

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Mtek Building, Armagh Road, Monaghan on Monday 4 January, 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

Chair: Cllr H. Humphreys, Mayor.

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

Mr. D. Nelson, County Manager, Mr. P. Clifford, Mr. A. King, Mr. D. Fallon, Directors of Service, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner, Mr. Toirleach Gourley, Senior Executive Planner and Ms. D. Kierans, Executive Planner, Ms. E. McShane and Ms. R. McManus, Senior Executive Officers and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

At the outset the Mayor, Cllr H. Humphreys, wished all present a very happy new year 2010.

The Mayor then proposed a vote of sympathy to Cardinal Sean Brady on the death of Cardinal Cahal Daly, former primate of All Ireland.

1. Confirmation of Minutes:

- (i) *On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Connolly it was agreed that the minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 7th December, 2009 be confirmed.*
- (ii) *On the proposal of Cllr Carville, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that the minutes of the Statutory Budget Meeting held on Friday 11th December, 2009 be confirmed.*

2. Correspondence

The following correspondence was circulated to the Members:

- Letter of acknowledgement from of the office of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in relation to the McCarthy Report regarding VEC's
- Letter from CAWT (Co-operation and Working Together) inviting the Council to receive a presentation in relation to cross border health services.
- Letter from the Department of Social and Family Affairs in relation to the National Carers Strategy.
- Letter from the Minister for Transport in relation to funding for the N2 Clontibret to the Border Road Scheme.
- Letter from Monaghan Chamber of Commerce in relation to hospital protects at visits by Government Ministers to Co. Monaghan.
- Letter from the Centre for Cross Border Studies in relation to community involvement in planning hospital services.

- Circular Letter LG26/09 from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in relation to Representational Payment for Councillors.
- Letter from Gerry Adams, MP, President of Sinn Fein in relation to proposals to amalgamate VEC's
- Letter from the National Roads Authority in relation to safety at the accesses to the Carrickmacross By Pass.

Proposals arising out of correspondence:

CAWT presentation:

On the proposal of Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the Council receive a presentation from the CAWT group in relation to cross border health services. It was agreed that this presentation would take place at 3.30 p.m. on the afternoon of the February Council meeting.

Emyvale bypass:

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the Council write again to the Minister for Transport seeking a meeting in relation to the Emyvale bypass and outlining to the Minister that the NRA has stated that the provision of funding for this project is a matter for the Minister and not the NRA.

On the proposal of Cllr B. McKenna, seconded by Cllr Maxwell it was agreed that the Council forward to the National Roads Authority, a copy of the letter dated 7th December, 2009 from the Minister for Transport.

Carrickmacross bypass:

Cllr O'Hanlon referred to the letter from the National Roads Authority in relation to safety at the accesses to the Carrickmacross bypass. He stated that safety at these junctions needs to be re-visited as it is his view and the view of road users in this area that the junctions are not safe.

Mr. D. Fallon, Director of Roads reiterated what he had said at an earlier Council meeting that the Carrickmacross bypass was designed to proper standards in accordance with DMRB (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges) – two safety audits having been carried out.

On the proposal of Cllr O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was agreed that the Council apply for funding to improve safety at junctions on the Carrickmacross by pass.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr Humphreys, it was agreed that the Council write to the National Roads Authority and the Department of Transport calling on these bodies to ensure that safety is at the top of the agenda in the design of any new road projects.

3. To consider report on proposed material contravention of Monaghan County Development Plan 2007-2013 (Application ref 09/314)

Cllr Carville declared a potential conflict of interest in relation to this planning application and withdrew from the meeting room.

Mr. P. Clifford, Director of Planning referred to the report dated 21st December, 2009 which had been circulated to the members. He stated that he wished to amend the report by the deletion of condition No. 7 as this condition is already dealt with under No. 6.

Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner responded to queries raised by the Members in relation to this application.

Cllr McElvaney proposed, Cllr Coyle seconded that the Council approve a Material Contravention of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2007-2013 to grant planning permission for a four island petrol filling station and associated two storey part single storey commercial building, incorporating a shop café, sandwich bar and ancillary facilities (application ref 09/314) at Cloughvalley Lower, Carrickmacross.

