

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the M-Tek Building, Knockaconny, Monaghan on Monday 2nd February, 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

Chair: Cllr M. Carthy, Mayor

Present: Cllrs Bannigan, Carville, Conlon, Crowe, Gallagher, Humphreys, Keelan, Keenan, Kieran, McAnespie, McElvaney, McNally, Martin, Maxwell, P. McKenna, O'Brien and Treanor.

Mr. D. Nelson, Co. Manager, Mr. P Clifford, Mr. D. Fallon and Mr. A. King, Directors of Service, Mr J. Murray, Head of Finance, Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner, Mr. J McGrath, Senior Engineer, Mr T. Gourley, Senior Executive Planner, Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator, and Ms. L Brannigan, A/Staff Officer.

Apologies: Cllr B. McKenna and S. Coyle

1. Minutes:

- (a) *On the proposal of Cllr Carville, seconded by Cllr Treanor it was agreed that the minutes of the Budget Meeting held on 1st December 2008 be confirmed.*
- (b) *On the proposal of Cllr McNally, seconded by Cllr O'Brien it was agreed that the minutes of the Adjourned Budget Meeting held on 15th December 2008 be confirmed.*
- (c) *On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Carville it was agreed that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 5th January 2009 be confirmed.*

On the proposal of Cllr Keenan, seconded by Cllr Crowe it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to George Montgomery, Carnaveagh, Aughtnamullen, on the death of his brother, Nixon, RIP, a former member of the Museum Committee.

On the proposal of Cllr McNally, seconded by Cllr O'Brien it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to Cllr Seamus Coyle on the death of his aunt, Mrs Sadie McCabe, RIP, Lisnagalliagh, Latton.

2. Correspondence

The following correspondence was circulated to the Members:

- Letter from the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in relation to National Broadband Scheme
- Letter from Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, T.D., enclosing letter from Margaret McCarthy, Private Secretary to Minister Batt O'Keefe, in relation to budget cutbacks in the education sector

- Letter from Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, T.D., in relation to a request for a meeting with Minister Batt O’Keefe regarding education cutbacks
- Letter from Margaret Conlon, T.D., in relation to a request for a meeting with Minister Batt O’Keefe regarding education cutbacks
- Letter from Marie Deighan, Town Clerk, in relation to the Garage Theatre
- Letter seeking nomination in relation to the Pádraig Pearse Award 2009
- Letter from Rehab Foundation in relation to “Co. Monaghan People of the Year Awards 2009”
- Letter from Department of Foreign Affairs acknowledging letter from the Council in relation to the situation in Gaza.
- Letter of acknowledgement from Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in relation to the Building Regulations
- Letter from Marian Harkin, MEP, in relation to the Farm Waste Management Scheme
- Letter from Tom Phillips & Associates to Adrian Hughes, Senior Planner, in relation to Biomass Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant and associated ash landfill facility adjacent at College Road, Nobber, Co. Meath
- Letter from Brendan Ryan, Court Services, together with copy of correspondence to Mr PJ Fitzpatrick, Chief Executive, Court Services and Mr Dermot McCarthy, Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach in relation to Castleblayney Courthouse

Civic Amenity Centre, Carrickmacross:

Mayor Carthy stated that the Council welcomed the grant allocation of €1.6million from the Department of the Environment for the Civic Amenity Centre in Carrickmacross which had been announced that morning.

Castleblayney Courthouse:

On the proposal of Cllr Carville, seconded by Cllr O’Brien it was agreed that the Council write to the Court Services requesting a meeting in relation to Castleblayney Courthouse.

The County Manager referred to the letter from Brendan Ryan, Courts Service stating that the Courts Service would not be prepared to restore and renovate the existing Courthouse in Castleblayney, as a greenfield site offered better money for the exchequer. The Manager stated that the Courts Service had carried out major refurbishment on the Courthouses in Carrickmacross and Clones and that a major work programme was currently underway at Monaghan Courthouse. He suggested that the Council invite Brendan Ryan, CEO designate of the Courts Service to a meeting in Castleblayney to discuss the matter and inspect the building.

On the proposal of Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Carville, it was agreed that the Council write to Judge Sean McBride thanking him for his comments in the local media in relation to the retention of court services in Castleblayney town.

Castleblayney Bypass:

On the proposal of Cllr Crowe, seconded by Cllr Carville it was agreed that the Council write to the NRA to seek a meeting in relation to Castleblayney Bypass and the damage caused to the roads around Castleblayney.

Farm Waste Management Scheme:

On the proposal of Cllr Treanor, seconded by Cllr McAnespie, this Council write to the Minister for Agriculture urging him to make the grant payments under the Farm Waste Management Scheme available immediately to farmers in the County.

3. To consider the following proposed variations to the Monaghan County Development Plan 2007 – 2013

a) SPC and CPG recommendations in respect of review of Policy ENV16 – Development in vicinity of lakes.

Cllr Maxwell asked that this item be dealt with at the March Council Meeting to allow time for the SPC to consider the matter further and submit its' report.

b) SPC and CPG recommendations in respect of review of Section 3.5 – extent/delineation of Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence.

