director of Housing to recommence the policy of notifying Members when Council houses are being allocated.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that the Council submit an application to the Smarter Travel Scheme that will provide funding for the development of a cycle trail along the route of the Ulster Canal from Clones to Monaghan town.

On the proposal of Cllr O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr McNally it was agreed that a letter be sent to the Department of the Environment calling for the allocation of funding for the installation of carbon monoxide detectors in local authority houses that currently do not have these devices.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the Council invite Dr. John Bradley and Professor Michael Best, authors of 'Cross Border Economic Renewal' to attend a meeting of the Planning and Economic Development SPC to elaborate on the setting up of a 'Border Development Zone'.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Crowe, it was agreed that the draft Annual Report for Monaghan County Council for 2011 be adopted.

7. To receive Draft Annual Report on the activities of the Audit Committee for 2011

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr McNally it was agreed that the draft Annual Report on the activities of the Audit Committee for 2011 be adopted.

8. Roads – Draft Speed Limit Bye-Laws 2012:

- (i) **To consider submission regarding proposed extension to speed limit at LS 8900, Lurgans, Carrickmacross.**

On the proposal of Cllr O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr McNally it was agreed that the Council approve the proposed extension to speed limit at LS8900, Lurgans, Carrickmacross, as circulated with the agenda for the Council meeting.

- (ii) **To adopt Draft Speed limit Bye-Laws 2012.**

On the proposal of Cllr McNally, seconded by Cllr Murray it was agreed that the Council adopt the Draft Speed Limit Bye-Laws 2012.

9. To re-affirm Cllr Coyle as the Council's nominee to the Board of Monaghan Integrated Development Limited.

On the proposal of Cllr Carville, seconded by Cllr Crowe it was agreed that Cllr Coyle be re-affirmed as the Council's nominee to the Board of Monaghan Integrated Development Limited.

10. To nominate one member to the Comhairle na nÓg and Intergenerational Peace Project Steering Committee 2012/2013.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Carville it was agreed that Cllr McPhillips be nominated to sit on the Comhairle na nÓg and Inter-Generational Peace Project Steering Committee 2012/2013.

11. To receive reports from Members attending Conferences

The Members noted the reports from Cllrs Coyle, Keelan, McElvaney, McNally, Murray, O'Hanlon, and P. Treanor in relation to their attendance at the following conferences –

- Environment Conference, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
- Economic prospects for Agriculture 2012, Kilkenny.
- Development of enterprise through tourism and sport, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.
- The rise of the creative individual, Portlaoise, Co. Laois
- Help busy Councillors become effective leaders, Westport, Co. Mayo
- Mental Health and Suicide Awareness, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford
- Colmcille Winter School (Tourism) Gartan, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
- Spatial Planning/Building Networks, Cookstown, Co. Tyrone.

12. Proposed Eirgrid 440kv Interconnector

Cllr Bannigan advised that a case taken by the Monaghan Anti Pylon Group has set a precedent for similar actions in the future. The High Court has ruled that the group does not have to pay security fees in its case for recovery of costs from its oral hearing against Eirgrid last December. He stated that this will give confidence to local community groups that they too can go as far as the High Court without huge expenses. EirGrid have the right to appeal the judgement to the Supreme Court. The oral hearing on the planning application for the northern section of the interconnector had opened earlier this year but had been adjourned indefinitely.

13. Business submitted by County Manager

Clones Erne East Sports Centre:

Mr. A. King, Director explained to Members that since the March meeting of the Council, the preferred contractor for this project had withdrawn and it was necessary

to move on to the next lowest bid. However, the price differential between both contractors is €130,000. To maintain the overall required contingency figure for the project of €280,000 an additional €130,000 is now required.

On the proposal of Cllr Seamus Coyle and jointly seconded by Cllrs Pat Treanor and Hugh McElvaney it was agreed that Monaghan County Council would provide a contingency figure of €130,000 towards the Clones Erne East Sports Partnership Project in addition to the €100,000 already committed at the March 2012 meeting of the Council.

