

**Minutes of meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Carrickmacross Town Council, Civic Offices, Carrickmacross on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2012 at 10.00 a.m.**

**Chair:** Cllr S. Coyle, Mayor.

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

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

**Apology:** Cllrs Carville, S. McKenna and McPhillips.

At the outset, the Mayor welcomed the Members to the new Carrickmacross Civic Offices which host the Carrickmacross Town Council, Monaghan County Council Area Office and Branch Library and complimented all involved in the project and those who had the foresight to purchase and develop the Convent Lands site.

Cllr Noel Keelan, Mayor of Carrickmacross Town also extended a warm welcome to the County Council members and staff and thanked them for accepting the Town Council's invitation to hold a meeting in the new Town Council Chamber. He also paid tribute to all involved in the new offices project, both past and present.

The A/County Manager joined in the tributes to those involved in the project.

**1. Confirmation of Minutes:**

*On the proposal of Cllr B. McKenna seconded by Cllr Crowe, it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2012, be confirmed.*

*On the proposal of Cllr S. Treanor, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that the minutes of the adjourned Council meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2012, be confirmed.*

**2. Correspondence**

**The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda –**

- Letter from the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport in relation to a Speed Limit Review.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht regarding the Ulster Canal project.
- Letter from the Minister for Communication, Energy and Natural Resources regarding the issue of prepayment meters for electricity and gas usage.

- Letter from the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in relation to the amendment of the Valuation Act and the levying of commercial rates.
- Letter from Fondúireacht an Phiarsaigh seeking nominations under the Padraig Pearse Award Scheme 2012.
- Resolution from Wicklow County Council seeking the provision of 100% funding to local authorities for the Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme.
- Letter from Roscommon County Council including copy of submission made by that Council in relation to the Reform of the Water Sector in Ireland.
- Resolution from Limerick County Council in relation to the upgrading of local authority sewerage treatment plants.
- Letter from the Department of Social Protection regarding the reduction in the budget for community employment schemes.
- Letter from the Local Authority Members Association enclosing copy of submission made in relation to the Reform of the Water Sector in Ireland.
- Email from Rural Community Network inviting the elected members to attend the Annual Youth Event to be held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012 in the Blackwater Learning Centre, Emyvale.
- Resolution from Monaghan Town Council calling on the Council to reject plans by the Department of Agriculture and Food to sell off Coillte.
- Email from ICBAN advising the Council of a half-day Spatial Planning Conference in the Four Seasons Hotel, Monaghan on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2012.

#### **Proposals arising out of correspondence:**

*On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the Council write again to the Department of Finance in relation to the resolutions passed at the February meeting regarding the Valuation Office.*

*On the proposal of Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr McNally it was agreed that this Council calls on the Minister for Public Expenditure, Brendan Howlin, TD, to immediately grasp the critical issue of rates that is crippling our domestic economy.*

*On the proposal of Cllr B. McKenna, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that the Council write to Deputies Humphreys and Conlan requesting them to continue to seek a meeting with the Minister for Health in relation to Monaghan General Hospital.*

*On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the Council invite Waterways Ireland to give a presentation to the Council on progress to date on the re-opening of the Clones section of the Ulster Canal.*

*On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the Council write to the Environment Section of the Northern Department of the Environment asking them to expedite the planning application for the re-opening of the Ulster Canal from Lough Erne to Clones.*

*On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the Council write to the Department of Social Protection urging it to include*

*the social, cultural and economic benefits of community employment in their review of the scheme's effectiveness.*

*On the proposal of Cllr O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr Crowe it was agreed that the Council write again to the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government in relation to the NPPR charge.*

*On the proposal of Cllr Murray, seconded by Cllr Maxwell it was agreed that the letter from the Minister for Transport in relation to a review of speed limits be referred to the Council's Speed Limits Committee.*

*On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr Crowe it was agreed that the Council adopt the resolution from Wicklow County Council calling for the provision of 100% funding to local authorities under the Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme, as they are finding it increasingly difficult to provide matching funding from their own resources due to a serious reduction in income from internal capital receipts.*

*Cllr Connolly proposed, Cllr B. McKenna seconded that the Council adopt the resolution from Roscommon County Council calling for the rejection of proposals for the setting up of Water Ireland.*

A vote by show of hands on Cllr Connolly's motion resulted in 7 for 5 against. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

*On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that the Council adopt the resolution from Monaghan Town Council calling on the Council to reject plans by the Department of Agriculture and Food to sell off Coillte.*

Cllr B. McKenna requested that members support the event in the Blackwater Learning Centre on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2012.