The Mayor put Cllr McElvaney's proposal to the meeting.

A recorded vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs. Bannigan, Conlon, Connolly, Coyle, Crowe, Gallagher, Humphreys, Maxwell, McElvaney, B. McKenna, S. McKenna, McNally, Murray, O'Brien, O'Hanlon, P. Treanor and S. Treanor.	Total 17
Against:	Nil
Abstentions: Cllrs Carthy and Keelan	Total 2

The Mayor declared the motion carried as it had received the consent of three quarters of the total membership of the Council.

4. To consider Section 183 Notice - disposal of land at Lurgans, Carrickmacross.

On the proposal of Cllr Murray, seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that the Council approve the disposal of .49 hectares (3 plots) of land in the townland of Lurgans, Carrickmacross to Michael McKitterick, Lurgans, Carrickmacross in accordance with the terms of notice dated 15th December, 2009 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

5. To receive Annual Financial Statement & Auditors Report for year ended 31st December 2008

The Members considered the Annual Financial Statement & Auditors Report for year ended 31st December 2008 which had been circulated with the agenda. The County Manager and Head of Finance responded to queries raised by the Members in relation to the Annual Financial Statement and Auditor's Report.

Cllr Maxwell requested that the Council would be advised of the amount of money due in respect of development contributions that are being pursued through the courts currently.

6. To consider adoption of Draft County of Monaghan Bye Laws for the regulation of personal watercraft (Jet Skis) 2009

The Members considered the report dated 18th December, 2009 from Ms. E. McShane, Senior Executive Officer, together with the draft bye laws for the regulation of personal water craft (jet skis) 2009 as well as the submissions received during the public consultation period.

Cllr Carville proposed, Cllr Crowe seconded that the Council adopt the Draft County of Monaghan Bye Laws for the Regulation of Personal Watercraft 2009 as presented - subject to the amendment recommended by E Mc Shane SEO that any reference to the term “ Jet Ski” be removed (as requested by Kawasaki PLC , the owners of the “ Jet Ski” trademark.)

In proposing the motion Cllr Carville stated that this matter has received significant consideration by the Strategic Policy Committee and by Castleblayney Town Council and Monaghan County Council and consultation has also take place with the general public and other interested groups/individuals. The draft bye laws propose an outright ban on the use of personal water craft on Lough Muckno and, if adopted, will allow the Garda Siochana to enforce the law. Cllr Crowe supported Cllr Carville.

Cllrs Connolly, Maxwell, Carthy and B. McKenna stated they were opposed to the introduction of bye laws which would impose an outright ban on the use of personal watercraft. They expressed the view that it should be possible to regulate the use of these watercraft and that the Council should consider designating an area of the lake for this purpose. They felt that banning these watercraft from Lough Muckno will only transfer the problem to other lakes in the county.

Cllr Maxwell proposed, Cllr Connolly seconded that the draft bye laws are rejected and that the Council prepare rules for the regulation of personal watercraft usage on Lough Muckno and put the matter back out for public consultation.

The Mayor put Cllr Carville’s motion to the meeting. A recorded vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For:	Cllrs. Bannigan, Carville, Coyle, Crowe, Gallagher, Humphreys, S. McKenna, McNally, Murray, O’Hanlon, P. Treanor and S. Treanor.	Total 13
Against:	Cllrs Carthy, Conlon, Connolly, Maxwell, McElvaney,	Total 5
Abstentions:	Cllrs B. McKenna	Total 1

The Mayor declared Cllr Carville’s motion carried – Cllr Maxwell’s motion was not put to the meeting as the matter had been decided by the result of the vote on Cllr Carville’s motion.

7. To receive minutes of the following meetings:

- (i) It was agreed that the minutes of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee meeting held on the 10th December 2009 be noted.
- (ii) It was agreed that the minutes of the Coiste Gaeilge meeting held on 27 October, 2009 be noted.
- (iii) It was agreed that the minutes of the Coiste Logainmneacha meetings held on 9 September and 27 October, 2009 be noted
- (iv) **Report from Border Counties Rail Group meeting** – Cllr Carthy gave a verbal report on the Rail Group meeting which took place in Omagh on 10th December, 2009. It was agreed that the draft minutes of this meeting would be circulated to all Councillors for their information.