NPPR charge – Mr. Fallon advised the Members that with effect from 1st April, 2012 a €10 handling fee for the NPPR charge would be levied on members of the public who paid the charge over the counter in local authority offices. The charge is not payable for on-line transactions.

On the proposal of Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr McNally it was agreed that this Council calls on the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government to simplify both property charges ie household charge and NPPR charge and to include, where applicable, both charges in the one invoice going forward.

Connect Ireland:

Mr. Fallon advised that the Mayor and himself had met with officials from Connect Ireland and they had indicated a desire to make a presentation to the Council at a future meeting in relation to engaging with the Irish diaspora abroad with a view to attracting companies that are expanding internationally to locate in Ireland and create new jobs in the Irish economy. It was agreed that Connect Ireland would be invited to attend the May meeting of the Council at 5.30 pm on 8th May, 2012.

Ulster Canal:

The Manager circulated an update to the Members in relation to the current status of the Ulster Canal planning application. The Council has been in contact with the Planning Service of Northern Ireland and its submission is awaited.

Ballybay Wetlands:

Mr. Fallon stated that a sum of €12,500 remains unpaid – this amount was part of the original allocation of €200,000 pledged to the Ballybay Wetlands Centre.

On the proposal of Cllr Crowe, seconded by Cllr Carville it was agreed that a final payment of €12,500 be paid to Ballybay Development Association in respect of the Ballybay Wetlands Centre.

Waterways Ireland:

It was agreed that a presentation from officials of Waterways Ireland would be received following the Annual Meeting of the Council in June, 2012.

14. Matters arising out of minutes of Council meeting held on 5th March.

Matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 5th March, 2012 were responded to by the relevant official.

15. Presentation by Claire Cunningham – I.T. Business Leaders Forum

The Mayor welcomed Claire Cunningham, Champion, CDB It Business Leaders Forum to the meeting. Mr. Kevin McNally and Mr. Paul Treanor MCC also attended. The Mayor invited Ms. Cunningham to address the meeting.

Ms. Cunningham thanked the Council for the opportunity to address the Members. She stated that the Monaghan IT Forum had been working with its members over the last year to improve access and promote awareness of information and technology in the county. The Forum understands that the cost of establishing mobile communications towers in County Monaghan is significantly more expensive than any other county in Ireland as a result of the development charges being levied. The Forum believes that this will be an issue for the development of mobile communication in the county and in particular, the roll out of 4G technology. She further stated that this technology will be critical to some business to enable them to remain competitive and in communication with customers and suppliers. In addition, the phenomenal growth of smart phone usage and wireless broadband access within the county is dependent on access to mobile towers and the continued maintenance and updating of the technology on these towers. Ms Cunningham asked that the Council would re-consider its policy in relation to development levies on mobile communications towers.

Ms. Cunningham then responded to queries raised by the Members.

The Mayor thanked Ms. Cunningham for a very informative presentation.

On the proposal of Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr Carville it was agreed that the Council forward the matter to the Planning SPC who will consider it and bring forward a report to the full Council in due course.

16. Questions:

Cllr M. Carthy asked:

1. When is it envisaged that the agreed works at the N2 junction at Aghavilla, Carrickmacross will be undertaken to facilitate traffic exiting the junction travelling north?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council made an application for funding for these works to the NRA for 2012. No funding has been made available to undertake the works in the current 2012 road allocations. At the request of the South Monaghan Road Area Committee the Council have written to the NRA requesting that they reconsider the funding of these works.*

2. What is the cost annually incurred by Monaghan County Council in providing fluoride in the public water supply? Will the Council give a substantive report on the process involved in provide fluoride in the water supply?