Cllr McElvaney requested that the Council Members of the HSE Forum would get information on the proposed new services to be introduced at Monaghan General Hospital as announced by the HSE recently.

**3. To consider Material Contravention to the Monaghan County Development Plan 2007 – 2013, to grant planning permission for development at Cloughvalley Lower, Carrickmacross (Ref P11/268)**

Mr. Adrian Hughes, Senior Planner referred to the circulated report from the Acting County Manager dated 27th February 2012 in relation to the proposed material contravention to the Monaghan County Development Plan 2007 – 2013 to grant planning permission for a development at Cloughvalley Lower, Carrickmacross for Colm and Jim McBride (Ref 11/268). The report recommended that the members proceed with the Material Contravention and that planning permission be granted subject to the imposition of the conditions outlined in the report.

*Cllr McNally proposed, Cllr Murray seconded that the Council approve a Material Contravention to the Monaghan County Development Plan 2007 – 2013, to grant planning permission for the development at Cloughvalley Lower, Carrickmacross for Colm and Jim McBride (Ref 11/268) as per the report of the Acting County Manager dated 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2012.*

The Mayor advised the Council that the motion required the approval of three-quarters of the total membership of the Council, in order for it to be passed. He then put the motion to the meeting.

A vote by show of hands resulted in 16 for nil against. (16 members being present at this time). The Mayor declared the motion carried.

**4. To approve recommendations from Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 20th February, 2012.**

*On the proposal of Cllr B. McKenna, seconded by Cllr Maxwell it was agreed that the recommendations and minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2012, be approved.*

**Date for Awards Ceremony** – It was agreed that the annual Awards Ceremony would be held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2012 at 7.00 p.m.

**5. To fix date for March CPG Meeting:**

It was agreed that a meeting of the Corporate Policy Group would be held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2012, following the meeting of the Joint Policing Committee.

**6. To receive reports from Members attending Conferences**

The Members noted the reports from Cllrs Bannigan, Conlon, Crowe, Keelan, McElvaney, B. McKenna, McNally, Murray and O'Brien in relation to their attendance at the following conferences –

- 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
- Planning for a new future, Dundalk, Co. Louth.
- Economic development in the Regions, Ennistymon, Co. Clare
- Local Government Seminar for Councillors, Limerick.
- AMAI Local Government, Renewal and Development, Cavan.
- Help busy Councillors become effective leaders, Westport, Co. Mayo

## **7. Proposed Eirgrid 440kv Interconnector:**

Cllr Bannigan stated that he had attended a meeting of the Oireachtas Committee on Energy with the Expert Commission in relation to the undergrounding proposal. The Monaghan Anti Pylon committee had given an excellent presentation to the Oireachtas Committee. The Expert Commission Report had been positive towards undergrounding but EirGrid was not. Cllr Bannigan said that he welcomed the opportunity to engage with EirGrid when he attended the meeting later that day. Cllrs Carthy and Keelan also commended the Anti Pylon group.

## **8. Business submitted by County Manager**

### **Clones Erne East Sports Centre:**

Mr. D. Fallon, A/County Manager referred to the funding available for the Clones Erne East Sports Partnership Sport & Recreational facility through the Peace Programme, on the basis of the most recent tender price being considered a figure for contingency of €180,000 has been allowed. The SEUPB had advised the Council that this figure was not sufficient and that a provision for an amount of approximately €280,000 should be made. To meet this extra €100,000 he requested that the Council would make provision of €50,000 for each of the years 2012 and 2013.

*On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that the Council provide €50,000 per annum in 2012 and 2013 to provide for an increased contingency item provision for the Clones Erne East Partnership Sport & Recreational facility.*

**Section 183 – Disposal of House at Church Street, Castleblayney:** Mr. Fallon referred to the Section 183 Notice that was before the Council at the February meeting, consideration of which had been deferred pending legal advice being sought. Mr. Fallon advised that the matter had been discussed with the Council's Solicitor who had confirmed that a burden can be placed on the title to the effect that the property will revert to the Council if, at any time in the future, the property is not being used for the charitable purposes that it is being disposed for.

*On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr McElvaney, it was agreed that the Council approve the disposal of St. Bridget's House, Church Street, Onomy, Castleblayney to Castleblayney Trust for the Homeless, Needy and Unemployed in accordance with the terms of notice dated 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2012 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001. The disposal is subject to a burden being placed on the title to the effect that the property will revert to the Council if, at any time in the future, the property is not being used for the charitable purposes that it is being disposed for.*

### **Diospoireacht as Gaeilge**

Mr. Fallon referred to the 'Diospoireacht as Gaeilge' that takes place at the March meeting each year. He advised the Council that Pól Ó Cleirigh, Irish Language

Officer had retired at the end of February and that the Council would be seeking expressions of interest from within existing staff interested in filling that vacancy. He wished Pól all the best in his retirement.