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr Treanor it was agreed that Cllr Carthy be nominated as the Council's representative to the Rail Steering Group.

- (v) It was agreed that the minutes of the Meeting with officials from the Spatial Planning Section, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government be noted.

Arising out of these minutes and in response to a query from Cllr Carthy, Mr. P. Clifford, Director of Planning requested, and it was agreed, that the preparation of an evidence based submission in support of a re-classification of areas under strong urban influence would be referred to the Planning SPC.

8. To approve nomination of Cllr Padraigin Uí Mhurchadha and Cllr Niall Quigley to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that the Council approve the nomination of Cllr Padraigin Uí Mhurchadha (Monaghan Town Council) and Cllr Niall Quigley (Clones Town Council) to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.

9. To consider rescinding Council resolution in relation to requests for meetings with Ministers visiting the county.

It was agreed that this item be considered by the Corporate Policy Group at its next meeting and a recommendation brought to the full Council.

10. Report on Ballinacarry Bridge Improvement Scheme

Mr. D. Fallon, Director of Roads advised the Members that the National Roads Authority commissioned a Cost Benefit Analysis for this project which was completed in June 2009. The report indicates that the Ballinacarry Bridge Improvement Scheme 'is economically viable and is therefore a worthwhile

project to progress'. The actual progress on the project is a matter for the NRA.

On the proposal of Cllr Crowe seconded by Cllr Keelan it was agreed that the Council seek a meeting with the National Roads Authority to discuss the Ballinacarry Bridge improvement scheme and to ascertain if the NRA will receive any funding from the Interreg IVA programme for this project.

It was further agreed that the Emyvale bypass and safety on the Carrickmacross and Castleblayney bypasses would also be on the agenda if a meeting with the NRA is forthcoming.

11. Proposed Eirgrid 440kv Interconnector

Cllr Bannigan referred to the planning application which had been submitted by Eirgrid for the proposed 440kv interconnector. He urged the public to make submissions to An Bord Pleanala and that there was a 10 week period available during which submissions could be made. He stated that pylon structures ranging in height from 33 to 41 metres high will be placed throughout the county and will have a totally destructive impact on the drumlin landscape. He continued that Eirgrid have no wish to change their plans or use the new technology that is available for undergrounding the cables. Eirgrid had carried out an Environmental Impact Study even though they had not been able to gain access to the majority of the lands they planned to build on. He stated that the project would create a sterile corridor of 80 metres in width and this had never been revealed at any of the meetings between the Council and Eirgrid representatives. Farmers within this corridor would not be able to develop or plant their lands. He estimated that the value of the lands affected would be in the region of €15m.

On the proposal of Cllr Bannigan, seconded by Cllr Crowe it was agreed that the Council write to Eirgrid highlighting the concerns raised by the members in relation to the planning application for the proposed 440kv interconnector.

Mr. P. Clifford, Director of Planning advised the Members that Eirgrid PLC lodged its Strategic Infrastructure Development application for the Meath – Cavan – Monaghan – Tyrone 400 KV Interconnector with An Bord Pleanala on 18th December 2009. Although the proposed Interconnector passes through County Monaghan the development falls to be determined by An Bord Pleanala in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Strategic Infrastructure Act 2006.

Mr. Clifford stated that plans and documents in respect of this proposal can also be inspected at the Planning Section Offices, Monaghan County Council, The Glen, Monaghan until 12th March 2010. Public comments in respect of the proposed development must be received by An Bord Pleanala by 5.30pm on 12th March 2010. The Council's Planners will prepare a draft submission and he suggested that the Council hold a special meeting to consider the submission.

Cllr Carthy stated that this project will have far reaching implications for Monaghan people and called on the Members to remain united against the

issue and steadfast behind the landowners in their views. The potential for Monaghan to develop as a county will be severely eroded if the Eirgrid application goes through. He referred to the unanswered questions about the project's health implications and the impact it would have on tourism and agriculture in the county not to mention the development of local communities and the impact on rural life.