Cllr Maxwell, Chair of the Planning Strategic Policy Committee advised members that the committee had been requested to consider a proposal to vary the Monaghan County Development Plan 2007-2013 in relation to the areas under strong urban influence (AUSUI).

The SPC were recommending that the Council vary the Monaghan County Development Plan 2007-2013, as follows:

The Area of Strong Urban Influence around Monaghan Town should be defined by a 5km radius from the town centre and follow the nearest field boundary.

The Area of Strong Urban Influence around Carrickmacross should be defined by a 5km radius from the town centre and follow the nearest field boundary.

The Area of Strong Urban Influence around Castleblayney Town should be defined by a 3km radius from the town centre and follow the nearest field boundary.

Reason for proposed variation:

It is considered that these recommendations are a more accurate reflection of those areas experiencing urban development pressure and would follow on from a report made by Monaghan County Council in response to the Ministerial direction made on 22nd July 2007.

The members discussed the restrictions imposed on planning applications due to the proposed limits and also the likelihood of the Department rejecting a proposal which was similar to the last submission by Monaghan County Council 2 years ago.

Cllr Crowe proposed, Cllr Bannigan seconded that the 3k radius of Strong Urban Influence around Castleblayney be removed.

Cllr Gallagher stated that there is no point in submitting a revised proposal to the Department of the Environment that was previously rejected.

Cllr Carville stated that whilst acknowledging the recommendation of the SPC the current situation in relation to Castleblayney is totally unworkable. Planning applications in the system at that time were penalised as a result of Ministerial intervention. Census returns for the Castleblayney area did not increase significantly in the period 2002-2006. He felt that a case can be made for Castleblayney to be excluded from these proposals.

A vote by show of hands on Cllr Crowe's proposal resulted in 16 for, 0 against, 1 abstention. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

Cllr Conlon proposed, Cllr McElvaney seconded that the area of Strong Urban Influence around Monaghan Town be revised from 5km to 3km.

A vote by show of hands on Cllr Conlon's proposal resulted in 9 for, 2 against, 6 abstentions. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

Cllr Keenan proposed, Cllr Keelan seconded that the area of Strong Urban Influence around Carrickmacross Town be revised from 5km to 3km.

A vote by show of hands on Cllr Keenan's proposal resulted in 8 for, 2 against, 7 abstentions. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

4. To consider the SPC and CPG recommendations in respect of Draft Rural Design Guidelines for County Monaghan

Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner stated that the Council had circulated the draft Rural Design Guidelines to the Members. They were inviting comments/submissions from the members, the public, architects and other interested parties on the document which will be brought to the Council for consideration at a future meeting.

Cllr McNally suggested that there should be more photographs of what designs are acceptable in County Monaghan.

Urgent Business:

The Mayor stated that he had received two notices of Urgent Business in accordance with Standing Order 14.2.

- (1) In the name of Cllr Humphreys, John Keenan, Pat McKenna and Gary Carville

“That we write to the Minister for Agriculture and impress upon him the serious financial situation that farmers of Co. Monaghan now find themselves in and indeed all the farmers of the country due to the fact that this Government is delaying on their commitment to pay the grant monies due under the Farm Waste Management Scheme and ask the Minister and the Government to immediately honour their financial commitment to the farmers of this country”

The Members agreed to deal with this item of urgent business

In moving the motion Cllr Humphreys referred to the decision taken by An Taoiseach not to introduce a supplementary estimate to pay for the scheme which meant that the €400m shortfall would have to come from Department funds. She called on Minister Smith to clarify where funding will come from and when applicants will receive monies due to them. She asked the members to consider the huge interest farmers have had to pay on loans taken out to enable them to carry out works under this scheme. In seconding the motion, Cllr Carville stated that the Government was contractually obliged to pay the grants. Farmers had entered into the scheme in good faith and had been lent significant sums of money by the lending institutions on the basis that grant payments would be forthcoming. He said it was incumbent on the Government to honour its side of the bargain. A number of members contributed to the debate.

The Mayor then put Cllr Humphrey’s motion to the meeting which was agreed unanimously.

On the proposal of Cllr McNally, seconded by Cllr O’Brien it was agreed that this Council calls on the Minister for Agriculture to make more personnel available in County Monaghan to carry out inspections on grant claims under the FWMS, to ensure that farmers do not suffer undue delays in receiving payment of their grants ”

Urgent Business - Motion No. 2

(2) Notice in the names of Cllrs Carthy and Keelan:

“That Monaghan County Council discuss the very serious consequences of correspondence received from the DOEHLG in relation to the proposed Carrickmacross Waste Water Treatment Plant”

The Members agreed to deal with this item under Urgent Business.

In moving the motion Mayor Carthy asked the members to consider the huge cost which will be incurred by one major industry in particular in Carrickmacross as a result of the Council being informed by the Department that it would have to meet 63.7% (€7.1m) of the cost of the provision of a new wastewater treatment plant in the town. He stated that two major financial considerations arise – (1) the Council’s ability to recover this level of expenditure from the industrial sector and (2) the chances of the Council getting loan approval from the Department of Finance. The situation has the potential to cost Carrickmacross in the region of 700 jobs. The Town Council could potentially lose rates to the value of €400,000 and this would impact on the county demand due to the County Council.