Cllr P. Treanor thanked Pól for carrying out the duties of Irish Officer. He advised members that Seachtain na Gaeilge began that day and continues until 17<sup>th</sup> March. He also referred to Rith 2012 - which is a national celebration of the Irish language and culture - and will arrive in the county on 10<sup>th</sup> March. A reception is planned for the Courthouse in Monaghan town followed by a traditional Irish seisuin in the Poc Fada later that night. Cllr Treanor also referred to the Scéim na Gaeilge and encouraged everyone to use the 'cupla focail Gaeilge'.

The Mayor associated himself with Cllr Treanor's comments and called on the members and the public in general to attend the Rith events in the county.

Cllr McElvaney referred to the very successful launch of Seachtain na Gaeilge 2012 in the Sean McDermott's Centre, Threemilehouse and complimented the club on the arrangements for the event.

Cllr Murray referred to the teaching of Irish in schools and highlighted the need for a review of the way that Irish is taught as children are leaving secondary level unable to speak the language.

## **9. Matters arising out of minutes of Council meetings held on 6<sup>th</sup> February and 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2012**

Matters arising out of the minutes of Council meetings held on 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> February 2012 were responded to by the relevant officials.

### **Septic tank sludge disposal charges:**

In response to a query from Cllr McNally, arising out of an answer to a question at the February meeting, the Acting County Manager advised the Members that the Council charge for the reception and treatment of septic tank sludges at our wastewater treatment facilities throughout the county is being reduced with immediate effect to €25 per cubic metre. He stated that following enactment of the Water Services (Amendment) Act 2012, all local authorities are reviewing their charging structures having regard to the need to put procedures in place to inspect waste permits and weigh, record and test incoming sludges.

Cllr McNally and other members welcomed the Manager's decision to reduce the sludge disposal charge. Cllr McNally asked the Manager to examine the situation where tanks being de-sludged in the Carrickmacross area are being directed to the Castleblaney area for disposal of the sludge.

*On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Coyle it was agreed that the public be advised through the press and the web-site of the reduction in the charge for the disposal of septic tank sludge.*

### **Twinning Committee:**

The minutes of the Twinning Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> February, 2012 were noted and agreed.

*On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Connolly it was agreed that that a contribution of €1,500 be made to the Tydavnet Twinning group in respect of their visit to Geel in August 2012 as part of the Geel Eurofest 2012.*

*On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that an invitation be issued to the Mayor of Geel and the members of the Geel City Council to visit Tydavnet and Co. Monaghan in 2013.*

*On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Maxwell it was agreed that the Council write to Tourism Ireland, Canada requesting that Tourism Ireland and Monaghan County Council take a promotional stand at the annual Irish Festival in Miramichi from 19 to 22 July 2012, to promote tourism to the county, in light of the Tourism Ireland promotion for "The Gathering 2013".*

### **Invitation to Prince Edward Island:**

The Mayor stated that he was unable to travel to Prince Edward Island in May 2012 and it was agreed, following consultation with the party whips, that Cllr McNally would travel along with the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Aidan Murray.

### **10. Presentation by EirGrid:**

The Mayor welcomed to the meeting, Andrew Cooke, GDC Director, Aidan Geoghegan, Senior Project Manager, Shane Brennan, Project Engineer and David Martin, EirGrid Communications. He also welcomed Co. Monaghan Anti-Pylon Committee representatives, Donal McDaid, Nigel Hillis, Mary Marron and Margaret Marron, who were present at the meeting as observers. He invited the EirGrid officials to address the meeting in relation to their views on the findings of the International Expert Commission Report on the North South Interconnector.

Mr. Andrew Cooke outlined EirGrid views on the findings of the Expert Commission report. He confirmed EirGrid's position that the 400kv AC overhead line approach was the best option. He stated that while a hybrid option involving partial undergrounding was technically possible, it was suitable only where the undergrounded cable requirement was relatively short. Mr. Cooke referred to advances made in high voltage technology which had some benefits over traditional methods and offered some flexibility. He stated that the cost estimate of the undergrounding option in the Commission report was understated as it had not included in their estimate the plan for a sub-station in Kingscourt which would be required in future years to reinforce energy supply into the north east

In response to queries from Cllr Bannigan Mr. Cooke stated that EirGrid had concerns about the report's conclusion that a high voltage system with underground cabling was technically possible for the distance required and it believed that the Commission had understated the difficulties. Mr Cooke said the undergrounding

solution could be built but it couldn't meet the objectives of the project to the extent that a 400kv AC overhead line could. EirGrid still believed that the overhead line was the least costly and best technical option. He said the Commission had not done the type of network modelling they would have needed to do in order to conclude that undergrounding was possible. He said if the undergrounding went ahead it would have to be operated very conservatively and securely and you would not get the benefits that were envisaged from the proposed interconnector.

