

Minutes of meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Mtek Building, Monaghan on Monday 7th October, 2013 at 10.00 a.m.

Chair: Cllr S. Conlon, Mayor.

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

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

Apology: Cllrs Coyle and Keelan.

Votes of sympathy:

The Mayor proposed a vote of sympathy with Cllr N. Keelan on the death of his cousin Concepta McNally, Rathmore, Carrickmacross, whose funeral was taking place that morning. Cllr Carthy seconded the proposal which was agreed unanimously.

Mr. D. Fallon joined in the expression of sympathy to Cllr Keelan on behalf of the staff.

All present observed one minute of silence, as a mark of respect.

Urgent Business:

The Mayor advised the members that he had received two notices of Urgent Business, as follows:

(i) Notice in the names of Cllrs P. Treanor, J. Crowe, S. Conlon, B. McKenna and M. Carthy

“That Monaghan County Council calls on the Ministers for Education and Finance not to increase class sizes in our primary schools in the forthcoming budget and pull back on the cutbacks in education which are having a far reaching and detrimental effect on the education of our greatest asset, our young people”

(ii) Notice in the names of Cllrs J. O'Brien, P. McNally, R. Gallagher, P.J. O'Hanlon

“That Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister for Education Ruairi Quinn, TD, to immediately address the issue of class sizes, given that Ireland has the second highest class size in Europe, well behind most European countries at 24.5 students per teacher. We call on the Minister to reduce the student/teacher ratio in the up-coming Budget.

It was unanimously agreed to discuss urgent business. The Mayor ruled that he would deal with this matter at 2.45 pm.

1. Confirmation of Minutes:

Minutes of Council meeting held on 2nd September, 2013

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr Carville it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 2nd September, 2013, be confirmed.

2. Correspondence:

The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda:

- Copy of submission from Monaghan County Council to the Irish Central Border Areas Network in respect of a Regional Strategic Framework for the Central Border Region.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government in response to the Council's resolution regarding Leader funding.
- Letter from the Minister for Housing and Planning in relation to local authority rent schemes.
- Letter from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in relation to the Social Housing Investment Programme.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in response to the Council's resolution regarding poultry products.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Social Protection in response to the Council's resolution regarding the Farm Assist Scheme.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Justice and Equality in response to the Council's resolution regarding Clones Courthouse.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in response to the Council's resolution regarding staffing levels in Teagasc.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in response to the Council's resolution regarding bank loans for farmers.
- Letter from the Minister for Education and Skills regarding Special Needs Assistants.
- Letter from the Minister for Finance regarding Public Interest Directors.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in relation to a job creation for the border region.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in relation to the North South Interconnector.
- Letter from the National Roads Authority in relation to Ballinacarry Bridge.
- Letter from the Department for Regional Development Northern Ireland in relation to Ballinacarry Bridge.
- Letter from Castleblayney Show Committee thanking the Council for its sponsorship of the annual show.
- Letter from Coiste Chontae Mhuineacháin CLG thanking the Council for the civic reception afforded to the Monaghan Senior and Minor Football teams on winning the Ulster Finals in July 2013.
- Email from the Irish Council Against Blood Sports calling on the Council to adopt a motion condemning those involved in the illegal practice of cockfighting.
- Letters from Monaghan Town Council, Wexford Borough Council and Dublin City Council confirming support for the Council's resolution regarding an increase in the Old Age Pension.

- Resolution from Leitrim County Council calling on the Minister for Finance and the Central Bank to ensure the protection of the structures and local branches of the Credit Union Movement.
- Resolution from Ennis Town Council calling on the Minister for Health to revise the scheme for chronic illnesses.

The following correspondence was circulated at the meeting:

- Letter from the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in relation to the North South Interconnector.
- Letter from the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government in response to the Council's resolution regarding Leader funding.
- Email from the office of the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht declining the Council's request for a meeting with the Minister.
- Letter from the National Roads Authority in relation to signage at Junction 14 on the M1 Motorway.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Commission for Energy Regulation in relation to the North South Interconnector.
- Resolution from Wexford County Council calling for all water and sanitation plants to be publicly owned.
- Resolution from Clones Town Council calling on the Minister for Health to ring-fence funding for mental health services in budget 2014.

