

**Minutes of Council Meeting held in the Mtek Building, Knockaconny,
Monaghan on Monday 17th September, 2007 10.00 a.m.**

Chair: Cllr G Carville, Mayor

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

Mr. D. Nelson, County Manager, Mr. M. Fitzpatrick, Mr P. Clifford, Mr D. Fallon and Mr A. King, Directors of Service, Mr A Hughes, Senior Planner, Mr Pdraig Maguire, Executive Planner, Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator and Ms. A. Mackle, A/Staff Officer.

Apology: Cllr Maxwell.

On the proposal of Cllr B McKenna, seconded by Cllr Carville it was agreed to wish Cllr Keelan and his wife Eileen many years of happiness and good luck for the future on the occasion of their recent marriage.

All members joined in the vote of congratulations to Cllr Keelan as did the County Manager on behalf of the staff.

Cllr Keelan thanked all present.

6 (ii) To consider proposed variation to the County Development Plan 2007-2013

The Members considered the report from Mr. P. Clifford, Director of Planning, dated 27th August, 2007 which had been circulated with the agenda.

Cllr Gallagher proposed, Cllr B. McKenna seconded that the Council proceed with the variation to the County Development Plan 2007-2013

Mr. Paul Clifford referred to his report, in particular to the conclusion and recommendation. He stated that it had taken account of national and local policies and has a clear recommendation. The Planning Authority must consider the impact of every application on its own merits. If this variation is approved it will impact on fourteen other sites zoned for commercial use around Monaghan Town. The proposal has been put forward to benefit one developer with no thought or consideration for others who have contributed to the development of the retail area of the town. The Council had granted eight planning permissions on this site over the last number of years. He suggested that the way forward is by a material contravention of the development plan – the use of the variation powers is totally inappropriate and will have major consequences for the town. He explained that the material contravention process is specific to one site/development whereas the variation process is global. The National Roads Authority, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Shopping Centre had objected to this variation.

Mr. D. Nelson, County Manager stated that the planning permission granted in respect of this site was for retail warehousing – it was not expected that people would walk out of town for shopping. This proposal would have major implications for the Monaghan town centre and for other towns. He referred to Dundalk town centre as a specific example where new outlets outside the town had contributed to the closure of businesses in the town centre. He felt it was wrong of the Members to change the Development Plan in favour of one named individual.

Mr. Adrian Hughes, Senior Planner stated that this proposal, if agreed, would not only affect the fourteen sites, with similar zoning, within Monaghan Town but would apply countywide. This proposal had the potential to allow established retail developments relocate from the centre of the town to the outskirts of the town in stand alone developments which would decrease the footfall use and increase car use and this would be detrimental to the town centre. He said the Planning section had carried out an economic survey of the town, which asked people about their shopping habits. They had established that most people do the majority of their shopping within Monaghan Town only travelling to other towns for specific items.

During the debate on the matter the Members raised the following issues –

- If this development encouraged more high profile retail developments to come to Monaghan Town it would benefit the town in a positive way.
- The development of Dundalk and Cavan town were on a large scale - the proposed development for Monaghan Town is a much smaller development, only thirty percent of the proposed variation is for a comparison goods
- Monaghan people are leaving the county anyway to travel to other towns to visit retail developments such as Next, Argos etc. - this proposal is to stop locals travelling by offering them more retail attractions.
- What shoppers want is variety and choice along with lower price and that's what this variation was trying to achieve.
- A number of Members felt the granting of this variation might affect the shopping ethos of Monaghan Town.

The following amendment was put forward by Cllr Gallagher and seconded by Cllr B. McKenna – that paragraph 4 of 9.4.4 Zoning Objective D Commercial of the County Development Plan 2007-2013 be amended as follows

“Ancillary non bulky comparison and convenience retailing uses will be permitted on zoned commercial lands at Cornecassa, Monaghan identified as C2 on Monaghan Town Zoning Map (Map MDP1), with the provision that not more than 30% of the gross floor area may be permitted for the sale of comparison and convenience goods ”

The Members agreed to adjourn the meeting to consider this proposal.

On resumption, the Mayor indicated that he was putting the amendment to a vote.

A vote by show of hands, on the amendment, resulted in 14 for, 2 against and 3 abstentions. The Mayor declared the amendment carried.

The substantive motion was put to the meeting which resulted in 14 for, 2 against, 3 abstentions. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

7. Taking an Estate in Charge – The Willows, Killycard, Castleblayney

The Members considered the report of the Director of Planning dated 27th August, 2007 recommending that the Council take in charge the roads, footpaths, sewers, watermains, public lighting and open spaces of “The Willow”, Killycard, Castleblayney.

On the proposal of Cllr Crowe, seconded by Cllr Carville it was agreed that Monaghan County Council would take in charge the roads, footpaths, sewers, watermains, public lighting and open spaces of “The Willows”, Killycard, Castleblayney in accordance with Section 26 of the Planning Act 1963.

8. Proposed Improvements to Clones Road Junction Ballybay

Mr. Adge King, Director stated that since the last meeting -

1. A letter had been forwarded to the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government seeking funding to purchase the necessary buildings to allow the re-development of this junction.
2. The Council had met with the property owners each had expressed their total dissatisfaction with the proposal put forward.