Cllrs Carville, Keelan, Murray and McNally joined in the comments expressed by Cllrs Bannigan and Carthy and called on the public to make submissions before the deadline.

It was agreed that the submission for the Eirgrid planning application would be considered at 2.00 p.m. on the afternoon of the March Council meeting scheduled for 1st March, 2010.

12. To receive reports from Members attending Conferences:

The Members noted the reports from Cllrs Connolly and Maxwell in respect of their attendance at the following conferences:

- LAMA Winter Seminar, Limerick
- 7th National Tourism Conference, Carlow

13. Business submitted by County Manager

The County Manager advised the members that the River Basin Management Plan will not be available until later in the month and therefore, the meeting which had been scheduled for 12th January, 2010 should be postponed.

It was agreed that this meeting would be re-scheduled for Monday 15th February, 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

14. Matters arising out of minutes of Council meetings held on 7th December, 2009 and 11th December 2009

Matters arising out of the minutes of Council meetings held on 7th and 11th December, 2009 were responded to by the relevant officials.

15. Questions:

Cllr P. Connolly asked:

1. In view of the safety issues involved for the users of the Tyholland Community Centre and GAA complex, including children adults and senior citizens and the fact that this centre is booked 7 nights per week by community groups and regular use by GAA teams including juveniles, will Monaghan County Council consider ensuring that rumble strips and anti-skid surfacing are put on the approach roads either side of the Community Centre similar to that at the Chapel Bridge at Killyneil?

Reply: *The Council has made an application for funding for road safety remedial measures at certain locations along the N12 at Tullynanure. The Council will investigate the feasibility of incorporating appropriate measures at the community centre as part of these works subject to the availability of funding.*

Cllr P. Connolly asked:

2. In view of the fact that all of the ducting and preparatory groundwork has been completed will Monaghan County Council consider erecting a public lighting system outside Tyholland Community Centre which should help to create awareness and improve the safety for people using the centre.?

Reply: *The Council has no plans to erect public lighting at this location.*

Cllr P. Treanor asked:

3. (a) What plans are in place to upgrade the Clones Sewerage System?

Reply: *Nicholas O'Dwyer Consulting Engineers submitted the final copy of the Castleblayney, Ballybay and Clones Sewerage Scheme Preliminary Report to Monaghan County Council in December 2009. The Preliminary Report proposes the phased construction of a new wastewater treatment plant and network improvements in Clones at an estimated cost of € 11,620,065.86 including VAT.*

- (b) When will this work be carried out?

Reply: *The Preliminary Report will be submitted to the DEHLG for approval in 2010. Following DEHLG approval a consultant will need to be appointed to detailed design stage. It is unlikely that the major capital Phase 1 works will proceed to construction stage before 2013. However, interim works will be completed at the wastewater treatment plant in 2010 to address some immediate plant deficiencies.*

Cllr P. Treanor asked (contd):

4. In relation to the Clones Public Water Scheme:

(a) How much has this Council spent repairing water leaks/burst pipes?

Reply: € 7,656.51 was charged to 'network maintenance' on Clones Public Water Supply Scheme.

(b) How much treated water is lost before reaching households in Clones?

Reply: Clones Public Water Supply has a UFW 'Unaccounted for Water' of 43%. Active leakage control in Clones Town will be undertaken in 2010 under Stage 2 of the County Monaghan Water Conservation Programme. Stage 3 of the Water Conservation Programme will include mains rehabilitation on particular 'problem' sections.

(c) What length of piping is involved in the line from the Reservoir at Scotshouse and the distribution to households in Clones?

Reply: Two distribution pipes service Clones Town for a distance of 5.4km.

(d) What type/material are these pipes made of and how long are they in use?

Reply: The trunk distribution mains are a 7" cast iron pipe installed in the 1930's and an 8" Asbestos pipe installed in the 1960's.

(e) Has Monaghan County Council considered building a Reservoir or Water Tower in the vicinity of Clones town?

Reply: There are currently no plans to construct a further storage reservoir in Clones Town.

(f) How much would this cost?

Reply: Estimated Cost of new reservoir, site acquisition and development, telemetry and associated pipe-work c. €0.75M.

