

**Minutes of meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Mtek Building,
Armagh Road, Monaghan on Monday 7th March, 2011 at 10.00 a.m.**

Chair: Cllr J. Crowe, Mayor.

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

Mr. D. Fallon, A/County Manager, Mr. P. Clifford, A. King, Directors of Service, Mr. J. McGrath, Senior Engineer and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

Apology: Cllr Carville.

At the outset the Mayor advised the Members that that Canadian Ambassador to Ireland, His Excellency Loyola Hearn, had expressed an interest in addressing the Council at a future meeting. It was agreed that the Ambassador would be invited to address the members at the April Council meeting – the address to be timed for 2.00 p.m.

Cllr Conlon advised the Members that the Chilean Ambassador to Ireland, His Excellency Leonel Searle, will be a guest of honour at the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Monaghan Town.

Cllr Gallagher, as Cathaoirleach of Monaghan Town Council, extended an invitation to the Mayor and Members of Monaghan County Council to attend the parade.

The Mayor then congratulated all those who had recently been elected or re-elected to the 31st Dail; Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, Brendan Smith, Joe O'Reilly, Sean Conlan and particularly Heather Humphreys who had been a member of the Council until her election. The Mayor paid tribute to and commiserated with those who had put their names forward for election but had not been successful on this occasion. All members joined in the tributes. Members also paid tribute to the T.D.'s who had retired prior to the general election namely Seymour Crawford and Rory O'Hanlon – for their dedicated service to the people of the county for a long number of years.

Mr. D. Fallon, A/County Manager joined in all the tributes being paid on behalf of the staff of the Council.

Urgent Business:

The Mayor advised the Members that he had received two notices of urgent business as follows:

1. Notice in the names of the Sinn Fein Members relating to Monaghan General Hospital and health services in the county.
2. Notice in the name of Cllr Connolly relating to the inclusion of 'Monaghan' on signage at Junction 14 on the M1 motorway.

It was unanimously agreed that Notice No. 1 be taken as urgent business at the end of the meeting.

Regarding Notice No. 2 it was generally agreed that the terms of this motion did not constitute urgent business but could be dealt with in the form of a notice of motion at a future meeting.

Cllr Connolly stated that he was not happy that his notice of urgent business would not be dealt with at the meeting. He stated that it was urgent as there was a national tourism convention taking place at present and one of the major concerns of the local tourism sector was the lack of proper signage on national roads – there is no sign for County Monaghan on the M1 motorway (Junction 14).

A recorded vote on the proposal that the motion did not constitute urgent business resulted as follows.

For: Cllrs Connolly, McElvaney and S. Treanor. Total 3

Against: Cllrs Bannigan, Conlon, Coyle, Crowe, Gallagher, Keelan, Maxwell B. McKenna, S. McKenna, McNally, Murray, O'Brien, O'Hanlon and P. Treanor . Total 14

The Mayor ruled the proposal defeated.

A number of members raised issues relating to the facilities available to candidates and members of the public at the election count venue in Cavan. It was agreed that the Council would write to the Returning Officer pointing out that the facilities were unsatisfactory and requesting that, in future, the count venue would rotate alternately between Cavan and Monaghan.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Crowe, it was agreed that the Council write to the Cavan County Council Fire Safety Officer asking if he was satisfied that the criteria and conditions at the General Election Count venue in Cavan Sports Centre complied with fire and health and safety regulations.

1. Confirmation of Minutes:

- (i) *On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 7th February 2011 be confirmed.*
- (ii) *On the proposal of Cllr S. McKenna, seconded by Cllr Crowe it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on Tuesday 15 February, 2011, be confirmed*

2. Correspondence

The following correspondence was circulated –

- Letter from the Meetings Administrator advising the Council of a casual vacancy in the membership of the Council arising from the election to Dail Eireann of Heather Humphreys, former member.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Tanaiste and Minister for Education and Skills in relation to student registration fees.
- Letter from the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in relation to grants for the insulation of water systems.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Housing and Local Services regarding long term leasing as a mechanism for the provision of social housing.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Finance in relation to VAT on medical appliances.
- Letters of acknowledgement from the Tanaiste and Minister for Health and Children and Minister Brendan Smith in relation to the North East Doctor on Call Service.
- Letter from the Competition Authority regarding the bulk LPG market.
- Resolution from Monaghan Town Council regarding voting rights for the Irish Diaspora abroad.
- Letter from the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources regarding the bulk LPG market.
- Report from Monaghan Library Service outlining the various services provided to the general public.