The County Manager stated that situation arises from Government policy in relation to the ‘polluter pays principle’ – the only grant aid that the Council will receive from the Department will be to cover the domestic element of this project. He had met the business involved and it would be a very grave situation if the town of Carrickmacross were to lose 700 jobs as a result of the financial burden being placed on a particular industry. He stated that this is a new policy within the Department as heretofore all capital schemes were 100% grant aided. Massive investment had taken place in wastewater treatment plants in all the major coastal centres and this meant that inland towns were now suffering great disadvantage. He also expressed concern at the Council’s capacity to repay the loan that would be required given the Council’s commitment to the existing scheme in Monaghan town which will use up practically all of the development contributions. The loan charges for this scheme would be in excess of €250,000 per annum if the Council were to get approval to raise the loan in the first place given the current Government limit on borrowing of €200m for the entire local authority sector.

The County Manager stated that the situation in Carrickmacross had arisen because of the Government’s interpretation of the ‘polluter pays principle’. The Department has indicated that exchequer funding for water services project will henceforth be confined to the domestic element and that local authorities will have to recoup the non-domestic element from the commercial and industrial sector. He stated that he had met with the Managing Director of the company who had advised him that the company will not be prepared to pay for the upgrade of the treatment plant. If the Council wished to modernise the plant and make further provisions for the future that was a matter for the Council. The County Manager stated that it would be a very grave situation if Carrickmacross was to lose 700 jobs. Carrickmacross and other towns which required new plants would be placed at a significant disadvantage into the future in attracting industry as they had to compete with other towns which already had spare capacity. He stated that massive investments had been made in the recent past on all the coastal towns in Ireland in order to comply with the EU Waste Water Directive. He stated that the Council would be required to borrow the money to make up the shortfall in grant aid. This would place a heavy financial burden on the Council into the future. Furthermore, he was not certain that Department approval would be forthcoming for this borrowing as there was a €200 million limit placed by the Department of Finance on borrowing by the local authority sector.

“ On the proposal of Mayor Carthy, seconded by Cllr Keelan, it was agreed that this Council seek an urgent meeting with the Minister of Environment, to discuss the situation in relation to the Carrickmacross Wastewater Treatment Plant ”

Cllr McNally proposed, Cllr Martin seconded that the Minister for Enterprise and Employment be requested to meet with a deputation from the Council and if possible jointly with the Minister for the Environment. This was agreed.

5. Launch of Social Inclusion Unit and Booklet – Presentation by Mr Francis McCarron and Mr Timothy Hall

Mr Francis McCarron, Social Inclusion Officer, thanked the Council for the opportunity to address them. Monaghan is one of the first local authorities to have established a Social Inclusion Unit. He outlined the work being undertaken by the

Unit. He explained that social inclusion can be defined as the process by which efforts are made to ensure that everyone, regardless of their background, experiences and circumstances can gain access to the services and facilities they need to achieve their own potential in life. A socially inclusive society embraces and promotes diversity. He referred to the Handbook which has been prepared and is being launched today. The Handbook will assist the Monaghan Local Authorities in identifying and understanding poverty and social exclusion. He circulated a copy of the Handbook to all present.

Mr Timothy Hall, Social Inclusion Analyst, who supports the work of Francis McCarron, also addressed the meeting. Mr Hall gave examples of some of the works they will be undertaking in the Unit.

Mayor Carthy thanked Francis and Timothy for their presentation and highlighted the importance of their work in times of economic downturn. He requested that an update be provided to the members at a future meeting in relation to what works have been undertaken by the Social Inclusion Unit.

6. Report on Housing Programme.

Mr. Paul Clifford, Director of Housing, provided the members with a copy of the report on the Housing Programme. Rosemary McManus, Senior Executive Officer, gave a presentation to the members on a summary of activities to be undertaken in the Housing Works Programme for 2009.

Cllr Conlon, Chairman of Housing & Corporate Services, thanked Paul, Rosemary and all the staff within the Housing Section for their work over the years. The members then discussed the increasing number of people on the housing waiting lists and possible ways of reducing this number.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Humphreys, it was agreed that this Council request a meeting with Mr Michael Finneran, T.D., Minister of State at the Department of the Environment in relation to our housing allocation for 2009.

7. To consider recommendation from Roads & Environment SPC - Submission to Consultants re: East West Link

Cllr O'Brien, Chairman of Roads & Environment SPC, gave a brief outline to the members of the discussion held at a recent meeting of that committee in relation to the proposed East West link. A submission had been prepared and the members of the SPC recommended that it be brought to the Council for consideration and forwarded to the Consultants appointed, by Cavan County Council, Roughan O'Donovan, with a view to influencing their review of the route selected for the proposed East West Link. The route recommended is 15km shorter than that which was proposed in the 2001 report.

Cllr O'Brien proposed, Cllr McElvaney seconded that the Council forward a copy of the SPC's submission to the Consultants appointed by Cavan County Council (Roughan O'Donovan) to review the East West Link route and also to Fermanagh District Council.