Reply: *Five Public Water Schemes (Monaghan, Clones, Carrickmacross and Lough Egish RWSS) are fluoridated within the recommended Drinking Water regulation limit of 0.6 -0.8 mg/l. The Council closely monitors fluoride levels at each WTP on a daily basis. Each treatment plant was upgraded in 2010 to include bunded bulk storage tank, bunded day tank and duty and standby dosing pumps which are regulated by the plant caretaker to ensure levels are within the recommended limits.*

The annual cost to provide fluoride in the five public water supplies for 2011 was €64,000 (O+M Cost - €55,200/year & Acid Cost - €8,800/year). This equates to 1.6cent/M3 of treated water produced.

The HSE collect independent samples on each network on a monthly basis to verify levels are within the 0.6 – 0.8mg/l range.

Cllr M. Carthy asked:

3. When is it expected that lights at Carrickashedoge community centre, Upper Magheracloone, will be erected?

Reply: *It is planned to undertake these works during the summer months.*

4. Will the Council give a comprehensive update on the position regarding the proposed group home for women with physical and sensory disabilities at Carrickmacross including an expected timeframe for completion of the project?

Reply: *The formal CAS2 Application was submitted to the Department in December 2011. A site visit was arranged by the Departments' Inspector in early March 2012, where he met with Monaghan County Council's Senior Housing Engineer to discuss the proposal. The Inspector raised concerns relating to the steep slope beside the proposed building. In the Inspector's estimation, a 6m high retaining wall would be required to allow the building to fit on the site as drawn and significant excavation would be required which would impact on the existing open space. RESPOND Housing Association was immediately informed of these concerns. The Inspector's written report was received on the 28th March 2012 and forwarded to RESPOND on that date. RESPOND has been requested to address the issues raised as soon as possible. This hold up is extremely disappointing at this stage, however, if all the issues can be addressed quickly in a proactive manner, it is still hoped that the project can proceed within a reasonable timeframe.*

Cllr P. Connolly asked:

5. In view of the recent tragedy in February of this year where a 2 year old boy died as a result of an accident on an unfinished housing development what plans have Monaghan County Council to secure unfinished developments where (A) the Council themselves have tenants living in accommodation in unfinished housing developments with many safety issues? (B) What plans are there to ensure that safety issues on all other unfinished developments are addressed?

Reply: *Safety on unfinished development sites remains the responsibility of property owners and developers. Local authorities have no liability in relation to property owned by third parties.*

Notices have been issued in relation to five developers under the Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act 1964 in relation to dangerous structures within their developments, requiring them to secure the site and make it safe. Where dangers to public safety exist, the sanitary authority may apply to the District Court, under this Act, to seek an order to have works completed to remove dangerous structures or places.

Monaghan County Council has carried out works on three unfinished housing developments at Carrickroe, Monaghan town and Ballybay, where the developer cannot be traced and a public safety risk existed. The costs incurred completing these works have been recouped from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

Cllr P. Connolly asked:

6. To ask Monaghan County Council for (A) an update on the level of money sought from central funding to complete unfinished developments and (B) the level of money received from central funding to complete these unfinished developments? And (C) the likely timescale for completion of these works?

Reply: *Remedial safety works were carried out on three Category Four sites 'Chapel Court' - Carrickroe, 'Wylies Hill' – Ballybay, and 'Forest Walk' – Monaghan and all expenditure totalling €32,359.50 was recouped by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in 2011 under their Unfinished Housing Development fund. This fund was established to address immediate public safety risks in scenarios where the developer was not contactable and no receiver was appointed.*

7. In relation to water mains bursts at weekends what policy does Monaghan County Council have in relation to repairing these at weekends? Is there any threshold of water loss before these repairs take place?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council monitors the network through an IT system called 'PMAC'. Changes in quantity used/lost are highlighted through this system which informs the technical staff of any significant changes to the network. Operational decisions to repair a water main burst are based on several factors including,*

- *Quantity involved*
- *Time of discovery*
- *Location*
- *Health & Safety concerns – public and staff*
- *Demand on network at time of discovery*
- *Available resources – internal / external*

The threshold of water loss is specific to the network in question and any decision to repair is evaluated considering all of the above criteria.