5. When will public lights be installed on the Ballybay road, Newbliss?

Reply: Monaghan County Council has no plans at present to install public lighting on the Ballybay Road, Newbliss. The scheme is included on a list of 14 public lighting schemes in the Clones area currently awaiting funding. It is proposed to carryout a review of the current list in 2010 with local representatives.

Cllr P. McNally asked:

6. Does this Council expect to get funds for the redevelopment of the O.P.D.'s at Cloughvalley, Carrickmacross?

Reply: *In 2009 the Council advertised for expressions of interest from contractors. Twelve firms were invited to tender for the works in September 2009. A contractor has been selected but a contract cannot be entered into until the DEHLG allocate funding to the project. The level of the Housing Capital Allocation in 2010 will determine whether the project can start next year.*

7. Regarding Billy Brennan's Loft, the applicant has said that there was an estimate included with his grant application. In any case why did no official of this Council phone the applicant seeking same as this would be the norm in my experience?

The closing date for applications to the grant scheme in 2009 was 30th January 2009. The application form lists all the necessary documentation which must be included with the application. This list includes a "cost breakdown of works for which grant is sought". All applications are treated equally. Each application was stamped and logged onto a database. There was no written estimate or cost breakdown of works for which grant aid was sought included with the application for Billy Brennan's Barn in 2009.

8. What policy has this Council in place to deal with housing applicants refusing Local Authority housing?

Reply: *Applicants are advised that it is a condition of any claimant's entitlement to a rent supplement that he or she has not failed to accept, within any continuous 18 month period, a second offer of accommodation, provided by either a housing authority (including accommodation offered under the new Rental Accommodation Scheme) or any body (Housing Associations) approved by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for the purposes of Section 6 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1992 (No. 18 of 1992) i.e. the Capital Assistance Housing Scheme.*

Where a second offer of accommodation is not accepted a rent supplement is not payable for a period of 12 months. In addition, applicant is advised that after a refusal of a second offer of accommodation, it will be deemed by the Local Authority that the applicant is not in need of re-housing by reason of their refusal of offers of accommodation and will be removed from the Housing Waiting List immediately.

9. When does this Council expect to have a planning application lodged for the new Civic Centre i.e. Library, Council Offices at the Convent Lands, Carrickmacross?

Reply: *Sisk Building Contractors have indicated that a planning application for this development will be lodged in January 2010.*

Cllr M. Carthy asked:

10. a) How many applicants, per electoral area, applied for social housing with Monaghan Local Authorities during 2009?

Reply:

Local Authority	No. of applications received in 2009
Monaghan County Council	150
Monaghan Town Council	104
Castleblayney Town Council	82
Carrickmacross Town Council	53
Clones Town Council	38
Total	427

- b) How many applicants, per electoral area, were housed in Council dwellings by Monaghan Local Authorities during 2009?

Reply:

Local Authority	No. of applicants housed in 2009
Monaghan County Council	49
Monaghan Town Council	31
Castleblayney Town Council	7
Carrickmacross Town Council	11
Clones Town Council	9
Total	107

- c) How many applicants are currently on the Housing lists of Monaghan Local Authorities, per electoral area?

Reply:

Local Authority	No. of applicants on the Housing Waiting List	Clones Electoral Area	C'macross Electoral Area	C'blayney Electoral Area	Monaghan Electoral Area
Monaghan County Council	252	58	20	64	110
Monaghan Town Council	399				399
Clones Town Council	74	74			
Castleblayney Town Council	142			142	
Carrickmacross Town Council	209		209		
Total	1076	132	229	206	509

Cllr M. Carthy asked:

11. a) How many Affordable Housing Applications, per electoral area, were received by Monaghan Local Authorities during 2009?