Regarding the issue of costs for community groups being represented at the public oral hearing, Mr. Cooke stated that this matter was now 'sub-judice' as there was a court case pending and he could not comment on the matter.

*On the proposal of Cllr Bannigan, seconded by Cllr Carthy it was agreed that in light of comments by EirGrid at the meeting today where they stated that the Expert Commission on the North-South Inter-connector did not have all relevant information to hand, that this Council seeks a meeting with the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources Mr. Pat Rabbitte TD to discuss the need for a renewed commission to be employed which has at its disposal all information considered relevant by each of the stakeholders in this project.*

Cllrs Carthy, Crowe, Keelan, O'Hanlon, McNally, O'Brien and McElvaney also spoke to the debate, raising queries which were responded to by Mr. Cooke.

The Mayor again thanked the EirGrid officials for attending the meeting. He stated that he was frustrated at the way this project was going and he could understand the frustrations of the people on the ground. He also thanked the observers for attending the presentation.

**National Control Centre** – The Members of the EirGrid sub-committee accepted the invitation to visit the National Control Centre in Dublin at 11.00 a.m. on the 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2012.

## 11. Questions

### **Cllr N. Keelan asked:**

1. Given that the people of Co. Monaghan are under the impression from some Government spokespersons that the €100 household charge, (should households choose to pay it), will be used by Monaghan County Council to provide additional and better services for the people, will the Manager clarify the factual position?

**Reply:** *The Household Charge has been introduced by the government to replace the Local Government Fund allocation to local authorities. It is an interim measure in advance of a property tax requiring a comprehensive property valuation system to which government gave a commitment under the EU/IMF Programme of Financial Support. It represents a broadening of the tax base in order to fund local services nearest the point of delivery.*

*The €100 annual charge will be used to fund local services such as libraries, planning and development, fire and emergency services, maintenance and cleaning of streets and street lighting. The level of provision of these services will depend on the amount of Household Charge which is collected. The Council will endeavour to deliver its services as efficiently as possible but cannot commit to providing additional services.*

**Cllr N. Keelan asked:**

2. In relation to the on-going problem of diesel wash being dumped in parts of County Monaghan, approximately how much money has it cost the taxpayer in recent years to clean up and make safe the various sites; approximately how many man hours have been spent by our staff, including our fire service, in dealing with this issue in recent years; given the number of residents in rural areas with their own wells, will Monaghan County Council carry out tests on these wells if requested by residents who feel that diesel wash may have contaminated their water supply?

*Reply: During the period from 2004 to February 2012 Monaghan County Council dealt with 156 separate incidents of diesel laundering incidents, the vast majority of which occurred in the rural border areas of the Carrickmacross and Castleblayney electoral areas. To date the costs incurred in dealing with these incidents have totalled €1.5m. Including road area staff, environment section staff and fire service staff it is estimated that approximately 8,000 man hours have been deployed to date to deal with diesel wash dumping incidents over this period.*

*The vast majority of the dumping incidents have taken place in remote rural areas away from houses and spillages have been localised. In the rare event that the dumping occurs adjacent to a dwelling's well supply and if there is deemed to be a definite risk of well contamination, Monaghan County Council may carry out tests on wells. Ultimately though, the responsibility for the testing of a private well lies with the well owner and not Monaghan County Council. Under Regulation 14 of the Drinking Water (No. 2) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 278 of 2007), Monaghan County Council as the Supervisory Authority, is obliged to notify the householder of action that can be taken to protect human health from the adverse effects resulting from any contamination of an exempted water supply, i.e. private well, intended for human consumption. The Water Services Section of Monaghan County Council has taken action to inform the public in accordance with the Drinking Water Regs by producing and circulating an information leaflet containing advice on Exempted Water Supplies – i.e. private wells. This leaflet has been posted in the local press and circulated to all Area Offices and all libraries in the county.*

*Monaghan County Council's only statutory role in incidents like this is to provide information to the exempted supply householder. Monaghan County Council has no direct role in the testing of an individual's well.*