Cllr C. McPhillips asked:

8. When a member of the public discovers a leak in the public water pipes, maintained by Monaghan County Council, who should they contact?

Reply: *Water Services Monaghan Co. Co. - 047 30500.*

9. When a member of Monaghan County Council's staff discovers a leak in the water system, what procedure is in place to ensure that this is remedied as efficiently as possible?

Reply: *The member of staff shall report this leak to the Water Service section of Monaghan County Council where the leak will be evaluated under the following criteria*

- *Quantity involved*
- *Time of discovery*
- *Location*
- *Health & Safety concerns – public and staff*
- *Demand on network at time of discovery*
- *Available resources – internal / external*

Following evaluation a timeline and decision to repair/not to repair will be made.

10. Can Monaghan County Council review the placement of signage at the junction on the Monaghan to Clones Road, known as Skeagh Bridge, close to the village of Smithboro? Although the signage is welcome, the sign directing traffic to Threemilehouse is causing a visual obstruction for drivers attempting to come onto the main road from the minor road.

Reply: *The Clones Area Office will remove the sign temporarily and will liaise with the NRA and their contractors with regard to the adjustment of the sign location to improve visibility.*

Cllr P. McNally asked:

11. (a) Has this Council carried out its full review of the pricing system used for discharging the contents of rural septic tanks in our sewerage systems throughout the County
- (b) Has this resulted in a further reduction of the €25.00 introduced last month as an interim measure and

Reply: *The Council has carried out a full review of the pricing system, taking account of the cost associated with treating m³ of including*

- *Disposal Charges of sludge*
- *Chemicals involved in the process (polymer)*
- *Labour*
- *Power kWhrs/Ton*
- *Water*

Monaghan County Council, at their last meeting, agreed to charge €25/m³.

Cllr P. McNally asked:

(c) What spare capacity is available throughout County Monaghan to accommodate such sludge and what plants is this spare capacity located.

The table below indicates the capacity and available capacity of our plants

Agglomeration Name	Actual PE	Treatment Plant	Plant Design PE	Present Treatment
Clones	3100	Clones Waste Water Treatment Plant	4,500	Secondary treatment only
Ballybay	3135	Ballybay Waste Water Treatment Plant	7,283	Secondary treatment only
Castleblayney	5692	Castleblayney Waste Water Treatment Plant	12960	Secondary treatment with NR
Carrickmacross	12000	Carrickmacross Waste Water Treatment Plant	12,150	Secondary treatment with NR
Monaghan	16533	Monaghan Waste Water Treatment Plant	43,833	Secondary treatment with NR

12. (a) In light of the tragedy on an unfinished housing estate in Athlone recently, is this Council satisfied that all such sites in County Monaghan are safe and
(b) What role, if any, has Monaghan County Council in this regard?

Reply: *Safety on unfinished development sites remains the responsibility of property owners and developers. Local authorities have no liability in relation to property owned by third parties. Notices have been issued in relation to five developers under the Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act 1964 in relation to dangerous structures within their developments, requiring them to secure the site and make it safe. Where dangers to public safety exist, the sanitary authority may apply to the District Court, under this Act, to seek an order to have works completed to remove dangerous structures or places.*

Monaghan County Council has carried out works on three unfinished housing developments at Carrickroe, Monaghan town and Ballybay, where the developer cannot be traced and a public safety risk existed. The costs incurred completing these works have been recouped from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

Cllr P. McNally asked:

(a) What is causing the unacceptable delay in completing the housing development in Cloughvalley, Carrickmacross

Reply: *Initially, Department approval of the project had been delayed for more than 12 months due to uncertainty regarding finance. When the project*

eventually commenced on site a design change was required to allow the sewers from the houses under construction to be connected into the new trunk sewer in Cloughvalley which was by then under construction as part of the Carrickmacross Sewerage Scheme. It appears that this may have caused some delay as apparently it was not possible to go ahead with some of the ground works until the sewer was redesigned.