Proposals arising out of correspondence:

On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that we request the Council Management to review the practice whereby social welfare recipients (where two people in a household are affected) pay proportionately more in Council rent than other tenants in light of the correspondence circulated with the agenda from the office of the Minister for Housing and Planning.

On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the Council writes to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government seeking a breakdown of where the 185 houses provided for in the 2012-2014 Social Housing programme will be located and to outline how many are to be delivered by local authorities. That we further call on the Government to initiate a comprehensive social house building/purchase scheme to alleviate the huge waiting lists across the State.

On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the Council accedes to the request of the Irish Council Against Blood Sports to adopt a motion condemning those involved in the illegal practice of cock-fighting and calls on the Gardai to initiate a crackdown on cock-fighting in the county.

On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the Council writes to the Minister for Social Protection and the Minister for Agriculture calling for a reversal in the cuts to the 2013 Farm Assist Scheme and seeking assurances that there will be no further cuts to this scheme in Budget 2014.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the Council re-issue its request to the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism to meet a delegation from the Council in relation to the Ulster Canal project.

On the proposal of Cllr Crowe, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that the Council make sure that Ballinacarry Bridge is included on the NRA proposed list of works until funding becomes available to re-align the said bridge.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that this Council retrospectively approve the submission to ICBAN relating to the Regional Strategic Framework for the Central Border Region.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that this Council supports the motion from Clones Town Council regarding the Mental Health Service.

On the proposal of Cllr B. McKenna, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that the Council writes again to the Minister for Finance requesting clarification as to what position the Public Interest Directors took in relation to the practice where banks increase mortgage interest rates in advance of the ECB's reduction in interest rates.

On the proposal of Cllr O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr Gallagher, it was agreed that the Council requests the Minister for Agriculture and Food to ensure that imports of chicken into Ireland are checked properly and thoroughly at point of entry and comply with the high standards required of Irish produced chicken.

On the proposal of Cllr McNally, seconded by Cllr Gallagher it was agreed that the Council write to the Director of Teagasc, Mr. Gerry Boyle, to establish what his staffing levels are and with particular reference to County Monaghan. Also what additional resources are required from the Department of Agriculture to restore proper staffing levels.

3. To approve Overdraft accommodation in the sum of €10m for the period from 1st January 2014 to 31st December 2014

On the proposal of Cllr B. McKenna, seconded by Cllr Crowe it was agreed that the Council approve of overdraft accommodation in the sum of €10 million for the period from 1st January 2014 to 31st December, 2014.

4. To receive recommendations from Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 16th September, 2013

On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr O'Brien it was agreed that the Council approve the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 16th September, 2013 and the recommendations contained therein.

On the proposal of Cllr B. McKenna, seconded by Cllr Maxwell it was agreed that the Council invite Dr. Nazih Eldin, Health Promotion Officer, HSE to give a presentation to the Council on health/obesity.

5. To approve the disposal of site at Drummond Otra, Carrickmacross in accordance with Section 183 Notice dated 24/09/13.

On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr McNally it was agreed that the Council approve the disposal of .329 hectares of land at Drummond Otra (Convent Lands) Carrickmacross to Respond Housing Association, Luke House, Alexander Street, Waterford, in accordance with the terms of Section 183 Notice dated 24th September 2013; Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 211(2) of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 2000.

On the proposal of Cllr B. McKenna, seconded by Cllr Carthy it was agreed that the Council write to the Minister for Housing Jan O'Sullivan, T.D., requesting that she meet with a deputation from the Council to discuss Social Housing policy.

6. Address by His Excellency Loyola Hearn, Canadian Ambassador to Ireland

The Mayor welcomed His Excellency Loyola Hearn, Canadian Ambassador to Ireland to the meeting. He also welcomed former Councillor, Willie McKenna, who was accompanying the Ambassador on his visit. He stated that County Monaghan is very fortunate to have enjoyed very close relationships with Canada over two decades and in particular the strong twinning links which have been established. Ambassador Hearn and his predecessors had formally visited the county on a number of occasions. He paid tribute to the work undertaken by Willie in promoting the county. Visitor numbers from Canada had been particularly strong this year. He then presented the Ambassador with a crystal clock adorned with the Council crest.