Proposal arising out of correspondence

Casual vacancy:

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that a special meeting be held on Wednesday 16th March, 2011 at 10.00 a.m. in the Mtek Building, to fill the casual vacancy on the Council.

Cllr Conlon, proposed, Cllr B. McKenna seconded that the Council adopt the resolution from Monaghan Town Council, as follows, and that it be forwarded to the incoming Minister for Foreign Affairs. “ Due to the substantial exodus of our people as a result of our country’s employment crisis, that the incoming Government would instigate a system of granting the Irish Diaspora the right to vote in Irish elections”.

Cllr Connolly stated that he had a difficulty with the Town Council proposal, particularly due to the looseness of the term ‘diaspora’ as this description could fit anyone who had left Ireland at any stage in its history.

Cllr Conlon stated that he would agree to the words Irish citizens being substituted for diaspora.

At this point Cllr Connolly withdrew from the meeting room following a disagreement with the Mayor.

Cllr Conlon’s motion was put to the meeting and agreed.

On the proposal of Cllr Murray, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was agreed that the Council Members ask their Oireachtas colleagues to support the Construction Contracts Bill which is being discussed in the Seanad.

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

(i) To consider granting permission for the construction of 4 bed two storey house and associated site works and services at Scarnageeragh (site of demolished 3 bed dormer) Emyvale, Co. Monaghan

The Members considered the report relating to this permission which was circulated with the agenda.

On the proposal of Cllr B. McKenna, seconded by Cllr Gallagher, it was agreed that the Council approve the construction of a 4 bed two storey house and associated site works and services at Scarnageeragh (site of demolished 3 bed dormer) Emyvale, Co. Monaghan to comply with the Director's Report dated 7th March, 2011 and in accordance with Part VIII of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations 2001.

4. To approve recommendations from Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on 21st February, 2011

(i) Regional Homelessness Action Plan

Cllr M. Carthy, Chair of the Housing SPC referred to the Homelessness Action Plan, a draft of which had been presented to the Council in May 2010 and had recently been considered by the Corporate Policy Group. He commended all involved with the preparation of the plan and recommended it to the Council for adoption.

Mr. A. King, Director of Housing stated that the plan had been prepared on a regional basis in accordance with Section 37 of the (Housing Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009. He stated that the objectives contained within the plan, which had been presented to the Council in May 2010, are as follows;

- (i) the prevention of homelessness,
- (ii) the reduction of homelessness in its extent or duration;
- (iii) the provision of services, including accommodation to address the needs of homeless households;
- (iv) the provision of assistance to persons who were formerly homeless and
- (v) the promotion of effective co-ordination of activities proposed to be undertaken for the purposes of addressing homelessness in the administrative areas concerned.

Mr. King responded to queries raised by the Members.

On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was agreed that the North East Homelessness Action Plan 2011-2013 be adopted by the Council.

(ii) Council Awards Ceremony – to approve nominations and fix date for Awards Ceremony

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr S. McKenna it was agreed that the Council approve the nominations received under the Council's Awards Scheme 2010, and that the Awards Ceremony be held on Monday 4th April, 2011 at 7.00 p.m.

(iii) To consider allocation of grant to Colaiste Oiriall:

On the proposal of Cllr B. McKenna, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was agreed that a grant of €1,000 be allocated to Colaiste Oiriall for 2011 – the allocation to be provided from the Council's Gaeilge budget for 2011.

5. To nominate Members to the Development Contributions Allocations sub committee.

It was agreed that the following members be nominated to the Development Contributions Allocations sub committee –

Cllrs M. Carthy and S. Conlon (Sinn Fein)
Cllrs A. Murray and O. Bannigan (Fine Gael)
Cllrs J. O'Brien and S. Coyle (Fianna Fail)
Cllr S. Treanor (Independent)

6. To receive report from Audit Committee on activities undertaken in 2010.

The Members considered the report on the activities of the Audit Committee for 2010.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Crowe it was agreed that the report on the activities of the Audit Committee for 2010 be noted.