Cooperation with the nearby school in allowing access for the construction of the recently completed multi-use games pitch at the school may also have contributed to part of the delay as construction traffic accessing the pitch had to cross the site.

A sewer from the school crosses the site and it also had to be redesigned to link into the new trunk sewer referred to above, which may have had an impact on timing of some of the ground works.

The exceptionally cold weather in late 2010 and early 2011 and exceptionally wet weather in late 2011 and early 2012 led to further delays and the difficult financial climate has meant that some of the subcontractors appear to have had difficulty in keeping a full compliment of staff on site.

There are six different house types in the scheme and they all have energy saving features such as ventilation systems, solar panels and stoves with external air intakes. The combination of energy saving features used is not common in Social Housing and significant work was required to ensure that what was proposed and designed could be constructed in a way that would result in good quality houses that can be relatively easily maintained and heated.

The site is very restricted and as work progressed and the houses were constructed the restricted nature of the site led to difficulty in accommodating the storage of materials. The movement of construction traffic within such a restricted site caused difficulty in completing some of the external work and the houses could not all be constructed at the same pace as some elements had to be left out temporarily for access.

The Contractor has given a firm commitment to complete the houses by mid April 2012 and progress on site has improved very significantly during the last few weeks. The revised programme submitted by the Contractor appears to be achievable and it is expected that the houses will be handed over on or before the 20th of April 2012.

(b) When is it expected that these houses will be allocated.

Reply: *It is expected that the houses will be completed on or before the 20th of April 2012 and will be allocated immediately after they have been handed over.*

Cllr P. McNally asked:

13. (a) When is it expected to have new shelving, equipment and book stock installed in Carrickmacross branch library?

Reply: *The shelving and furniture are on order and the installation of both is scheduled to take place on the week beginning 23rd April 2012. The Council is*

also arranging to have the new internet and management system installed in the same week. This will require the closing of the branch library for this week to facilitate the installations.

Cllr P. McNally asked:

(b) How many people are using the library since it was transferred to the new Civic Offices in Carrickmacross compared to the same period prior to the transfer.

(b) In order to compare usage in the new library to that of the old library listed below are statistical reports for the first eight weeks of opening in the new branch compared with the same eight weeks last year:

<i>Time Period</i>	<i>Feb/March 2011</i>	<i>Feb/March 2012</i>	<i>Percentage Increase</i>
<i>New Members/Membership Renewal. The number of people who joined the library for the first time or renewed their membership</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>576</i>	<i>320%</i>
<i>Items borrowed by Children</i>	<i>2,616</i>	<i>4,786</i>	<i>83%</i>
<i>Items borrowed by Adults</i>	<i>2,872</i>	<i>4,428</i>	<i>54%</i>

Much greater usage of the service is expected once the branch has been fully fitted out.

Cllr R. Gallagher asked:

14. What plans does the Council have regarding the inspection of septic tanks with regard which areas to target first and what is the expiry date for the €5 registration fee offer?

Reply: *Local Authorities are awaiting direction from the DOECLG in regard to the inspection plan, as this plan is developed by the agency (EPA).*

The Minister announced that the expiry date for €5 is 30th June 2012.

Final details in relation to the collection / registration of septic tanks have not been received by the local authority, to date.

15. Could the Council liaise with the Courts Service with regard to best use of the community service programme for litter picking, clean ups etc?

Reply: *The Litter Management Plan 2010 – 2012 sets out the objectives to prevent and control litter. One of the objectives is to develop new partnerships with various voluntary, public and commercial bodies with the view to creating joint anti-litter initiatives and to examine the potential of using the probationary services to undertake various clean-ups of litter black –spots.*

Monaghan County Council's Environment is encouraging local Tidy Towns groups through the County Monaghan Tidy Towns network to avail of the

probationary services to assist them with their work. There are currently a number of groups availing of this help.

Cllr R. Gallagher asked:

16. Has the Council made any progress with regard to seeking sponsorship for the upkeep and development of roundabouts from local businesses?