The Ambassador thanked the Mayor for the presentation and proceeded to address the Council. He said he was delighted to be back in Monaghan and complimented the Council on the re-design of the chamber. He thanked Willie McKenna '*the Council's own Ambassador*' for arranging the visit. The Ambassador stated that his role was to promote Canada in Ireland but that he also promoted Ireland in Canada whenever the opportunity arose to do so. He referred to the tourist attractions and the ancestral heritage – 50% of the people in Newfoundland have Irish ancestry. He reflected on the success of The Gathering initiative and that he had attended a number of events to celebrate it.

He had been in Monaghan the previous week at the Monaghan Mushrooms complex (with the Canadian Minister for Agriculture) – a company that had a major expansion in Ontario which gave them access to a large market. The visit had been beneficial for both sides. He also referred to the large numbers of young Irish people who have found employment in Canada and he praised Ireland's highly adaptable and skilled workforce. He said that when the quota of permits for Irish people was opened up, the entire 6,350 places were taken up in a little over 48 hours.

Cllrs McNally, McElvaney, B. McKenna and Connolly then spoke on behalf of their political groupings. They thanked the Ambassador for his address and for the interest he had shown in the county over the past three years and for promoting a positive image of it.

The County Manager also expressed his appreciation to the Ambassador.

7. To receive reports from Members attending Conferences

The Members noted the reports from Cllrs Gallagher and O'Hanlon in relation to their attendance at the following conferences –

- Sport and Mental Health, Ballybofey, Co. Donegal
- Poverty in Ireland today, Bunratty, Co. Clare

8. Proposed Eirgrid 440kv Interconnector

During the course of a debate on this item, Cllr Bannigan proposed, Cllr Murray seconded and it was agreed –

That this Council write to Minister Pat Rabbitte and EirGrid referring to correspondence dated 30th September, 2013 and stating that –

- 1. The delays experienced by EirGrid in the Northern/South Interconnector project are because EirGrid cannot finalise a planning application, due to the fact that land-owners will not allow access to lands for surveying.*
- 2. The attempts by EirGrid to bully people into accepting overhead high voltage power lines are being resisted and will be resisted by local communities and land-owners.*
- 3. Given that acceptance by local communities is a fundamental part of the Government Policy Statement and that we now have strong resistance from communities in Monaghan, Cavan, Meath, Mayo, Roscommon, Galway, Kildare, Laois, Kilkenny, Carlow, Waterford, Wexford, Tipperary and Cork, will the Minister and EirGrid now accept that high voltage overhead powerlines are not acceptable to local communities. EirGrid must now seek an alternative way to upgrade the National Grid – that alternative is undergrounding as outlined in the Independent Commission Report.*

On the proposal of Cllr Bannigan, seconded by Cllr Murray it was agreed that this Council write to the Energy Regulator and the Department of Energy seeking

- 1. The total KW of electricity produced in 2012 and 2013 year to date.*
- 2. The generating source from which that electricity was sourced (exact figures)*
- 3. The average price paid per KW of electricity by EirGrid.*
- 4. The average price quoted by each generating source eg oil, gas, coal, wind*
- 5. The amount of subsidy paid per KW of electricity produced by wind energy.*

On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr Crowe, it was agreed that this Council writes to the Minister for Communications asking him to outline the full details of his assertion (correspondence dated 30/9/13 Ref: LH2013 186 ECD 62) that the absence of the North South Interconnector is currently costing the consumer approximately €20m annually.

It was agreed that the above resolutions be circulated to all local authorities in the country.

9. Business submitted by County Manager

e|net Takeover: Mr. D. Fallon, County Manager informed the Members that e|net, the company that manages and operates the MANs in 94 cities and towns around Ireland had been taken over by a consortium of international telco and infrastructure investors. The acquisition will have no impact on e|net's day to day business operations, e|net's current management will remain in place and the company's customers, which include BT, UPC and Vodafone, will not be affected. The MANs continue to remain in State ownership and are operated by e|net under a concession agreement with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

Memorandum of Understanding – Monaghan & Armagh:

Mr. Fallon advised the members that ICLRD will facilitate interaction between both local authorities. A draft agreement will be brought to the Council for input and approval.