*Extract from Drinking Water Regulations, 2007:*

*Information in case of exempted supplies:*

- 14. (1) Each relevant sanitary authority shall take measures, in accordance with guidelines issued by the Agency, to notify the population served by an exempted supply of—*
- (a) the fact that these Regulations do not apply to such supply, and*
  - (b) action that can be taken to protect human health from the adverse effects resulting from any contamination of water intended for human consumption, and*
- (2) Where it is apparent to a sanitary authority that a potential danger to human health arises from the quality of an exempted supply, it shall, in accordance with guidelines issued by the Agency, ensure that the consumers of that supply are given appropriate advice promptly.*
- (3) The Agency may issue guidelines for the purposes of paragraphs (1) or (2), which shall be binding.*
- (4) A sanitary authority commits an offence if it fails to comply with paragraphs (1) or (2).*

*Monaghan County Council published guidance notes in the Northern Standard on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012 titled 'Guidance for Members of the Public Served by an Exempted Drinking Water Supply'. An information leaflet on exempted supplies is also available from Monaghan County Offices or for download on the Monaghan County Council website [www.monaghan.ie](http://www.monaghan.ie).*

**Cllr N. Keelan asked:**

3. In order to save taxpayer money and be more efficient in terms of energy use, will Monaghan County Council consider appointing one or more of our staff as an Energy Officer as is the case in other Councils?

**Reply:** *Monaghan County Council has no plans to appoint an Energy Officer. However Council staff constantly review energy efficiency and the Council participated in a number of specific programmes where our energy use has been analysed, efficiencies identified and measures implemented to reduce our energy consumption. Significant savings have been made in areas such as water treatment and housing. A current programme The Energy Efficiency and Micro-Generation Project funded under Interreg IVA through the East Border Region with a budget of over €900,000 is assessing energy use and identifying potential improvements in public buildings in Co. Monaghan (and nine other authorities in the region). This programme will fund significant works to be undertaken in these buildings, producing savings and energy efficiency.*

4. In relation to staffing levels within the Council and given that 30 – 40 people have left the Council in recent years for various reasons which we could not replace, and also given that a significant number of staff have expressed an interest in taking the early retirement package, will the Manager make a statement as to how Monaghan County Council will continue to provide all the services that the people deserve with such depleted staff numbers; is there any truth in rumours that some services may be discontinued such as the Mobile Library Service?

**Reply:** *The number of whole time equivalent posts within Monaghan County Council totalled 475 in June 2008. The number of positions has reduced to 406 following a number of retirements in February 2012. Monaghan County Council is seeking to provide as wide a range of services as possible with reducing staff numbers. This will entail changes to work practices and how services are delivered to the public. A review of services is being undertaken in light of reduced financial and staffing resources and services will be affected. There are no plans to discontinue the Mobile Library Service at present.*

**Cllr N. Keelan asked:**

5. Given that Monaghan County Council has a huge range of plant and equipment i.e. (lorries, pick-up trucks etc.) which need to be kept in a good state of repair, am I correct in my understanding that we currently have only one mechanic looking after all of this equipment; what action will the Council take to rectify the situation?

**Reply:** *The number of full time mechanics employed in the Council's Machinery Yard has been reduced from two to one. In accordance with national policies and having regard to the moratorium on recruitment in the public sector senior management are reviewing the delivery of this as well as other services within the County.*

**Cllr P. Connolly asked:**

6. Under the Tenant Purchase Scheme which was in place from Feb 2011 to end of Dec 2011 giving eligible tenants up to 45% discount on the market price of their house

(a) How many tenants have availed of this scheme to date?

**Reply:** *3 houses have been sold to date under this scheme*

(b) How many other tenants have indicated that they wish to purchase their homes before the completion date of end of Dec 2012?

**Reply:** *Applications from 3 other tenants are currently being processed.*

7. In relation to the housing Leasing Initiative introduced in 2009 and as a means of meeting housing need how many long term leases of

(a) private dwellings and for how long have Monaghan Co Council entered into?

**Reply:** *One dwelling*

(b) other types of dwellings?

**Reply:** *None*

(c) the average duration of these contracts?

**Reply:** *5 years*

(d) how many people /families are being catered for under this initiative?

**Reply:** *One family unit has been catered for.*

**Cllr M. Carthy asked:**

8. What plans are there to repair a 100 metre stretch of footpath between Ballyalbany crossroads and the Emyvale road that is disintegrating and collapsing into a field leaving it dangerous for walkers and pedestrians?

**Reply: *The Council intend to carry out these repairs before the end of March.***

9. Will the Council give a comprehensive update on the proposed development of a Group Home in Carrickmacross to cater for women with physical and sensory disabilities including the likely date of submission of a planning application and the proposed date for completion of this important project?

