

Minutes of Adjourned October Council Meeting held in the Mtek Building, Knockaconny, Monaghan on Monday 15th October, 2007 10.00 a.m.

Chair: Cllr G Carville, Mayor

Present: Cllrs Bannigan, Carthy, Conlon, Coyle, Crowe, Gallagher, Humphreys, Keelan, Keenan, Kieran, Maxwell, McAnespie, McElvaney, B. McKenna, P. McKenna, P. McNally and Treanor.

Mr. D. Nelson, County Manager, Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator and Ms. A. Mackle, A/Staff Officer.

1. (i) Presentation by County Monaghan Fund

The Mayor welcomed Mr Seamus McDermott from the County Monaghan to the Council Meeting and invited him to address the meeting

Mr. McDermott thanked the Members for the opportunity to address the Council. In the course of his presentation he outlined the following

- The Community Foundation was set up in Cleveland, Ohio in 1914, was established in Britain in 1980 and was established in Ireland in 2000. The County Monaghan Fund was established in 2004.
- The County Monaghan Funds initial funding target is €800,000.
- The Monaghan Fund has supported various causes within the county including the Ballybay Cailini, Alzheimer's Society of Ireland (Monaghan Branch) and Clones Day Care for the Elderly, Arts and Community Centre, Castleblayney etc.
- To date €2,807 has been given out in grants.

The Fund was set up for two reasons:

- (i) To afford generous Monaghan people wherever they live, the opportunity to support Monaghan by targeting their donations to worthy projects which address the needs of groups, communities and individuals within County Monaghan.
- (ii) To make County Monaghan an attractive, safe, supportive, caring and well-resourced environment to live, work and relax in.

Benefits

- This fund will develop a sustainable perpetual source of support of funding for community and charitable projects in County Monaghan and will create a legacy for the county
- Subscribers may qualify for full tax relief and the foundation takes care of all legal, accounting and tax issues.
- Subscribers may specify the causes you wish your donation to go to and they get all the benefits of owning a "Trust" without the problem of managing it.

Fund Type

- **Endowment Fund** – Monies donated are put in a long-term investment deposit savings scheme and grants are given from the income generated by the capital.
- **A flow through fund** – These monies are used for immediate response to identified funding needs, they fund once off projects

Aims

The Fund hopes to fund a number of projects including:

- CPR Training
- Support Budding Entrepreneurs
- Bring Graduates Home

The County Monaghan Fund would also like to target people from Monaghan now living abroad who are interested in giving something back to the community and this presentation today is asking the Members, as public representatives, to spread the word.

The Members welcomed Mr. McDermott's presentation and spoke about the positive impact this project has and will have for County Monaghan. The following comments were made -

- This presentation focuses on the needs and potential development of County Monaghan
- If everyone contributed €5 per week amounting to €250 per annum this amount is assessable to all.
- Focusing on Graduates, encouraging their return to the County and assisting them to establish enterprises within the County is very important.
- The criteria for accessing this funding is not strict and allows everyone to access it
- This project needs to be published, contact details need to be highlighted and information evenings to be held to make people more aware of the funds existence.

In response Mr. McDermott said he would like to make a presentation to the staff of Monaghan County Council to promote the fund. He would also like to see the establishment of an Enterprise Liaison Officer - this would help advocate and assist any potential entrepreneur and help eliminate the red tape, which frightens many potential entrepreneur. They advertise this fund twice yearly but if a committee of around twelve people representing the various sectors of the local community was established to advise the main County Monaghan Fund committee, this would be of great benefit to the whole community.

The County Manager said this was an excellent initiative and to ensure its success they needed to identify Monaghan people who were looking for a

vehicle to support the County. He welcomed Mr. McDermott's suggestion to give a presentation to the staff of Monaghan County Council. He also suggested that this item be discussed at An All Party Job Creation meeting arranged for November 7th with the IDA and John McEntegart in attendance.

The Mayor thanked Mr. McDermott for his presentation.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Carville it was agreed to refer this presentation to the CPG for consideration.

1. (ii) Falun Gong Presentation

The Mayor welcomed Ms Donguxue Dai to the Council Meeting.