10. Matters arising out of minutes of Council meeting held on 2nd September, 2013

There were no matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 2nd September, 2013.

11. Questions:

Cllr C. Bennett asked:

1. In the interest of road safety in the vicinity of Urbleshanny School, could this Council consider a measure to slow traffic at either end of the school entrance, to ensure that pedestrians have a safe arrival and departure from school?

Reply: *Flashing school lights have been placed at each approach to the school. Speed bars have been painted on the road surface at the school and at the chapel entrance to further alert drivers to slow down in this area.*

2. Can the Council carry out urgent repairs to the road leading from Scotstown Village to Smithboro – approx. one mile from Scotstown there is a large dip in the road and it is causing severe problems for traffic.

Reply: *The Council propose to carry out repairs at this location by the end of October.*

3. Will the Council erect 'right of way' signs at Knockatallon Cross, as a matter of urgency, in the interest of road safety and to prevent accidents?

Reply: *The current signage at this junction does indicate who has right of way. The Council will examine the feasibility of installing road centreline marking to highlight the priority of the through road.*

Cllr C. Bennett asked:

4. (a) Will the Council consider converting a portion of the green space at Corlatt Housing Estate, Knockatallon into a car park for use by the residents of the estate?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council owns three houses within the Corlatt housing estate, which has a total of nine houses. The three houses owned by the Council have parking spaces within their front gardens as do three of the privately owned houses. There is no funding available for the provision of additional car parking at Corlatt however the Council would consider, subject to planning permission being sought, for private residents providing car parking spaces within the gardens of their own houses subject to a maximum of two parking spaces per house.*

- (b) Will the Council construct a footpath on the main road side of the green at Corlatt housing estate, Knockatallon to ensure the safety of pedestrian walking to both estates?

Reply: *The North Monaghan Area Office will examine this location and place the matter on the agenda of the next Road Area Committee Meeting for discussion.*

5. Can Monaghan County Council do anything to ensure that there is an adequate broadband connection available to all areas of County of Monaghan?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council has no statutory responsibility for the provision of broadband or other telecommunications infrastructure in County Monaghan. The Council though is working with the relevant agencies and broadband providers to improve the coverage in the County. Initiatives that the Council have undertaken are:*

- *Establishment of an IT forum for the purposes of the promotion of IT technology in Monaghan and the promotion of Monaghan from an IT perspective. The IT forum has been instrumental in the hosting of a successful conference entitled “Retail is e-Tail” and the establishment of a website entitled www.Monaghanbusiness.com. The forum is continuing to examine areas by which it can achieve its objectives,*
- *Reducing the development levies for the installation of telecommunications infrastructure that IT service providers have to pay when seeking planning permission for installations,*
- *Assisting the Department of Communication, Energy and Natural Resources with the rollout of initiatives such as the Metropolitan Area Networks (MAN) and the Rural Broadband Schemes,*
- *Working closely with the Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) to produce the Regional Telecommunications Action plan,*
- *Coordinating a joint application with Fermanagh District Council for Intereg funding to extend Project Kelvin to Clones and Carrickmacross*

Cllr J. O'Brien asked:

6. What is the up to date position with Hope Castle, the last full report we received was on the 7th Feb 2013, the people of Castleblayney are very frustrated with the current state of the building and really want to see some progress made in tidying up the premises.

Reply: *In June 2012, Castleblayney Circuit Court held that the State was liable in a Malicious Injury Claim for €2,856,817, lodged by Chris Haren in respect of the fire at Hope Castle on 4 November 2010.*

Monaghan County Council appealed this decision to the High Court. The High Court upheld this appeal in February 2013. In June Chris Haren sought leave to appeal the High Court decision to the Supreme Court.

7. What is the up to date position on The Court House in Castleblayney? What are the Councils future plans for the building?