7. Diospóireacht as Gaeilge

Cuireadh láithreachas i bhfoirm díospóireacht as Gaeilge faoi bhráid cruinniú mí na Marta den Comhairle. D'oscail Maor an Chontae Seán Mac Chonra an díospóireacht is ansin cuir sé cuireadh don tOifigeach Gaeilge Pól Ó Cléirigh cuir síos a dhéanadh ar a bhí faoi bhun maidir le cuir chun cinn na Gaeilge sa Chontae. Cuir Pól in úil don cruinniú ar na nithe dearfacha a bhí á dheanamh ag an Comhairle i leith na Gaeilge is ina theannta sin rinne se cuir síos gairid ar Mionchomhdháil suntasach a reáchtálaíodh ag an Comhairle ar an 1ú Mí na Marta san Músaem.

Théis léiriú Pól glac go leor comhairleoirí páirt gníomhach sa díospóireacht ina measc an Comhairleoir Padraic Mac Thréinir Cathaoirleach an Coiste Gaeilge achan ag tacú leis an dea obair atá faoi bhun i dtaobh na Gaeilge de. Ag taispeáint a

líofacht fhéin sa teanga náisiúnta is é ag deanamh achoimre comh maith lena cuid tacaíocht féin a cuir leis cuir Banaisteoir Feidhmiúcháin an Chontae David Fallon críoch leis an díospóireacht. Dáilíodh bileoga eolais i measc achán a bhí i láthair ar a raibh sonraí ar na himeachtaí uilig is iad bainteach le Gaeilge a bhí le reáchtáil sa Chontae i rith Seachtain na Gaeilge

The March meeting of the Council was entreated to a debate as Gaeilge. The debate was opened by the Mayor Jackie Crowe who invited the Irish language Officer Pól Ó Cléirigh to address the meeting. Pól informed the meeting of the very positive measures being carried out by the Council for the promotion of the Irish Language in the county. A brief account was given of a very successful Mini Conference which was held in the Museum on March 1st 2011.

Pól's address was followed by further statements from various councillors including Cllr P. Treanor, Chairman of An Coiste Gaeilge in support of the promotion of the Irish language and complimenting the Council on the good work being carried out. Acting County Manager David Fallon displayed his own proficiency in Irish while adding the significant concluding comments to the debate. Leaflets were distributed to all present outlining details of events with an Irish Language content to be held in County Monaghan during Seachtain na Gaeilge 2011.

8. To receive reports from Members attending Conferences:

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

- I.C.L.R.D. Conference, Radisson Blu Hotel, Sligo.
- TJK Conference, Thomond Park Stadium, Limerick

9. Proposed Eirgrid 440kv Interconnector

Cllr Bannigan stated that the Mayor and himself had attended the Renewable Energy Summit in Dublin on 3rd March. He will circulate information to Members when received from ESB.

On the proposal of Cllr Bannigan, seconded by Cllr Murray it was agreed that the Council write to the new Ministers for Energy and the Environment seeking

- 1. the immediate establishment of the independent Commission to review all aspects of the North/South Interconnector and to instruct Eirgrid to stop all work on the planning process.*
- 2. To immediately adopt the Aarhus Convention.*

On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr Crowe, it was agreed that when the new Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources is appointed that the Council seek an indication as to when an Order will be made advising Eirgrid to recoup costs to individuals/groups that incurred costs in relation to the Eirgrid Interconnector oral hearing.

10. Business submitted by County Manager

Mr. D. Fallon, A/County Manager advised the members that he wished to update them in relation to Hope Castle.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr O'Brien it was agreed that the Council deal with this matter 'in Committee'.

Mr. Fallon then briefed the Members in relation to Hope Castle. Following the briefing, the Council then came back into public session.

It was agreed that a meeting of the Muckno sub-committee would be held on 16th March, 2011 immediately following the Special Council meeting in the Mtek Building at 10.00 a.m.