Reply: *The Council received one application under the scheme from the Monaghan Electoral Area.*

- b) How many affordable houses were sold by Monaghan County Council, per electoral area, in 2009?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council did not sell any houses under the scheme in 2009 as all houses constructed under the scheme were sold by the end of 2008.*

- c) How many affordable housing applicants are there in County Monaghan, per electoral area?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council has received 334 applications for affordable housing since May 2003. The Council has provided 101 affordable houses as follows:*

Newbliss	14	Doohamlet	8
Ballybay	17	Emyvale	6
Carrickmacross	24	Knockatallon	8
Castleblayney	24		

The Council allocated social housing tenancies to 20 of the applicants, 14 applicants were approved for social housing, 55 applications were refused or withdrawn and the balance of 131 applicants are on the affordable waiting list as follows:

Monaghan	39	Annyalla	16
Castleblayney	23	Clontibret	1
Carrickmacross	32	Newbliss	6
Clones	1	Inniskeen	3
Ballybay	5	Glaslough	1
Doohamlet	2	Emyvale	2

- d) Considering the number of Affordable Housing applications why was a dwelling in Carrickmacross, previously sold under the affordable housing scheme and subsequently returned, not made available under this scheme to another applicant? Have any similar instances occurred in County Monaghan?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council has taken 3 affordable houses into stock for a number of reasons. The houses were allocated to persons on the social housing waiting list due to the level of demand for such housing.*

Cllr M. Carthy asked:

12. How many planning applications were received by Monaghan County Council in 2009? Of these:
- How many in total were refused, withdrawn, granted (in numbers and percentage)?
 - How many per electoral area were received and of these how many were refused, withdrawn or granted?
 - How many decisions were subsequently appealed to An Bord Pleanála and of these how many appeals were upheld?

Reply: *608 planning applications were received to 18 Dec 2009. 38 applications were refused, 9 withdrawn and 378 permissions granted to date this year. Eleven decisions were appealed to An Bord Pleanála as to 15 Nov 2009. 8 appeals remain undecided while 1 was upheld, 1 was refused and 1 was dismissed. Planning statistics are not maintained on an electoral area basis.*

Cllr R. Gallagher asked:

13. With regard to college grants:
- What is the cost of processing college grants per applicant?
Reply: *Monaghan County Council does not have an exact figure for the cost of processing college grants per applicant. However a recent media query under the Freedom of Information Act estimated that these costs ranged from €70.51 to €484 per applicant. The cost attributed to this Council was €97.23 per application processed.*
 - How could the process be simplified from the current lengthy application form?
Reply: *The Department of Education and Science is currently working with local authorities and VECs and has undertaken a number of initiatives to reduce the administrative burden for these authorities, including the provision of downloadable application forms and work is continuing on the development of a new more simplified application form and on moving towards an on-line application process.*
 - How many students are currently in receipt of grants?

Reply: *There are currently 484 students in receipt of higher education grants.*

14. Could the Council develop a plan to ensure that in the interests of safety the approach roads and areas around primary schools are salted when necessary or that materials could be stored at or near schools to facilitate same?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council carry out an extensive winter maintenance/salting plan covering 500 km of road. Further extension of this plan is not feasible.*

Cllr R. Gallagher asked:

15. Could the Council provide an update on the timeframe for the reconstruction of the cross border bridges in Glaslough and the much needed re-surfacing of the approach roads for same?

Reply: *The contractor for the project plans to start the construction of the bridges early in 2010 and to have the bridges open to traffic by September 2010. The approach road to both bridges will be resurfaced by Monaghan County Council as soon as possible after the contractor has completed the work on the bridges.*

16. With regard to the North East serviced land initiative what is the timeframe for the completion of works, what is the number of existing dwellings that could be facilitated and what incentives are in place for people to connect to the new system? (i.e. O.A.P.s)

Reply: *The North East Serviced Land Initiative will be substantially completed by the end of January 2010. The scheme has the potential to cater for up to 700 new homes. Monaghan County Council encourages existing dwellings serviced by septic tanks to connect to the scheme within a 6 month period commencing on the date of substantial completion. A 50% reduction in the connection charge of € 3,170 will be available for applications received within the proposed 6 month window. Monaghan County Council will notify all houses in the area of the incentive in January 2010.*

17. Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations:

The Council agreed to extend a vote of sympathy to the following:

- The wife and family of the late John McAviney, Ballybay and to his brother Martin McAviney, former Member of Ballybay Town Council.