Reply: *The Council has received an updated structural report on the building from the National Housing Agency. Whilst there are serious structural defects which render the building unsafe at present, the Agency has outlined a repair regime which can safeguard the building and arrest its deterioration. These repairs have been costed but at the time of writing the County Council has not assigned a budget for the required repairs.*

The budget for the repairs should be a matter for consideration when the Council is preparing the 2014 Budget.

8. Can Monaghan County Council investigate the possibility of removing the dangerous height in the road approx 200 metres from Mc Nally's Cross, Doohamlet heading to Tullycorbett.

Reply: *There is currently no funding for realignment works on local roads. It is proposed to discuss this location at the next Road Area Committee meeting for the mid Monaghan Area.*

9. Can Monaghan County Council look at the possibility of placing extra lighting in Ballybay Park?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council will examine costs associated with providing public lighting from the Castleblayney Road entrance along the avenue to the parking area. This will be presented at the next roads area meeting for inclusion on the public lighting programme for the mid Monaghan Area.*

Cllr R. Gallagher asked:

10. Can the Council arrange to have the derelict building on the Emyvale/Glaslough road removed in the interest of road safety?

Reply: *This is currently been investigated.*

Cllr R. Gallagher asked:

11. In relation to proposed sponsorship of the decorative upgrading and maintenance of roundabouts in the county by members of the business community what is the current position with same?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council and Town Council staff are finalising a report outlining options for the landscaping of the roundabouts on the Monaghan By-pass. It is proposed to arrange a meeting to discuss these options with the North Monaghan Members.*

12. What is the current position with the proposed installation of a pedestrian crossing in the village of Glaslough at Oakland Centre?

Reply: *The Council propose to carry out an assessment of traffic in the village to determine the most appropriate option for pedestrian crossing facilities.*

13. What is the revised schedule for completion of works on the N2 between Monaghan and Corracrin?

Reply: *The Contractor's latest programme indicates a date for completion of the works in mid December. It is proposed to hold a briefing for the North Monaghan members later in the month with regard to these works.*

Cllr P. Connolly asked:

14. Re Road improvement work on N2 between Tiernaneil/Corracrin:--
- (a) To ask Monaghan County Council for an update in relation to proposed dates for the return of free flow two way traffic on the N2 between Emyvale and Monaghan?
 - (b) What is the expected completion date for the works to be carried out on this stretch of roadway?
 - (c) In relation to the narrow width of roadway at the Drumcaw road exit/entry onto the N2 is Monaghan County Council satisfied that there is no safety issues involved for traffic negotiating this junction?
 - (d) In view of the fact that articulated lorries are having great difficulty negotiating the left turn off the N2 at the Tiernaneil junction are there any plans to review the layout of this junction and what response have the consultants given in relation to concerns expressed regarding design and safety issues at this junction?
 - (e) What, if any, alterations have been made to the original contract which was signed Monaghan County Council and the contractor and what, if any, additional costs have been incurred?

Reply: *The Contract for the works is still ongoing and many of the issues raised above are the subject of ongoing correspondence with the Contractor as is normal in the course of the administration of a contract. It is proposed to hold a briefing for the North Monaghan members later in the month with regard to these works.*

Cllr P. Connolly asked:

15. Will Monaghan County Council give an update in relation to their efforts to acquire land from the IDA at Knockaconny Monaghan thus ensuring the availability of lands for industrial development in the future?

Reply: *These lands at Knockaconny are still for sale. The County Manager has been in contact with the selling agents, GVA Donal O’Buachalla, and advised them that Monaghan County Council is interested in the lands. The IDA is still seeking full market value for the lands.*

Cllr S. Conlon asked:

16. Will Monaghan County Council’s Road Section consider erecting a sign for Ardaghey on the Ballybay Rd. where the R162 and LP01500 converge?

Reply: *This sign has been ordered and is proposed to be erected in 4 weeks time.*

17. In regard to the upcoming abolition of Town Council’s and radical changes in local authority governance and management, Council Executive have created Transition / Implementation teams. To date there has been an absence of elected members participating in this process. Will measures be taken to ensure their future participation?