11. Matters arising out of minutes of Council meetings held on 7th and 15th February, 2011.

Matters arising out of the minutes of Council meetings held on 7th and 15th February, 2011 were responded to by the appropriate officials.

12. Questions:

Cllr P. Connolly asked:

Q.1 In view of the findings of the recent national draft report of the Advisory Group on unfinished housing developments and the fact that 14 out of a total of 45 unfinished housing developments in Co Monaghan are considered dangerous what plans are in place to ensure that these developments can be secured and rendered safe and what is the likely timeframe for completion of works?

Reply: *The Minister for Housing issued an interim report prepared by the Advisory Group on Unfinished Housing Developments entitled "Emerging Priority Issues" on 18 February 2011. The interim report did not include a list of unfinished developments. Press reports indicated that there were 14 unfinished estates identified in Co. Monaghan that presented a danger to public safety and a national allocation of €5million was to be provided to carry out urgent works. Despite requests to the Department, Monaghan County Council has yet to be notified of estates that were identified within the report or the funding allocation for the county. Monaghan County Council has identified 39 unfinished developments within the county and has initiated a consultation process and negotiations with developers, to ensure the works are completed to a satisfactory standard on each development. Developers who fail to co-operate are referred for enforcement proceedings through the Courts.*

Q.2 (a) How many housing developments/estates are waiting to be taken in charge in Co Monaghan?

Reply: *As at 1 March 2011, Monaghan County Council has 10 applications for Taking in Charge of housing developments.*

(b) What is the likely timeframe for taking in charge of same?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council adopted an updated policy document "Taking in Charge Procedures for Private Housing Developments" at its November 2010 meeting, which specifies the standards of work required before the Council will take housing developments in charge. The timeframe is determined by the length of time taken by the developer to comply with the conditions of planning permission and complete all works in compliance with the standards.*

Cllr A. Murray asked:

Q.3 As part of Monaghan County Council's Enterprise initiative and in particular in relation to broadband coverage in the county to whom do individuals or companies contact if they have poor coverage?

Reply: *Please send details to: Kim McKenna, Community and Enterprise, Monaghan County Council. Phone: 047 73719; Email: kmckenna@monaghancoco.ie*

Q.4 With regard to Monaghan County Council's housing waiting list what is the breakdown in numbers for:

- (a) Couples with children.
- (b) Single parent families.
- (c) Single persons under 50 years.
- (d) Those over 50 years old seeking O P D's.
- (e) All other categories.

Reply: *See attached sheet for breakdown.*

Cllr R. Gallagher asked:

Q.5 Would the Council investigate as a matter of urgency the need for traffic control measures at Cul Banagher in Glaslough?

Reply: *The Council will investigate traffic issues at Cul Bannagher.*

Q.6 Would the Council consider:

(a) the need for a name plaque at the OAP estate in Emyvale

Reply: *The Council will consider the need for a name plaque and shall provide one if the money to do so is available. The name of the estate is "Gort an Chaibléara", if residents wish to erect a suitable name plaque in a suitable position that would be also acceptable.*

(b) the need to ensure that the hoarding along the estate boundary is not causing an obstruction to sightlines for traffic exiting the estate onto the N2

Reply: *The Council will examine the hoarding and ensure that sightlines are not affected.*

(c) that trees to the rear of the site are trimmed so that they do not pose a hazard to residents

Reply: *The hedge to the rear of the sight has been trimmed. Two trees at the rear of the site were inspected and do not appear to constitute a hazard to residents.*

Q.7 Would the Council investigate the upgrading of tourism signage and seating on the N2 on the south side of Emyvale and at the picnic area on the N2 north of Ballyoisin?

Reply: *Plans are in place to upgrade seating in this area. A mural is also planned to be located at this area under the Blackwater Partnership.*

Cllr S. Conlon asked:

Q.8 In the interest of road safety, will the Roads Section correspond with Coillte imploring on them the need for a regular schedule of hedge/tree trimming and maintenance along the inside of forestry walls that run alongside road networks such as the Cootehill Rd and Threemilehouse Rd that boundaries Rossmore Park?