A vote by show of hands on Cllr O'Brien's proposal resulted in 14 for 2 against. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

Cllr Carville proposed, Cllr Maxwell seconded that the Council make a submission to the Border Regional Authority outlining the preferred route of Monaghan County Council in relation to the East West Link (i.e Dundalk-Castleblayney-Ballybay-Clones-Enniskillen-Sligo).

A vote by show of hands on Cllr Carville's proposal resulted in 14 for, 0 against and 2 abstentions. The Mayor declared the motion carried

8. To consider resolution from the Environment & Roads SPC

Having regard to the announcement earlier that funding of €1.6m has been allocated for the Civic Amenity Centre in Carrickmacross this item was regarded as dealt with.

9. To consider motion from November Council Meeting

The Members considered the motion from the November meeting as follows:

“That the Council agree in principle to provide a financial contribution to a business plan for the Rail Network project subject to the agreement of the Council at the annual budget and payable only after the presentation of Mr. Towey and the agreement of the Members at that stage ”

Cllr Carthy proposed, Cllr Kieran seconded that the Council contribute an amount of €30,000 towards the Rail Network project.

A number of members stated that they were not in favour of making a commitment to this project and stated that the Border Regional Authority has included a proposal to carry out a cross border study in its strategy document and that it would be the appropriate authority to pursue this project.

The Mayor stated that if there is going to be a rail network in this region it will only happen if its local authority led. The Council needs to part of the Rail Network project outlined by Mr. Towey, Engineer with Donegal County Council. He assured the members that the Council would only make the payment if all the other local authorities make a similar payment.

A vote by show of hands in relation to Cllr Carthy's proposal resulted in 9 for, 5 against, 1 abstention. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

10. To receive minutes of the following meetings:

- (i) *On the proposal of Cllr Kieran, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was agreed to approve the minutes of Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee Meeting held on 31st October 2008.*

- (ii) *On the proposal of Cllr Treanor, seconded by Cllr Carville it was agreed to approve the minutes of An Coiste Logainmneacha held on 21st November 2008*
- (iii) *On the proposal of Cllr Carville, seconded by Cllr Treanor it was agreed to approve the minutes of An Coiste Gaeilge held on 8th December 2008*

Cllr Treanor advised the Council that An Coiste Gaeilge proposed to host a 'Comhdail na Gaeilge' (Irish Seminar) in Monaghan town on the 19th/20th March, 2009 and requested the support of the Members for this seminar.

- (iv) *On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr Treanor, it was agreed to approve the minutes of meeting, with Minister Eamon Ó Cuiv on 20 January 2009 subject to an amendment to include a sentence to reflect that the delegation raised the matter of the outstanding funding under the Local Improvements Scheme.*

11. To fix date for the following meetings:

(i) Corporate Policy Group Meeting

It was agreed that a meeting of the Corporate Policy Group would be held on Monday 16th February at 10.00 a.m. in the Conference Room, The Glen.

(ii) Inaugural Meeting of County Monaghan Joint Policing Committee

It was agreed that the inaugural meeting of the County Monaghan Joint Policing Committee would be held on Monday 23rd February at 10.00a.m. in the Iontas Centre, Castleblayney.

(iii) Economic Development Committee Meeting

It was agreed that a meeting of the Economic Development Committee would be held on Monday 16th February at 12.00 noon, in the Mtek Building.

(iv) Meeting with Monaghan Community Alliance

It was agreed that a meeting with Monaghan Community Alliance would be held on Wednesday 18th February at 7.00 p.m. in the Iontas Centre, Castleblayney.

(v) Road Area Meetings

Road Area meetings were agreed as follows:

North Monaghan – Monday 16th February at 2.00p.m. in Monaghan town
Clones – Monday 16th February at 10.00a.m.
Carrickmacross – Thursday 26th February at 9.30a.m.
Castleblayney – Wednesday 25th February at 10.00a.m.

The members also agreed that the Council would meet with representatives from the primary schools in the county on Wednesday 18th February in Castleblayney.

12. Audit committee

(i) To receive Audit Committee Charter

On the proposal of Cllr Humphreys, seconded by Cllr Kieran, it was agreed to adopt the Audit Committee Charter.

(ii) To approve payment of allowance to external Committee Members

On the proposal of Cllr Treanor, seconded by Cllr Humphreys, it was agreed to approve the payment of an allowance of €2,000 to each of the three external members and an additional €1,000 for the Chair of that committee.

13. Proposed 440kv Eirgrid Interconnector

The Members were advised that a meeting of the Eirgrid sub-committee has been arranged with Eirgrid on Wednesday 11th February at 11.00 a.m. in Carrickmacross.

14. Reports from Conferences

The Members noted the reports from Cllrs Carville, Coyle, Kieran and Maxwell in respect of their attendance at the following conferences:

4th Annual Conference ICLRD - Centre for Cross Border Studies, Letterkenny
LAMA Annual Winter Seminar, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Institute of International & European Affairs - Agriculture & Climate change, Dublin Castle

15. Business submitted by County Manager

The County Manager stated that he would bring a report on the current position in relation to Lough Muckno to the next meeting of the Corporate Policy Group.