Reply: *Proposals for the future administrative arrangements are currently being prepared by the County Manager in accordance with the Action Programme for Effective Local Government.*

It is the intention of the Council Executive that special meetings will be held with the County and Town Councils to update them on progress made by the Implementation Team and to allow Councillors to have extensive input to the exercise.

18. Regarding previous questions I have submitted, and answered by the Planning Section, regarding the possibility of the Council purchasing undeveloped lands at Latlurcan, Castleblayney Rd. (formerly WJ Dolan’s site) , what is the current status of negotiations with the financial agencies?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council is presently negotiating with a number of banks and receivers in relation to the completion of unfinished housing developments in the county. Following last month’s Planning and Economic SPC meeting, a full report will be presented to next month’s Council meeting.*

Cllr N. Keelan asked:

19. How many claims for damages have been made against Monaghan County Council in the previous three years, what are the nature of these claims, what percentage of claims are paid out on, & at what cost to the Council’s Insurance Company & ultimately the taxpayer?

Reply:

PUBLIC LIABILITY CLAIMS RECEIVED FROM 1ST JAN 2010 TO 1ST OCT 2013

	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>
<i>No of Claims Received</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Nature of Claim</i>				
<i>Damage to vehicles</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Personal Injuries e.g. trips/falls</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Damage to property</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Status of Claims</i>				
<i>settled</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>liability denied</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>with IPB for decision</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>no further development</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Percentage of claims paid out on</i>	<i>45.70%</i>	<i>42.20%</i>	<i>29.40%</i>	<i>19.50%</i>
<i>Cost to Insurance Company</i>	<i>€45,318</i>	<i>€22,884</i>	<i>€17,723</i>	<i>€4,387</i>

Cllr N. Keelan asked:

- 20 In commending the combined efforts of the various community groups in Inniskeen village, in relation to the provision of a newly constructed footpath & public lighting adjacent to the pitch & putt course, when will the public lighting be switched on, why the delay in having this work completed?

Reply: *These lights are now operational.*

21. Given that individuals & couples throughout County Monaghan, as first time buyers, & builders, are finding it almost impossible to get a mortgage from the main banking institutions & buildings societies, how many home loans have Monaghan County Council approved in the last two years, how many have been refused, what is the Council's current rate of interest for home loans?

Reply: *In the last two years Monaghan County Council has approved 9 loans. There have been three refusals. The current rate of interest is 2.75%*

22. In relation to my request on behalf of the Lisanisk Residents in Carrickmacross to have an additional public light put in place at the top of Lisanisk hill, when is it hoped to have this work carried out?

Reply: *The Council intends to complete these works by the end of November.*

Cllr N. Keelan asked:

23. Given that Respond Housing Association with the assistance of Carlow County Council have purchased 55 housing units in Tullow, what plans have Monaghan County Council in its own right, or in conjunction with housing associations in the county to purchase housing units, in order to address the ever increasing housing list, & also given that the Department of Local Government have funded the purchasing of housing units across the country, including the purchasing of 10 units at Castleross in Carrickmacross, is it not possible that this Council could source similar funding for house purchase in the county?

Reply: *The Government's Housing Policy Statement published in June 2011 states the following regarding Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) also known as Housing Associations; "In recognition of both the constrained funding levels available for local authority construction programmes, as well as the capacity and track-record of the voluntary and cooperative housing sector, approved housing bodies will be at the heart of the Government's vision for housing provision". Monaghan County Council proactively encourages the involvement of AHBs in relation to the provision of housing in County Monaghan. In close cooperation with AHBs the Council has a key strategic enabling role which has led to considerable success recently in securing funding for various projects including: the purchase of ten houses at Castleross, the construction of a Group Home at Tailte an Chlochair, Carrickmacross which is to commence before the end of 2013, the construction of a Group Home and ten independent living units at Drumillard in Castleblayney currently under construction, an extension to the Steadfast Group Home in Carrickmacross and the purchase of two large houses to be used to provide similar accommodation at locations in Monaghan and Carrickmacross. The Council has also engaged proactively with NAMA through its subsidiary National Asset Residential Property Services Limited and other lending institutions to investigate all potential opportunities to engage with them in conjunction with AHBs towards the provision of housing by direct purchase, leasing and the Capital Advance Leasing Facility. It is hoped that the work done by the Council to date and in progress with AHBs will result in further houses being made available in due course. At present the Council is engaged with AHBs and lending institutions in relation to further provision of social housing however the specific project details cannot be disclosed as the information is commercially sensitive.*