Ms. Donguxue Dai outlined the following to the Members

The Falun Gong group had been in County Monaghan earlier in the year to highlight the plight of this organisation which is currently being persecuted by the Chinese Government. They had petitions signed by the people of County Monaghan and had handed it into the County Manager. Ms, Dai highlighted the following:-

- Falun Gong is a spiritual movement based on Taoism and Buddhism called the Falun Gong, which is more, a philosophical group than a religion.
- The religion has no formal organisation or hierarchy, there are no formalities.
- The basis of the religion is Truthfulness, Compassion and Forbearance; its aim to improve the body and mind, its founder is Li Hongzhi.
- The Communist Party see this movement as its most serious challenge since the Communist Party came to power in 1949.
- Falun Gong – literally means “The Power of the Law Wheel” is derived from the ancient Chinese practice of Qi Gong, Qi is an energy force that is said to be circulating within the body.
- In April 1999 Falun Gong brought 10,000 people to demonstrate in Beijing, a large of people mobilised at short notice and this worried the authorities.
- In light of this the Chinese Government seeing the growth of Falun Gong's popularity banned Falun Gong two years ago and tens of thousands of its followers arrested.
- The Government is now receiving bad press twenty-four seven within China and people are told not to associate with its members. People are told to condemn Falun Gong or face expulsion.
- Chinese people living abroad are also targeted and if they are believed to be Members are arrested once they arrive back in China and tortured.
- Since 2000 know Falun Gong Members have been used for live organ harvesting and the Chinese Government runs a state website advertising organs for sale.
- The State Run hospitals are killing Falun Gong practitioners for their organs and for foreign export.
- In 1998 there were 9 organ transplants in China, by 2004 there were 1,601.

- David Matas, Human Rights Lawyer and David Kilgour a former Secretary of State, Canada investigated these allegations on behalf of the UN and issued a report concluding that organ harvesting is occurring in china.

Following her presentation Ms. Dai responded to queries from the Members.

The Mayor thanked Dongxue Dai for her presentation and she withdrew from the meeting.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr B McKenna it was agreed that Monaghan County Council write to the Department of Foreign Affairs asking them to put pressure on the Chinese Government to desist from the arrest and persecution of Falun Gong Practitioners”

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr McAnespie it was agreed that Monaghan County Council write to the International Olympic Committee stating that Monaghan County Council is interested in determining the level of concern of the International Olympics Committee on the reports of human rights abuse, particularly against practitioners of Falun Gong in China”

1. (iii) Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)

The Mayor welcomed the representatives from the Gaelic Athletics Association (GAA) to the Council Meeting.

In attendance were Mr. Paul Curran, Monaghan Co Board Coaching and Games Development Officer, Dr Eugene Young, High Performance Director of the Ulster Council, Mr. Stephen McGeehan and Mr. Dermot Marsden, Mr. Eamon O’Hara of the Coaching and Games Development Committee and Ms. Marion Donnelly, Monaghan County Board Treasurer.

In his presentation to the Council Dr. Young highlighted the following:

- Within the nine counties of Ulster there are 573 Clubs and 6 different types of Sports.
- The Monaghan County Board has at its core Governance, from there they aim to develop and promote Inclusion & Cohesion, Culture and Heritage, Games Development and Facilities/Infrastructure.
- **Games Development** - Aims to promote Physical Literacy, Coach Development, Football, Hurling, Camogie, Ladies Football, Rounders, Handball, Health and Lifestyle and Club Maith.
- **Inclusion and Cohesion** – Aims to integrate all people within the county. The program includes the Integration of Codes, Diversity, Special Needs, Disability, New Irish, Non Traditional GAA Community, and Young Offenders.
- **Culture and Heritage** – Aims to promote Irish Language Summer Schemes, Recruitment of Coaches for Schools, Scor, GAA Club Culture and promoting the Good Club.

- **Facilities and Infrastructure** – Aims to develop new recreational facilities and services including development of the pitch at Ballybay, lights in Annyalla, Castleblayney and Corduff etc
- As well as promoting County Monaghan’s elite squads, they also hope to promote Go Games where all participants have an opportunity to engage in sports.
- It aims to target and educate people both young and old on lifestyle issues including drug and alcohol, obesity and heart disease issues, road safety, suicide, diabetes and cancer issues affecting both young and old.
- At the moment they are teaching young people about proper eating habits to help reduce the levels of obesity in young people.
- GAA Grassroots Summer Caps have been set up to educate young people between the ages of 5 – 12, the contents of the program is skills and games and behavioural changes in eating habits for both parents and children. The Motto is if we lead children with good examples they will follow.
- Promotion of open door days to encourage people from other communities and people with special needs to join in the activities.
- The GAA links clubs with schools to target the younger generation
- The GAA is here today to request the County Council to provide €150,000 over three years for the employment of three Coaches.