**Reply: *A Capital Assistance Scheme application was submitted to the Department in December 2012 and we are awaiting the result of their assessment.***

Cllr Carthy said he was not happy with the answer given to this question and he requested that a full report on the matter be circulated to the Members and that the officials pursue a speedy resolution to this matter.

*On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr Connolly it was agreed that the Council write to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the Minister asking for the Group Home project in Carrickmacross be expedited.*

10. Will the Council erect public lighting at Carrickashedge Community Centre, Upper Magheracloone?

**Reply: *It was agreed at a recent Area Roads Meeting to include these works on the 2012 programme.***

11. (i) How many households are currently repaying housing loans to Monaghan County Council?

**Reply: *There are 324 active loans.***

- (ii) Of these, how many households are currently in arrears?

**Reply: *There are 198 loan accounts in arrears.***

- (iii) Will the Council make a comprehensive statement regarding households in arrears including amounts, lengths of time in arrears etc.

**Reply: *Details of households in arrears are as follows:***

<b>Months in arrears</b>	<b>Number of customers</b>	<b>Total Arrears</b>
1 - 2 months	67	€30,726
2 - 3 months	18	€10,644
3 - 6 months	36	€32,538
6 months +	77	€120,780
<b>Total</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>€194,688</b>

**Cllr M. Carthy asked:**

12. When will the Council be allocating the new houses in Cloughvalley, Carrickmacross? When will these houses be available for occupancy?

**Reply:** *The Contractor is confident of finishing the houses in April, and they will be allocated shortly thereafter.*

13. Considering the government's stated intention of burdening households with water charges (in addition to proposed household charges/ property taxes), will Monaghan County Council undertake to resolve all water supplies with excessive 'lime-scale' levels considering 'hard water' can result in significant costs to householders by necessitating the regular replacing of appliances etc?

**Reply:** *There is no set limit on hardness under the Drinking Water Regulations which transposed the EU Drinking Water Directive [80/778/EEC] into Irish law. Rather, there is a minimum set if an attempt is made to soften water, as hardness it is deemed good for human health.*

*The following is an extract from the World Health Organisation reference manual*

*'Guidelines for drinking-water quality, third edition, incorporating first and second addenda*

*Hardness caused by calcium and magnesium is usually indicated by precipitation of soap scum and the need for excess use of soap to achieve cleaning. Public acceptability of the degree of hardness of water may vary considerably from one community to another, depending on local conditions. In particular, consumers are likely to notice changes in hardness. The taste threshold for the calcium ion is in the range of 100–300 mg/litre, depending on the associated anion, and the taste threshold for magnesium is probably lower than that for calcium. In some instances, consumers tolerate water hardness in excess of 500 mg/litre.*

*Depending on the interaction of other factors, such as pH and alkalinity, water with a hardness above approximately 200 mg/litre may cause scale deposition in the treatment works, distribution system and pipe work and tanks within buildings. It will also result in excessive soap consumption and subsequent "scum" formation. On heating, hard waters form deposits of calcium carbonate scale. Soft water, with a hardness of less than 100 mg/litre, may, on the other hand, have a low buffering capacity and so be more corrosive for water pipes'.*

*Monaghan County Council has made an application to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, under the Small Schemes Programme for improvements to some supplies.*

*Upon receipt of our annual allocation, Water Services target investment at projects that significantly reduce the risk of non-compliance with the Drinking Water Regulations.*

**Cllr R. Gallagher asked:**

14. With regard to road safety at Knockconan, Ballyoisin when is the proposed works due to commence?

**Reply: *The Council propose to undertake these works during the school summer holidays.***

15. What is the expected date for the erection of signage for the three hotels in Monaghan town, namely Four Seasons, Hillgrove and Westenra hotel?

**Reply: *The signage is on order from the sign manufacturers. It is expected that the signs should be in place in the next 8 weeks.***

16. What plans do the Council have for this years "Spring Clean" campaign in the county?

**Reply: *Monaghan County Council will communicate by letter with community groups and schools offering them a free skip, litter pickers and bags if they organise a "Spring Clean Up" in their area. In 2011 over 50 groups availed of this offer, the same demand is expected again in 2012.***

***There will be a publicity campaign in the local press to highlight the issues around litter and progress to date in the implementation of Monaghan Local Authorities Litter Management Plan 2010-2012.***

17. What is the expected time frame for the conclusion of investigations between the Council and the OPW into the recent flooding in and around Monaghan town?