Cllr P. McNally asked:

24. Has this Council received notice from the Department of Enterprise and Employment that all assets and streams of income presently held by the County Enterprise Board must be transferred to the Department of Enterprise and Employment. In addition to this, will all loans and liabilities also be transferred to the Department under the new proposed regulations to rehouse the Enterprise Board to County Buildings?

Reply: *The County Enterprise Boards (Dissolution) Bill 2013 provides for the transfer of the existing functions of the County Enterprise Boards to Enterprise Ireland and for these transferred functions to be performed by local authorities on behalf of Enterprise Ireland. All lands and assets previously vested in a County Enterprise Board are to be transferred to Enterprise Ireland.*

Cllr P. McNally asked:

25. (a) Has this Council received any indication from the Department of Environment regarding proper funding becoming available for the LIS Scheme?

Reply: *The Council is not aware of any recent notification in regard to this matter.*

- (b) How many applications have we on our list?

Reply: *There are currently 193 applications on record.*

- (c) Are we still accepting applications to our LIS list?

Reply: *Applications are being accepted and recorded but will not be processed in the absence of funding being available.*

26. Has this Council received further correspondence from the Department of Agriculture regarding the breakdown of Teagasc advisors that are available to work directly with the farming community?

Reply: *The Council has received an acknowledgement of its letter to the Department of Agriculture in relation to Teagasc advisors – a copy has been circulated with the agenda for the October meeting (see page 35)*

27. Further to a previous debate at this Council, has this Council got plans in place to wash all sign posts (where necessary), in order to improve safety in advance of the onset of winter.

Reply: *Washing of signs is carried out by the Engineering Areas and is assessed on the basis of condition and resources available. Having regard to the competing demands on resources to cover the various maintenance activities there are no plans at present to put in place a plan to wash all signs annually.*

Cllr M. Carthy asked:

28. Will Monaghan County Council initiate plans to provide toilet facilities at the Monaghan Motor Tax Office considering many users of the tax service are elderly, have a disability, are accompanied by children and/or have traveled long distances to get to the office?

Reply: *Monaghan County Council will examine the feasibility of providing toilet facilities for customers at the Motor Tax Office. In the meantime customers requiring toilet facilities will be accommodated.*

29. What plans are in place to develop improved Speed Restriction measure at Drummogossat, Magheracloone in the area comprising of the local church, school and school? Will the Council extend the barriers outside the school as requested by parents of pupils?

Reply: This item will be placed on the agenda of the next Speed Limits Committee meeting for discussion.

30. Will Monaghan County Council agree to install speed restriction ramps in Foxfield housing estate, Carrickmacross as requested by the Residents Committee?

Reply: This will be placed on the agenda for the next Area Road Area Meeting.

12. Notices of Motion:

Cllrs Carthy proposed, Cllr Bennett seconded:

1. *That Monaghan County Council notes that this month Revenue have began to deduct the Family Home Tax (Local Property Tax) from people. We note that this tax has resulted in more Monaghan families finding it difficult to make ends meet. In some cases it has caused people to go into mortgage arrears for the first time.*

Monaghan County Council hereby reiterates our opposition to the Family Home Tax on the basis that it is an unfair regressive taxation that hurts families in financial difficulty and harms local economies while not delivering any additional services at local authority level. That we call on all Cavan Monaghan TD's to support the campaign to have the Family Home Tax repealed.