In response to queries from the Members, Dr. Young and Paul Curran replied as follows:

- They did not see a problem with the GAA consulting with the Tenant Liaison officer for the promotion of sport within housing estates.
- There are 64 schools in County Monaghan and the GAA promote physical activity in these schools 10 weeks out of the 36-week school year.
- The GAA has a number of voluntary coaches who do an excellent job and while the voluntary coaches are excellent they are limited in both time and training. This is why the GAA was here today to ask the Members for financial assistance limits the GAA.
- Smaller Rural schools are targeted by the GAA. Programmes including Go Games have been held to increase activity and participation in the under 10’s and Under 8’s.
- Various programmes are held in the towns because children living in towns more reluctant to join sports activities compared to the rural counterparts.
- They need €280,000 to employ three coaches over a three-year period. They have managed to raise funding from grants and fund raising however they still have a short fall of €50,000 per annum.
- The GAA do receive assistance from the Central Council of the GAA.
- Special needs – The GAA is working closely with the Special needs schools to help promote sports.
- The Ulster Council will match the County Councils funding.
- Levies are not the same for all clubs; it is based on the number of schools within the area.

The County Manager said the provision of this funding would be a challenge for the Council. It would mean cutting expenditure elsewhere or increasing revenue. However, he felt it was an excellent proposal and he welcomed the idea of

involving the Tenant Liaison officer in the process. The submission of an annual report to the Council in relation to how the proposed funding had been utilised would be important.

On the proposal of Cllr Carville, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was agreed that the request from the GAA for funding of €50,000 p.a. over three years be referred to the CPG for consideration.

2. Notices of Motion

(a) Cllr Martin proposed, Cllr Carthy seconded

“That Monaghan County Council adopt (in conjunction with the Northern Standard Newspaper) an arrangement similar to that practised by Cavan County Council with the Anglo-Celt Newspaper, whereby Cavan County Council supply the aforesaid newspaper at regular intervals throughout the year with a classified, easy to read list of all planning applications received by the Council to the great benefit of the Cavan public and in particular its property owners.”

In moving the motion Cllr Martin stated that he believed it was in the interest of the public that the Council to place a list in the local press of all planning applications received by the Council at regular intervals throughout the year

On the proposal of Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr Carthy it was agreed defer a decision on this motion until the next Council meeting so that an estimate of the annual cost for such a proposal is obtained.

Cllr Carthy also proposed that the Planning Section approach each local newspaper seeking the most economical cost of implementing this proposal.

Cllr Maxwell proposed that due to the increase in newspaper circulation in County Monaghan it would be best to look at readership levels and most cost effectiveness.

Cllr Crowe proposed that the Planning lists issued to the Members be forwarded to the local media.

The County Manager said there was huge cost implications attached to Cllr Martins proposal. Planning applicants may also believe that once their details have been advertised there is no onus on them to advertise it and this may have legal implications.

Cllr Martin agreed to defer a decision on his motion until the November meeting, pending a report from the County Manager on the cost, to the Council, of implementing this proposal. He acknowledged that there are now more newspapers circulating in the county than when this motion first appeared on the agenda paper and that they should all be consulted. He also suggested that the County Manager consult with the Cavan County Manager on this matter.

Official Opening of the Castleblayney Bypass

On the proposal of Cllr Carville, seconded by Cllr B McKenna it was agreed to hold the November Council on November 6th 2007 due to the official opening of the Castleblayney Bypass, which is scheduled for November 5th 2007.

Monaghan Theatre Application

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Maxwell it was agreed to invite Ms Martina Hurson, Administrator of the Garage Theatre to attend the meeting with Mr Dara Mullally, Principal Officer in the Arts Unit to discuss an unsuccessful application under this Departments ACCESS II Scheme.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____

Meara

Meetings Administrator

Date: _____