Reply: *The Council have been in contact with Coillte regarding cutting of hedges at both these locations. Further correspondence will continue.*

Q.9 Within the Council Planning and Environmental Sections, what degree of progress has been made in advancing the concept of developing an Integrated Constructed Wetlands at the Scotch Corner Municipal Landfill Amenity?

Reply: *The Integrated Constructed Wetlands concept Project at the historic landfill at Scotch Corner is at a preliminary stage. A Part 8 application was lodged with the Planning Authority on Friday 18th February 2011. An ICW project such as this will have to form part of an overall site remediation proposal to be submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency for approval and Certification under the Waste Management (Certification of Historic Unlicensed Waste Disposal and Recovery Activity) Regulations 2008.*

13. Notices of Motion:

Cllr Conlon proposed, Cllr P. Treanor seconded and it was agreed,

That this Council deplore the recently announced termination of annual DOEHLG grant allocation to Monaghan County Council that provided funding towards implementation of the National Disability Strategy in Local Authorities.

In proposing the motion, Cllr Conlon stated that the removal of the department funding will have a serious impact on the delivery of future services. He referred to the excellent work that had been done in the past few years in a county that was seen as a model of best practice in the enhancement of measures for people whose lives had been affected by disability. In seconding the motion Cllr P. Treanor referred to the “Making Monaghan Accessible” report and the fact that Monaghan County Council was recognised nationally for its approach to implementing the recommendations of the Barcelona Declaration.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that the Council write to the Minister for the Environment and Local Government seeking re-instatement of the funding that has been removed for the implementation of the National Disability Strategy.

Cllr B. McKenna stated that he had witnessed on many occasions, able-bodied persons parking in disabled parking spaces and he called on Monaghan Town Council traffic wardens to ensure that the regulations are implemented.

14. Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations:

It was agreed that a vote of sympathy be extended to the following.

- Grainne Owens, a member of the Council’s staff on the death of her mother, Nora Gilsenan, Brackagh, Broomfield, RIP.
- The wife Maura and family of the late Peter McGuirk, Kinturk, Newbliss, RIP.
- The family of the late Gerard Finn, Cherry Park, Clones, RIP
- The family of the late Daniel Douglas, Lisarearke, Scotshouse, RIP

15. Conferences:

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

Promoting Authority	Subject/Theme	Venue	Dates	Members
Smart Marketing	A guide to effective Public Relations	The Falls Hotel Ennistymon, Co Clare	11 th -13 th March 2011	Cllr Hugh McElvaney Cllr Owen Bannigan Cllr Gary Carville Cllr John O’Brien Cllr Pdraig McNally Cllr Jackie Crowe
Association of County & City Councils	Association of County & City Councils Annual Conference	Tullamore Court Hotel,	24 th – 25 th March 2011	Cllr David Maxwell Cllr Gary Carville Cllr Aidan Murray Cllr Robbie Gallagher Cllr Brian McKenna Cllr John O’Brien

Conferences (contd):

Rattoo Heritage Society	20 th Annual Kerry Environmental Conference and Training Seminar	The Meadowlands Hotel, Oakpark, Tralee, Co. Kerry	7 th -10 th April 2011	Cllr David Maxwell Cllr Owen Bannigan Cllr Aidan Murray Cllr Seamus Coyle Cllr Padraig McNally Cllr Paudge Connolly Cllr Sean Conlon
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Urgent Business:

Motion in the names of Cllrs Carthy, Crowe, Conlon, Keelan, B. McKenna, S. McKenna and P. Treanor.

Cllr B. McKenna proposed, Cllr M. Carthy seconded

That Monaghan County Council calls on the incoming Government to radically overhaul the health services across this state including, as a priority for the people of this county, to restore all acute, medical and emergency services removed from Monaghan General Hospital by the previous Government under the auspices of the HSE. That we also call for the further development of appropriate services at the site of Monaghan General Hospital.

That this Council also requests a meeting with the incoming Minister for Health as soon as he/she is appointed to discuss this and other health related issues pertaining to the people of County Monaghan.

A debate followed to which a number of members contributed and called on the incoming Minister for Health to ensure that all acute medical and emergency services are restored to Monaghan General Hospital.

Cllr B. McKenna's motion was put to the meeting and agreed unanimously.

The meeting then concluded.