**Reply: *The Council understand that the OPW have appointed specialists to carry out the surveying and hydraulic modelling of Monaghan Town and other areas in the Neagh-Bann region that have been listed for further assessment. These works are planned to be completed by the end of 2013 and it is then expected that recommendations on flood management measures would be reported by the end of 2014.***

**Cllr S. Coyle asked:**

18. How many lanes does Monaghan County Council currently have awaiting works on the local improvement schemes in:  
(a) the entire county

**Reply: *The Council currently have 187 applications for improvement works on lanes.***

(b) each electoral area: Clones, Castleblayney, Carrickmacross & Monaghan

**Reply: *The number of applications in each electoral area is as follows; Clones 52, Castleblayney 48, Carrickmacross 37 and Monaghan 50.***

**Cllr S. Coyle asked:**

19. When does Monaghan County Council hope to commence & complete works on the pedestrian/school crossing at Latton village, adjacent to Scoil Mhuire National School, Latton Family Resource Centre & Latton GAA facilities?  
There is a large number of children & parents crossing the road on a daily basis.

**Reply: *Monaghan County Council envisages that works will commence in the next 2 weeks and will take in the region of 3 to 4 weeks to complete.***

**Cllr P. Treanor asked:**

20. How many applications does Monaghan County Council have, per road area, for the Local Improvement Scheme?

**Reply: *The number in each electoral area is as follows; Clones 52, Castleblayney 48, Carrickmacross 37 and Monaghan 50.***

(a) How many of these are 'special needs' cases?

**Reply: *Five of the applications are 'special needs', however these will need to be verified by the social worker if the applications were to proceed.***

(b) What is the estimated cost of these works?

**Reply: *The estimated cost of these five applications is estimated at €95,000. The estimate is subject to review following the Engineer's inspection of the lanes.***

21. Has Monaghan County Council made an application for funding to survey the Finn River from Aghafin to Annies Bridge, and establish what blockages exist?

**Reply: *No specific application for survey work was made. However the full history of flooding in this area was compiled and submitted to the OPW for consideration under the (PFRA) Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment. Following the O.P.W.'s appraisal of this submission they have deemed this section of the Finn river falls outside the remit of the areas considered for further investigation i.e. AFA. These area's of further investigation from part of the overall CFRAM study.***

***CFRAM Study Objectives - The objectives of the CFRAM Studies are to: - identify and map the existing and potential future flood hazard and risk areas within the Study Area, -build the strategic information base necessary for making informed decisions in relation to managing flood risk, and, -identify viable structural and non-structural measures and options for managing the flood risks for localised high-risk areas and within the catchment as a whole, and, -prepare (a) Catchment Flood Risk Management Plan(s) for the area, and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment, that sets out prioritised measures and policies, that should be pursued by the OPW, Local Authorities and other Stakeholders to achieve the most cost-effective and sustainable management of flood risk within the Study Area.***

**Cllr S. Conlon asked:**

22. At the location opposite of Clontibret chapel, sections of large wooden roadside fencing panels have collapsed several months ago. Is responsibility to repair with Monaghan County Council or the National Roads Authority? Are efforts being made to repair?

**Reply: *Maintenance of this national road in Monaghan is a function of the County Council. The Council will carry out the repairs.***

23. Will the Executive provide a detailed drawing, including acreage and access, of Council owned property at Annahagh and along the N2 Monaghan bypass that remains available for development, post completion of the new fire station?

**Reply: *With the exception of the lands acquired for the construction of the bypass and the fire station these lands are in the ownership of Monaghan Town Council.***

**Cllr B. McKenna asked:**

24. In relation to unauthorised signage along the N2 from Aclint to Moybridge:
- how many of these signs are there in total;
  - how many warning notices have been issued in relation to them in the year 2011;
  - how many enforcement notices have been issued in respect of these signs for 2011;
  - how many have had court proceedings instigated against them in 2011;
  - how many convictions have been secured in 2011?

**Reply: *The Planning Authority has detected a total of 16 unauthorised signs along the N2, between Aclint to Moybridge, since August 2010. Warning notices were issued to all of the applicable parties.***

***In 2011 enforcement notices were issued in respect of 2 cases. A court conviction was secured in respect of one of these cases. The second case was closed prior to the court hearing, following the removal of the unauthorised sign.***

***6 letters were issued in 2012 to date in respect of newly erected unauthorised signs.***

**Cllr A. Murray asked:**

25. How many fines did Monaghan County Council issue for littering in 2011? Of these how many were in the Carrickmacross area?