16. Matters arising out of Council/Budget meetings held on 1st December, 15th December 2008 and 5th January 2009

In response to a query from Cllr Sean Conlon, regarding monies owed to the Monaghan Local Authorities by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, replied as follows:

Amounts owed by DEHLG to Monaghan Local Authorities for period in excess of One Year

		Amount Owed
Clones T.C. Supply	Mar-04	366,000

Monaghan T.C. Water	Jan-05	1,502,000
Castleblayney T.C. Central Heating	Dec-07	29,170
County Council Voluntary Housing	Jan-07	500,000

17. Questions

Cllr P. McKenna asked:

1. Will Monaghan County Council be constructing speed ramps on the Mullen Road in Emyvale having regard to the increase in volume of traffic on this road since the re-opening of the border crossing?

Reply: *There are currently no plans to construct speed ramps at this location. The Council will monitor speeds at this location and examine the regulatory signage and lining currently provided.*

Cllr McNally asked:

2. When does Monaghan County Council expect to be in a position to carry out works at a number of dangerous junctions on the Blackstaff Road at Inniskeen?

Reply: *The Area Office is in negotiations with the landowners involved. Progressing this further will be dependant on acquiring the land and of available funding.*

3. Has this Council carried out the promised examination of the dangerous junction at the Carrickmacross / Kingscourt Road at Clonseady with a view to putting a turning lane in the centre right of the carriageway at the point known locally as the ball alley?

Reply: *The Area Office has carried out some preliminary work on this. Progressing this further will be decided in the context of available funding.*

4. Is this Council satisfied with the safety of the detours presently in place via Inniskeen as a result of the closure of the Dundalk / Carrickmacross Road?

Reply: *Responsibility for implementing and maintaining the traffic management on this diversion lies with the Contractor. The Council has put in a place a mechanism to allow for any observations or concerns to be forwarded to them.*

5. Has this Council included in their list of proposals for regional routes to further upgrade sections of the Carrickmacross-Shercock and Carrickmacross-Dundalk roads as this would be in line with the long term proposal to upgrade the Cavan Dundalk road and particularly in light of very dangerous sections on that route including Essexford Bridge and the very dangerous section between Reilly's Cross and the Cavan border on the Shercock section of the road.

Reply: *An application to continue works carried out in 2008 is included in the list submitted to Department of Transport.*

Cllr Carville asked:

6. Will the Council include the provision of public lighting in Cremartin (Tier 6 Settlement in Monaghan County Development Plan 2007-2013), as part of the review

of public light provision in the County that was indicated by the Director of Services at the recent Budget meeting of the Council on 1 December 2008?

Reply: *This area has a pub, GAA grounds and a small number of one off housing. Under the Development Plan Cremartin falls under Tier 6 Settlements and therefore is unlikely that there will be significant development in this area over the life of the plan. Having regard to schedule of requirements for public lighting in other areas it is considered that this area to be rural and wouldn't merit the provision of public lighting at this time.*

7. In view of the current decline in house prices will the Council now assess the possibility of acquiring more houses for sale under the Affordable Housing Scheme in villages around the County and bring a report on the matter to the Council members?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council has no plans to acquire houses for sale under the Affordable Housing Scheme in villages around the County.*

8. What action is the Council taking, in conjunction with the National Roads Authority, to address the problems which have arisen on the Castleblayney By-Pass concerning "uneven surfaces" that have been notified to the public, particularly in view of the fact that this scheme is only open for little more than one year? Who is responsible and when will the problems be addressed?

Reply: *The contractor for the scheme is responsible for any defects that occur within the two year defects period. The issue of the "uneven surfaces" that have occurred at a few locations has been discussed with the contractor and we have been informed that remedial works, to restore the surface to its design levels, will be carried out as soon as possible.*

9. What is the current status of the proposed Link Road between the R181 and the old N2 (Keady Road to Monaghan Road) in Castleblayney? Does the Director of Services accept that in a time of economic decline, that projects such as this could be used to help boost employment and provide for improved infrastructure which will enable investment be attracted to Castleblayney and to the County?

Reply: *The scheme has received planning and a preliminary design has been done. It was always envisaged that this link road would be developer driven but this is not likely in the current climate.*

10. In view of the highly publicised remarks of Justice Sean McBride at a recent Court sitting in Castleblayney:

- a. Does the County Manager accept that this Council, as the owner of the property, has not done all it can in pursuing the question of the restoration of Castleblayney Courthouse?
- b. Will he outline a detailed account of the Council's actions to date in relation to this matter and give an update of the current situation?
- c. What communication has there been recently with the Courts Service?
- d. What indication has the Courts Service given to the Council in terms of its commitment to the restoration project?
- e. Is the Council prepared to make the required space available to the Courts Service in Castleblayney Courthouse and are plans being formulated to accommodate such space as well as enough capacity for Council offices?
- f. Are any further meetings planned between Monaghan County Council and the Court Service?