Following a debate, the Mayor put the motion to the meeting. A vote by show of hands resulted in 11 for, 4 against. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

Cllr S. Conlon proposed, Cllr B. McKenna seconded and it was agreed,

2. *That Monaghan County Council calls on Minister for Health James Reilly TD to take a more robust approach in tackling corporate malfeasance within the pharmaceutical sector that results in Ireland continuing to be one of the most expensive countries in Europe for generic prescription medicines resulting in an additional €70 million burden on the taxpayer.*

Notices of motion 5, 7, 10 and 12(a) – *calling on the Minister for Finance to retain the 9% VAT rate in the tourism and hospitality trade into 2014 and beyond* – were agreed unanimously.

Notice of motion 12(b) – *That Monaghan County Council calls on all restaurants to have Irish Chicken on their menus* - was also adopted without debate.

13. Conferences:

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Bannigan it was agreed that the Council be represented at the following conferences by the members listed.

Promoting Authority	Subject/Theme	Venue	Dates	Members Selected
Nuclear Free Local Authorities	Future energy needs and risks from radioactive discharges	Council Chamber, Galway City Hall, College Road, Galway	11 th October, 2013	Cllr B. McKenna
Age Action Ireland/ Monaghan County Council	Positive Living in the Third Age – Enhancing the Golden Years	Four Seasons Hotel, Monaghan.	17 th October, 2013	Cllr P. Connolly
BG Seminarz	Future Energy Needs – Wind Turbines to Nuclear	Clanree Hotel, Letterkenny	26 th October 2013	Cllr N. Keelan Cllr G. Carville
Celtic Conferences	Design Guidelines for the Planning & Development of Rural Housing	Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery, Co. Cork	25 th -27 th October, 2013	Cllr J. O'Brien Cllr C. McPhillips
LAMA	LAMA Autumn Conference	The Falls Hotel, Ennistymon, Co Clare.	11 th -12 th October 2013	Cllr P. McNally Cllr R. Gallagher
Oideas Gael	Irish Language Course	Glencolmcille, Co. Donegal	25 th – 28 th October 2013	Cllr M. Carthy
IRFU/IFA/Ulster GAA	Sport and Reconciliation Conference	The Market Place Theatre, Armagh	8 th November 2013	Cllr S. Conlon

14. Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations:

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

- The wife and family of the late Gerard McCarron, RIP, Knockronaghan, Emyvale who died tragically in a road traffic accident.
- The family of the late Emmett Connolly, RIP, Druminton, Dartrey, who was murdered in Cootehill recently.
- The family of the late James Sreenan, Drumbrain, Aghabog, former Council employee.

It was agreed that the Council extend a vote of congratulations to the following:

- Monaghan Ladies GFC on reaching the TG4 All-Ireland Ladies Football Final and narrowly beaten by Cork.

The Mayor congratulated Cllr McElvaney, the current Chairperson of LAMA, on securing the LAMA Spring Conference for Monaghan Town in January 2014.

Urgent Business:

(i) Notice in the names of Cllrs P. Treanor, Crowe, Conlon, B. McKenna and Carthy

“ That Monaghan County Council call on the Ministers for Education and Finance to not increase class sizes in our primary schools in the forthcoming budget and to pull back on the cutbacks in education which are having a far reaching and detrimental effect on the education of our greatest asset, our young people.”

(ii) Notice in the names of Cllrs O’Brien, McNally, Gallagher and O’Hanlon

“This Council calls on the Minister for Education Ruairi Quinn TD to immediately address the issue of class sizes. Given that Ireland has the second highest class size in Europe, well behind most European countries at 24.5 students per teacher, we call on the Minister to reduce the student/teacher ratio in the up-coming budget.”

The Mayor advised that he would take both motions together as they related to the same issue.

In proposing the motion Cllr Crowe referred to the INTO information meeting that had been held the previous week in Castleblayney. The message from the meeting was that there is a huge threat to the future of the primary education system countrywide if the Minister for Education Ruairi Quinn decides to increase the teacher-pupil ratio in the forthcoming Budget. Ireland has the second largest class sizes in the EU. In County Monaghan almost 28% of primary school children are in classes of 30 pupils or more – this is the third highest in the country. Cllr O’Brien seconded the motion and called on the Minister not to increase class sizes. Cllrs Carthy, Murray, McNally, Maxwell and Conlon also spoke to the motion.

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

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Meara Meetings Administrator

Date: _____