**Reply: *Excluding Town Councils 62 litter fines were issued by Monaghan County Council in 2011. Of these 6 were in the Carrickmacross Area.***

## **12. Notices of Motion:**

### **Cllr S. Conlon proposed, Cllr Maxwell seconded**

1. *In an effort to improve the lives and well - being of our deaf and hard of hearing citizens, that this Council calls on the Government to give official recognition status to ISL, Irish Sign Language.*

*Cllr Conlon proposed, Cllr Maxwell seconded that in the context of both enhancing the lives and well being of our deaf and hard of hearing citizens and adhering to the spirit and ethos of the United Nations Convention on Persons with Disabilities that Monaghan County Council call on the Government to give official recognition status to Irish Sign Language (ISL). That this motion be circulated to all local authorities.*

*Cllr Connolly proposed, Cllr S. Treanor seconded that Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister for Education to ensure that the issue of sign language be put on the primary/secondary school curriculum thus ensuring that students get to understand the basics of sign language.*

The Mayor put the motions to the meeting and they were agreed unanimously.

### **Cllr P. Connolly proposed, Cllr B. McKenna seconded**

2. *That Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister for Health and Children to implement the recommendations of the Report into Feasibility study on North/South Co-operation in Health and Social Care which was jointly commissioned by the Department of Health and Children and the DHSSPS in Northern Ireland and launched on December 5th this year and further ask the Minister to outline the measures/steps which have been taken to address the priority issues identified, i.e. suicide and mental health and obesity, in the Report which was completed in February 2009.*

The Mayor put Cllr Connolly's motion to the meeting and it was agreed unanimously.

*On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the Council write to the Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan and Louth County Councils and Derry City Council, Strabane, Fermanagh, Dungannon & South Tyrone, Armagh, Newry & Mourne District Councils, requesting their support in calling for the implementation of the North-South Feasibility Study on the provision of healthcare planning and delivery on a north-south basis.*

**Cllr P. Connolly proposed, Cllr Crowe seconded**

3. *That Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister for Transport to make it mandatory that all public vehicles carrying or serving members of the public should be fitted with winter grade tyres from the months of November to March each year.*

The Mayor put Cllr Connolly's motion to the meeting. A vote by show of hands resulted in 3 for 4 against and 9 abstentions. The Mayor declared the motion lost.

**Cllr M. Carthy proposed, Cllr P. Treanor seconded**

4. *That Monaghan County Council believes that a moratorium should be placed on onshore and offshore exploration development and production of shale gas by withdrawing licenses for hydraulic fracturing (fracking) at least until the publication of a detailed environmental impact assessment into the practice; a consultation process carried out with affected communities and consideration given to how it will benefit the local economy. We note that proposals for 'fracking' are well advanced in neighbouring counties and will include policies in line with the wording and spirit of this motion in our County Development Plan.*

The Mayor put Cllr Carthy's motion to the meeting. A vote by show of hands resulted in 14 for, 1 against and 1 abstention. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

**13. Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations:**

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

- Jim McMahon, Foreman, Carrickmacross Area on the death of his mother Kitty McMahon, Lisnamoyle, Castleblayney

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

- Tommy Bates, Latton GFC on being awarded the GAA Presidential Award, the highest honour in the association, in recognition of his lifetime of service to his community.
- Rory McIlroy on becoming the World's No. 1 Golfer.
- Darren Hughes Scotstown GFC on captaining the Ulster Football Team to victory in the Railway Cup.
- Eoin Lennon (Latton GFC) and Paul Finlay (Ballybay GFC) on being members of the Ulster Football Team who won the Railway Cup.
- Eileen and Jessica Cullen and Aoife Bannigan from the McMahon School of Dancing on winning the All Ireland Under 16 Dancing Championship recently

#### 14. Conferences:

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

<b>Promoting Authority</b>	<b>Subject/Theme</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Members</b>
TGR Seminar	<b>Effective Time and Priority Management</b>	Ravensdale Suite, Carrickdale Hotel, Carrickarnon, Dundalk, Co Louth.	23 <sup>rd</sup> -25 <sup>th</sup> March, 2012	<b>Cllr Coyle Cllr Bannigan</b>
Dundalk Chamber In Business for Business	<b>Major Conference What it takes to succeed in the Tourism Sector</b>	Ballymascanlon House Hotel, Dundalk, Co Louth.	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2012	<b>Cllr Coyle Cllr Murray</b>
Elected Member's Training Seminar	<b>Guide to Septic Systems</b>	The Kingsvalley Hotel Merlin Park, Dublin Road, Galway City.	9th March 2012	<b>Cllr Coyle Cllr McNally Cllr Gallagher Cllr Connolly</b>

The meeting then concluded.