Reply: *Correspondence circulated at the Council meeting on Monday 2nd February sets out the up to date position in this matter.*

1. *Letter dated 1st May 2007 from D. Nelson, County Manager to Secretary General, Department of An Taoiseach.*
2. *Letter dated 18th December 2008 from D. Nelson, County Manager to Chief Executive Courts Service*
3. *Letter dated 6th January 2009 from Chief Executive Courts Service to D. Nelson, County Manager.*

Cllr Crowe asked:

11. a. When is it expected that the Part 5 houses in the new housing scheme at Oram will be ready to be allocated?
- b. In this first round how many houses / apartments will be allocated out of the 15 that are being purchased?
- c. What progress is being made in relation to the vacant bungalow at No: 7 Oram cottages and when is it to be allocated?

Reply: *It is anticipated that five units in Oram will be completed by May 2009, with a further six to be completed in autumn 2009. A further four units are due to be completed in 2010. Substantial works are required to No. 7 Oram. It is expected that the work required to enable it to be re-let will be carried out on No. 7 within the next 2 months.*

Cllr Crowe asked:

12. In the present economic climate and the effect it is having on the retail sector in Castleblayney, it is imperative that Castleblayney is clearly shown at all exits from the bypass. Will Monaghan County Council provide large and clear signage at all roundabouts (Lislanly/Tullyvin) and exits to guide motorists into the many facilities in Castleblayney?

Reply: *Directional signs for Castleblayney Town have been provided on the Bypass at the southbound approach to the Ballybay Road Interchange and at the northbound approach to the Tullyvin Roundabout. Also there are numerous advance direction signs for Castleblayney along the new Bypass in both directions. In addition two tourism information signs have been erected for Castleblayney, one at the Ballybay Road Interchange and one at the Tullyvin Roundabout.*

13. In the interests of safety will Monaghan Co. Council consider extra lighting at the roundabout at the Riverdale Hotel to highlight the signs when approaching the junction?

Reply: *There is public lighting at this location, however, the County Council has requested the ESB to examine the illumination of this area.*

14. With the main water supply being off for 3 days over the Christmas period to two houses in An Corran (No's 3 & 4) the mains pipes don't seem to be buried deep enough. What plans have water services to eradicate this problem which happens every year in hard frost?

Reply: *The houses in question were constructed as part of Monaghan County Council's construction programme. Two years ago similar defects were found in house numbers 1 and 2 An Corran, Oram. The original Contractor accepted*

responsibility and rectified the defects in the water supply to numbers 1 and 2 An Corran, Oram.

The period of very cold freezing weather this year was longer and colder and obviously led to the freezing of water in the supply pipes to numbers 3 and 4 An Corran, Oram. The Council has written to the original Contractor requesting that the defect in the water supply in numbers 3 and 4 An Corran, Oram be rectified.

Cllr Gallagher asked:

15. Could the Council outline the current situation and any progress made with regard to the redevelopment of junctions on the Cootehill Road at Leck?

Reply: *Discussions regarding the acquisition of land have been ongoing. The ESB & Eircom have also been contacted with regard to the relocation of their services. Completion of these works are subject to the necessary funds being provided.*

16. Could the Council outline the current status of the project to reconstruct the border bridges near Glaslough and the likely timescale for the repair and re-surfacing of roads in the area?

Reply: *Our consultants, Mott McDonald Pettit, are presently preparing the tender documents, for the Design & Build contract, and these documents should be issued in early March 2009. It is planned to have a contractor appointed by the beginning of May 2009 and to have the bridges constructed by March 2010. The resurfacing of the two local approach roads to the bridges will be carried out to coincide with the opening of the bridges to traffic.*

Cllr Gallagher asked:

17. Could the Council review the adequacy of signposts on each of the roads leading to/from the village of Scotstown?

Reply: *The Area Office will review this matter.*

Cllr Conlon asked:

18. Is there any possibility of extending recycling opportunities at any of the existing bottle bank facilities to include plastic and/or paper?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council is currently examining the possibility of extending the bring bank network to include the collection of plastic bottles (i.e. HDPE containers and PET such as mineral bottles) Currently, officials are in discussions with a local plastics recycling company concerning the possibility of collecting plastics from a number of bring sites on a trial basis. This roll-out will necessitate confirmation of available subsidies from the Department of Environment to ensure economic viability of the project.*

In relation to the collection of paper at the bring site network this is not being considered presently. Due to the limited space available at the majority of the bring banks throughout the county it is unlikely that many of these sites would be able to cater for both additional plastic and paper recyclable banks.

Cllr Coyle asked:

19. (i) What is the current number of applicants on Monaghan County Council's housing waiting lists and in what categories of accommodation do they require housing

in the following villages in the Clones electoral area: (a) Rockcorry, (b) Newbliss, (c) Scotshouse, (d) Threemilehouse, (e) Smithboro?

(ii) What is the current number of applicants on the housing waiting list in Clones town and in what categories of accommodation do they require housing?

Reply: I attach an analysis of the waiting list that was compiled by the Council at June 2008 for your information.