The Council agreed to extend a vote of congratulations to the following:

- Austin McKenna, Secretary of County Monaghan Handball Board on being awarded the Handball Official of the Year in Ireland at the awards ceremony in Dublin recently.
- Knockatallon Development Association on winning the Pride of Place Award.
- John McAnespie of Truagh Gaels Hurling club on being selected as Hurler of the Year in Monaghan and winning a Nicky Rackard All-Star Award.

It was agreed that the Council extend a vote of good wishes for a speedy return to full health to the Minister for Finance, Mr. Brian Lenihan, T.D.

18. Conferences:

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

Promoting Authority	Subject/Theme	Venue	Dates	Members
Centre for Cross Border Studies (ICLRD Conference)	Preparing for the Economic Recovery: Planning Ireland North & South out of a recession	Killyhevlin Hotel, Enniskillen	21st/22 nd January, 2010	Pat Treanor Seamus Coyle Robbie Gallagher David Maxwell Hugh McElvaney Owen Bannigan
TDK Conferences Ltd	Planning Seminar for Councillors	Patrick Punch Hotel, Limerick	29 th & 30 th January, 2010	Noel Keelan Robbie Gallagher John O'Brien Paudge Connolly Owen Bannigan Hugh McElvaney Heather Humphreys
Antrim Tourism Conference	Tourism in the 21st Century – A Challenge for all	Dunadry Hotel, Dunadry, Co. Antrim	29 th & 30 th January, 2010	Jackie Crowe Seamus Coyle Padraig McNally Gary Carville Aidan Murray

Urgent Business:

The Mayor advised the members that she had received three notices of urgent business, as follows:

(i) Notice in the names of Cllrs Murray, Carville, Maxwell and McElvaney

“ That the Council discuss the problems caused by the recent severe weather and the Council’s gritting policy ”

(ii) Notice in the names of the Sinn Fein Members

“ That this Council suspend standing orders to receive a report on the roads salting programme in the county and to discuss options to improve the programme in rural areas of County Monaghan ”

(iii) Notice in the names of the Fianna Fail Members:

“ Is Monaghan County Council Executive satisfied that adequate raw materials and plans are in place to deal with the current adverse weather conditions? ”

It was unanimously agreed to deal with urgent business and to take all three motions together.

The Mayor requested Mr. D. Fallon, Director of Roads to brief the Members in relation to Council's activities in relation to salting/gritting during the recent cold spell.

Mr. Fallon stated that the Council had eight gritting trucks going out on a daily basis covering 500 kilometres of road per night. A run lasted four-five hours – 90 tonnes of salt is used per night and the cost of a night's gritting is circa €10,000. He said the Council had experienced problems obtaining salt last week but had been successful in obtaining supplies from Carrickfergus and other sources. A further delivery of 250 tonnes is expected on Thursday of this week. Additional supplies of grit have been obtained although this is not as effective as salt on the roads. Mr. Fallon stated that he was confident that the Council would have sufficient supplies of salt to deal with road conditions as they stood but if there was heavy snow that situation could change. He further stated that the Council is examining the possibility of providing a salt barn in the county – this would cost in the region of €200,000 but would be partly funded by the National Roads Authority.

A debate followed to which a number of members contributed. Members acknowledged and paid tribute to the Council's staff who worked so hard over the Christmas and New Year period to keep the roads safe. The following issues were raised during the debate –

- Seasonal salt bins should be provided in villages and housing estates with controlled access to same.
- A plan should be put in place now to deal with future situations and to address the matter of salting minor roads.
- Danger areas around the county need to be identified and a plan put in place to deal with these areas.
- The Council should make salt available for purchase at its depots in the county.
- Co-ops and poultry businesses should have plans in place to support their suppliers.
- Provision of salt/grit to rural communities
- Monaghan is and has been the best local authority for salting/gritting roads in this region.
- That Area Engineers are encouraged to use local initiatives to clear county roads that are currently impassable.

The County Manager acknowledged the tributes paid to the Council's staff and the assistance and co-operation that had been received from the Members of the Council during the current difficult conditions.

It was agreed that the matter be referred to the Roads SPC for consideration and that a report be brought to the full Council at a future meeting.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Meara Meetings Administrator

Date: _____