Reply: *The Council's Area Engineer has liaised with the Town Engineer's Office and has employed the services of a landscape company to maintain the roundabouts as part of the Council's maintenance programme.*

17. Has the Council any plans to improve the quality of water in and around Scotstown?

Reply: *There are no drinking Water compliance issues with the public supply to Scotstown.*

Cllr S. Conlon asked:

18. Of the 2000 houses that have been accessed through the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) for the purpose of social housing throughout the country, what number, if any, have been apportioned for County Monaghan?
(a) What residential property developments throughout the county have been identified as having come under the authority of NAMA?
(b) What efforts are being made to secure such properties for the purpose of much needed social housing for our county?

Reply: *The Council has had no official correspondence from NAMA regarding any specific residential property developments. The Council has met with some Developers who have stated that their properties have fallen under the authority of NAMA. It appears that Developers have been required to submit business plans to NAMA and are now awaiting approval from NAMA before proceeding with any potential deals with other parties such as Local Authorities, Approved Housing Bodies etc.*

19. Regarding the valuable services provided by members of the Councils Outdoor Staff, and following on from a recent retirement, has there been a replacement to the post of operator of the road tar patcher vehicle that will in turn ensure our roads are properly maintained?

Reply: *There is a moratorium on the recruitment of staff to all local authorities. Monaghan County Council has taken account of recent retirements in restructuring its workforce over the past year. The Council retains trained staff to operate the road tar patcher vehicle.*

20. Since the introduction of the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) have all properties contracted and leased by Monaghan County Council become Building Energy Rating (BER) certified and are compliant with appropriate energy efficiency ratings?

Reply: All homes for sale or rented on or after 1st January 2009 are statutorily obliged to provide a BER to prospective buyers or tenants.

In the case of properties contracted and leased by Monaghan County Council the private landlords, are required to provide a BER certificate to the Council prior to the local authority entering into an agreement with them.

18. Votes of sympathy/congratulations:

It was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to the following:

- Ciaran Staunton of the Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform on the untimely death of his son Rory, RIP
- Kieran Duffy, Executive Engineer on the death of his aunt, Kathleen Duffy, Avalreagh, Clontibret.

It was agreed that the congratulations of the Council be extended to the following:

- Stephen McKenna, Smithboro ABC on winning an Irish Boxing title recently and representing Ireland in an International competition.
- Paul Brady, Cavan on winning his 9th All-Ireland 40x20 Handball Title and his 8th title in a row, which makes him, without question the greatest handballer this country has ever produced.
- Crossmaglen Rangers GFC on winning the All Ireland Club Championship title for the 6th time.

19. Conferences:

On the proposal of Cllr McNally, seconded by Cllr Carville, it was agreed that the Council be represented at the following conferences by the Members listed.

Promoting Authority	Subject/Theme	Venue	Dates	Members
L.A.M.A. Spring Seminar 2012	The Role of Local Authorities in Enabling Economic Development & Local Government Reform	The Tower Hotel, Waterford.	13th - 14th April 2012	Cllr S. Coyle Cllr P.J. O'Hanlon Cllr R. Gallagher Cllr P. Connolly Cllr S. Conlon Cllr H. McElvaney Cllr O. Bannigan Cllr D. Maxwell
TGR Seminar	The 2012 EPA Urban wastewater Discharges Report. Environmental & Financial Consequences for your Local Authority	Walsh Suite, Kilmurry Lodge Hotel, Kilmurry, Co Limerick	20th - 22nd April, 2012	Cllr S. Coyle Cllr J. O'Brien Cllr P. McNally Cllr J. Crowe Cllr O. Bannigan Cllr H. McElvaney

Conferences (contd):

Promoting Authority	Subject/Theme	Venue	Dates	Members
European Union European Regional Development Fund	Spatial Planning – Political and Civic Collaboration Programme Inspirational Business Leadership	Four Seasons Hotel, Monaghan	26 th April, 2012	All Fianna Fail and Sinn Fein Members
BMW Regional Assembly Annual Conference	Renewable Energy Revitalising Irelands' Regions	TF Royal Hotel Castlebar	30 th April, 2012	Cllr R. Gallagher Cllr J. O'Brien Cllr M. Carthy Cllr G. Carville Cllr A. Murray Cllr O. Bannigan

Urgent Business:

Urgent Business No. 1 in the names of Cllrs Maxwell, Carville, McElvaney, Bannigan, McPhillips and Murray.