Housing Waiting List

AREAS OF CHOICE	5 Bed	4 Bed	3 Bed	2Bed	2Bed OPD	1 Bed (SU55)	Intellectual disability	Physical Disability	TOTAL
ANNAYALLA	0	0	1	4	1	2	0	0	8
BALLINODE	0	1	2	3	3	3	0	0	12
BALLYBAY	0	0	3	4	9	7	0	0	23
BAWN	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
BROOMFIELD	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
CARRICKROE	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	4
CLARA	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
CLONTIBRET	0	2	0	2	0	3	0	0	7
CONNONS	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	0	5
DEMOUNTABLE	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	6
DOOHAMLET	0	1	1	0	1	3	0	0	6
AREAS OF CHOICE	5 Bed	4 Bed	3 Bed	2Bed	2Bed OPD	1 Bed (SU55)	Intellectual disability	Physical Disability	TOTAL
DRUM	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	5
EMYVALE	0	1	3	7	2	6	0	0	19
FARM HOME	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
GLASLOUGH	0	2	0	6	2	0	0	0	10
INNISKEEN	0	0	1	5	1	1	0	0	8
KNOCKATALLON	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
LATTON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LISDOONAN	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
MAGHERACLOONE	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
NEWBLISS	0	1	0	1	1	4	0	0	7
ORAM	0	0	3	4	1	3	0	0	11
ROCKCORRY	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	4
SCOTSHOUSE	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	5
SCOTSTOWN	0	0	0	4	4	2	0	0	10
SMITHBORO	0	1	2	2	1	4	0	0	10
THREEMILEHOUSE	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	3
TYDAVNET	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	4
TYHOLLAND	0	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	6
TOTAL	1	10	23	58	46	46	0	0	184
Carrickmacross T.C	2	4	36	73	8	30	18	6	177
Castleblayney T.C.	3	4	14	48	7	29	12	0	117

Clones T.C.	1	3	8	21	8	24	9	0	74
Monaghan T.C.	0	9	59	59	23	78	31	2	261
TOTAL	6	20	117	201	46	161	70	8	629
Overall Total	7	30	140	259	92	207	70	8	813

20. What is the current position of Monaghan County Council on the Rockcorry sewerage extension on the Monaghan Road, Rockcorry and when will works commence on this project which is greatly required by these residents?

Reply: *The design and drawings were completed by the Council. DOEHLG funding of 40% has been granted. A contractor has been appointed and is due to commence works in three weeks.*

21. What proposals do Monaghan County Council have to adjust the local engineering area's within the County to match the local electoral areas and when will these changes take place?

Reply: *It is proposed to review the Engineering Areas in the latter half of this year with a view to aligning them with the revised Electoral Areas.*

Cllr Keenan asked:

22. **Lurgans Rd Carrickmacross:** Because of recent sewerage works on this road, road conditions have deteriorated and need upgrading. When can this be done and is there money from this project to cover repairs or does it come from 2009 area road funding?

Reply: The Council is aware of the poor condition of this road, caused by the construction vehicles using it. The Council will carry out repairs to the potholes as soon as possible.

23. What are the plans for additional public lighting at Shantonagh Post Office in order to improve public safety in this area?

Reply: This matter will be brought before the Area Members for consideration at the Area Roads meeting in light of available funding.

24. What progress has Monaghan County Council made in relation to the implementation of the Disability Act? Have we a planned programme of works to make our services and buildings more accessible to persons with disabilities? Is it now policy to provide disability access to both front and rear of our housing stock?

Reply: As requested by the DEHLG, all services, buildings and information of Monaghan Local Authorities have been audited in terms of accessibility. This accessibility audit programme together with an in depth public consultation period formed the basis of the development "Making Monaghan Accessible", Monaghan Local Authorities Disability Act implementation plan. This implementation plan sets out a planned programme of actions of how we will improve accessibility to services and buildings and information for everyone in the community, and in particular to people with a disability. Making Monaghan Accessible was endorsed by the County Council meeting in March 2008. Arising from this implementation plan, a number of key policy documents were developed in 2008. The implementation of these policies will have a huge impact on how easily people with a disability can access the buildings, services and information of Monaghan Local Authorities.

Disability Proofing template

This policy document will identify barriers and difficulties that exist within all policies of the local authority and sets out a template to put in place actions to remove those barriers. Adopted by members at meeting December 1st 2008. A programme of work to disability proof all policies of the local authority will begin in 2009.

Accessible communications policy

This policy highlights the numerous ways in which the Council communicates with the public. (EG: By telephone, written publications, email, website, face to face communications). The policy highlights how each of these service delivery methods can be made more accessible. It was adopted by members at their December meeting. Training on implementing the accessible communications policy will be rolled out to all sections in 2009.

Accessible procurement strategy

This strategy is focused on the procurement of built works. The strategy sets out a process whereby accessibility is a key feature from the beginning of the tendering process. The strategy also highlights how accessibility can be incorporated into the

selection criteria in the process of awarding a contract and will be presented to the SPC in February 2009.

The adoption and implementation of the Accessible procurement strategy will ensure that accessibility is central to all built works projects of Monaghan Local Authorities in the future. This would include the accessibility of new housing developments.

25. In relation to Lisdoonan village, and in order to compliment the excellent work being carried out by the Recreation & Development Association, when is it hoped to have the new public lighting switched on and also following a meeting with myself and our engineering staff, when can we expect to have the flooding problem addressed at the AOH hall, footpaths completed, roadway adjacent to Lios housing development upgraded and signage for the new disabled car park at the church in place?

Reply: *The Area Office has been made aware of the list of works outlined in the Councillor's question and has included them on the maintenance list for attention. However the completion of these works is subject to the necessary funding being available.*

26. In relation to Inniskeen village, what is the up-to-date position regarding the provision of a second pedestrian crossing adjacent to the traffic island in the centre of the village to serve the school in particular but also others using the facilities in the general area?

Reply: *This is included in a submission made to the Department of Transport for funding. No indication of the 2009 budget allocations have been made.*

27. Given that Part 5 of the Planning & Development Act has collapsed, whereby developers provide 20% of their housing developments to the Local Authority for social and affordable housing, what progress has the Council made in acquiring a land bank in the Carrickmacross town area to provide for current and future housing need?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council is presently negotiating with a number of landowners in relation to the acquisition of land for housing in Carrickmacross.*

28. In relation to road safety and the 'Be Safe Be Seen' campaign what action have the Council carried out in this regard? Are high visibility vests available to the general public particularly to those who walk on our county roads at night time?

Reply: *The Council's Road Safety Officer has arranged for the distribution of 1000 high visibility vests to the public through the area and Town Council offices and through various community groups.*

Cllr O'Brien asked:

29. What is the up to date position with regard to the sewerage system on the Castleblayney Road out of Ballybay?

Reply: *The preliminary drawings have been completed by the Council and an application will now be submitted to DOEHLG for 40% funding.*

30. What is the update on the problem of the smell coming from the sewerage system in the Castleblayney area?

Reply: *Water Services carried out extensive work on the sewer lines and installing filters on vent pipes in the Drumillard area. The staff has also liaised with a local industry and installed aeration equipment on the effluent line from that industry. These measures have had some success but have not eliminated the problem entirely.*

It is now proposed to install chemical dosing equipment on the effluent line to deal with the hydrogen sulphide problem which causes the odour. The industry is to carry out modifications to reduce the quantity and temperature of the effluent. These measures will be monitored to verify their effectiveness. They are expected to remedy the problem.

Cllr Carthy asked:

31. Does the Council have any indication when the pedestrian lights will be erected in Ballybay at the 2 pedestrian crossings?

Reply: *The ESB indicated that they plan to carry out the necessary under-grounding works along Main Street in February. Following this the pedestrian crossings can be connected to the power supply. Monaghan County Council will keep in contact with the ESB regarding this matter.*

32. What is the possibility of the Council erecting additional lighting at Carrickatee Chapel and repairing the existing lighting, which is currently not working?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council has received a quotation for additional lighting at this location, which will be placed on the public lighting programme for prioritising at the next Road Area Meeting. Monaghan County Council have been in contact with the ESB regarding repair of the existing lights.*

33. How many building/construction contracts has Monaghan County Council awarded since 2004? Of these how many successful applicants were recorded as being companies based in County Monaghan?

Reply: *A response to this question will be prepared for the March Council meeting.*

19. Votes of Sympathy / Congratulations:

The Council agreed to extend votes of sympathy to the following:

- *Patrick Sheridan a member of outdoor staff, Clones area on the death of his father, Packie Joe Sheridan, R.I.P., Boyher, Rockcorry.*
- *Cllr Seamus Coyle on the death of his aunt Sadie McCabe, R.I.P., Lisnagalliagh, Lisnalong.*
- *George Montgomery on the death of his brother Nixon who was a member of the Council's Museum Advisory Committee since it was founded.*

The Council agreed to extend votes of congratulations to the following:

- *Cllr. Brian McKenna on his participation in the County Handball Championship. The Council also wished Cllr McKenna a speedy recovery following his recent hospitalisation.*
- *The Chief Fire Officer, Monaghan Fire Authority highly commending Gareth Marron, firefighter on his act of bravery in rescuing a lady who was trapped in her car on the N2 near Ashbourne recently.*

20. Conferences:

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

Promoting Authority	Subject/Theme	Venue	Dates	Members
AMAI	Spring Seminar 2009	Clanree Hotel, Letterkenny	13 th - 14 th Feb. 2009	Gary Carville John Keenan Owen Bannigan Benny Kieran John O'Brien Noel Keelan
Mid-West Regional Authority	Ireland's Water – What is the real cost?	Woodlands House Hotel, Adare, Co. Limerick	19 th – 20 th Feb	Hugh McElvaney Gary Carville David Maxwell Robbie Gallagher Padraig McNally Vincent P. Martin Brian McKenna
Third Sector Forum	Maximising Your Vote 2009 Elections	Red Cow Moran's Hotel, Naas Road, Dublin	26 th -28 th Feb. 2009	David Maxwell Heather Humphreys John Keenan Seamus Coyle Benny Kieran Matt Carthy
Colmcille Heritage Trust	20th Colmcille Winter School – Ireland & the Economic Recession	Colmcille Heritage Centre, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal	27 th February – 1 st March '09	Hugh McElvaney Owen Bannigan Pat McKenna Padraig McNally John O'Brien Sean Conlon

The meeting then concluded.

Signed:

Meara

Meetings Administrator

Date