That this Council calls on Coillte to re-examine its policy for access to Rossmore Forest Park outside Monaghan Town.

In proposing the motion Cllr Maxwell stated that Coillte had introduced a € entrance fee at Rossmore Park and an electronic pay barrier had been installed at the gates of the park. This was leading to a backlog of cars parking on the Threemilehouse and Cootehill roads. In his opinion it was only a matter of time before there would be a serious accident. He called on the Council to liaise with Coillte about the safety aspect of the barrier. Cllr Connolly seconded the motion and stated that he thought there was no reason why the barrier could not be re-located 500 yards or so inside the park and he called on Coillte to reduce the entrance fee of €. Cllrs Gallagher, Conlon, B. McKenna and McNally also spoke to the motion.

Cllr Maxwell's motion was put to the meeting and agreed.

On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr S. Treanor it was agreed that the Council write to Coillte and ask them to move the barrier about 500 yards inwards and also that Coillte consider reducing the charge for entry to Rossmore Park.

It was agreed to take Urgent Business items 2 and 3 together.

Urgent Business No. 2 in the names of Cllrs Gallagher, McNally, O'Hanlon, Coyle and O'Brien.

That this Council support the plight of the GAME Shop workers in Monaghan Town and calls on Minister Bruton to intervene to ensure that like the other UK outlets all efforts are made to find an alternative operator.

In proposing the motion Cllr Gallagher said it was sad that the GAME workers received an automated call informing them that their jobs were gone and that they were left with no option but to have to arrange a 'sit-in' at the premises to get their entitlements. Cllr McNally seconded the motion and said that employment laws needed to be examined to restrict a company's ability to close down in a manner such as this.

Urgent Business No. 3 in the names of Cllrs Carthy, Conlon, Crowe, Keelan, B. McKenna and P. Treanor

Cllr Conlon proposed, Cllr B. McKenna seconded, that Monaghan County Council acts in solidarity with the former employees of the GAME retail outlets in Monaghan and throughout Ireland by calling on the Minister for Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation and the Minister for Social Protection to facilitate interventions with the relevant corporate and statutory agencies that will ensure the workers get fair treatment.

In proposing this motion, Cllr Conlon referred to the automated telephone call to the GAME workers informing them that their employment was terminated and requiring them to close the store, cash up and gather up the stock. They were told that they would receive a goodwill payment of €500 if they fully carried out these requests. He stated that there were 14 stores in Ireland employing 121 staff who have been trying to ascertain their rights and entitlements since the closure on Monday 26th March. He encouraged the Members of the Council to visit the GAME store in Monaghan Shopping Centre and express their solidarity with the former workers there. Cllr B. McKenna seconded the proposal and stated that the way in which these workers were informed of the termination of their employment was disgraceful. He called on the Government to bring forward legislation to ensure that companies could not behave in such a manner.

Cllrs Maxwell, Connolly and O'Hanlon also contributed to the debate.

Cllr Gallagher proposed, Cllr McNally seconded that this Council calls on Minister Bruton to make contact immediately with the company to ensure that the GAME workers get their maximum redundancy entitlements.

Cllr O'Hanlon proposed, Cllr Conlon seconded that the Council request the Minister for Enterprise Jobs and Innovation to engage with Opcapita, the company who have taken over the GAME stores in the UK, to ascertain if they are interested in taking over the GAME stores in Ireland.

The Mayor put all four proposals to the meeting and they were agreed unanimously.

Cllr Conlon requested that the Council write to Price Waterhouse Cooper, the administrators, in the matter. This was agreed.

The meeting then concluded.