Mr. David Fallon, Director stated he had spoken to Dominic Mullaney, Principal Advisor from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and he had stated that the Council could apply for funding for this project as part of its 2008 Specific Improvements Grant application. Alternatively, it is open to the Council to seek approval to incur expenditure on the project in 2007 on the basis that it will be submitted as the first priority Specific Improvement Grant scheme for 2008 and that the 2007 expenditure will be recouped in 2008. He estimated the cost of property acquisition and junction improvements for the project would be around one million.

Cllr Bannigan proposed, Cllr O’Brien seconded “That this Council enter negotiations to purchase the derelict building in Ballybay identified by area Engineer Declan McKernan and the business community as necessary on the grounds of health & safety. We apply to the Department for approval to incur expenditure in 2007 and that this be first priority Specific Improvement Grant in 2008 as outlined in Department of Transport letter dated 20th August 2007. This allocation to come from the Mid Monaghan share of Specific Improvement grant. That this Council further apply to Department of Transport for a once off specific allocation towards the costs associated with this project”.

A number of Members spoke in favour of the proposal and highlighted the danger that this junction was posing to road users and pedestrians alike. They asked that this project be made priority.

The Mayor stated he was putting Cllr Bannigan's motion to the meeting.

A vote by show of hands resulted in 19 for. The Mayor declared the motion carried

9. FAI Development Officer – to consider report from Local Sports Partnership:

The Members considered the report from the Local Sports Partnership which had been circulated with the agenda.

Cllr McElvaney proposed, Cllr McNally seconded that funding be allocated towards the recruitment of an FAI Development Officer for 3 years on a 50/50 basis between the Football Association of Ireland and Monaghan County Council.

Cllr Conlon proposed, Cllr McAnespie seconded that this Council support the application from the FAI and sporting organisations that may apply for funding that enhances the role of sport in our community and provides a fund for this purpose”

Cllr McAnespie said she wanted it put on record that she was not anti Soccer as recorded in the press after the decision at the March Council meeting to refer the matter to the Local Sports Partnership. This decision was made by the majority of Members and was made in light of the fact that the Council would find it difficult to fund this project and the Local Sports Partnerships had been set up to promote and develop sports and physical activity at local level. She wanted it noted that she supports all sports.

A general discussion took place on the benefits of developing and promoting sport developing within the county. Some Members expressed their disappointment at the response from the Local Sports Partnership. The Members were generally in favour of providing the funding required to support the recruitment of the FAI Development Officer for a period of three years. They also expressed they view that that Local Sports Partnership should be properly funded if it were to be successful in its role.

The County Manager stated that the expenditure in 2007 in relation to this project would be minimal – the Council would need to ring fence funding of approx. €26,000 for three years. The FAI are developing a regional facility in Monaghan Town. He felt this was a positive step and may contribute to a reduction in anti social behaviour.

The Mayor indicated that he was putting the matter to a vote.

A roll call vote was requested which resulted as follows:

For: - Cllr Bannigan, Carthy, Carville, Conlon, Coyle, Crowe, Gallagher, Humphreys, Keelan, Keenan, Kieran, Martin, McAnespie, McElvaney, B McKenna, P McKenna, McNally, O'Brien and Treanor Total (19)

Against – Nil

The Mayor declared this motion carried

The Mayor then put Cllr Conlon's motion to the meeting which was agreed.

10. Update on Interreg IV Programme

Mr. Adge King, Director stated that the Interreg IV Subcommittee had met regarding both ICBAN and INTERREG, however both groups were still working on their proposals. ICBAN were anxious to meet with the Members to discuss proposals and he suggested Monday 24th September as a possible date for such a meeting. The Members agreed.

18. Business as submitted by County Manager

Monaghan Leisure Club

The County Manager suggested that a formal photograph of the full Council be taken at the newly opened Monaghan Leisure Club at 9.30 a.m., on the morning of the October Council Meeting. He proposed extending an invitation to the Monaghan Town Council Members also. This was agreed.

Launch of the Rehab People of the Year Awards

The County Manager advised the Members that the launch of the People of the Year Awards would take place on Monday 24th September 2007 in the Hillgrove Hotel at and that the actual formal event would take place on Friday 30th November 2007.

Naming of Bypass projects:

The County Manager referred to the report prepared by Mr Theo McMahon, Historian which suggested names for the Castleblayney and Monaghan bypasses, based on local history. The report recommended the following names

Castleblayney Bypass – Cremourne Way/ Slí Críoch Mughdhorna

Monaghan Bypass – Blackwater Way / Slí an Dabhaill

He also stated that it was intended to name each roundabout after the local town land.

Cllr Carville proposed, Cllr Bannigan seconded that the Castleblayney Bypass be named the Cremourne Way / Slí Críoch Mughdhorna

A vote by show of hands resulted in 17 for 1 against.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Gallagher it was agreed to name the Monaghan Bypass, Blackwater Way / Slí an Dabhaill.

Cllr Conlon proposed, Cllr Crowe seconded that signage be erected at Clontibret indicating the site of the Battle of Clontibret and the Wildlife Centre.

Cllr Bannigan proposed that any existing road signs that were currently on the existing N2, subject to National Roads Authority approval, be erected on the bypass. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Conlon and agreed.

Cllr Treanor proposed, Cllr B. McKenna seconded, that the Irish name only be used for both the Castleblayney and Monaghan Bypasses.

A roll call vote was requested which resulted as follows:

For: - Cllrs Carthy, Conlon, Crowe, Keelan, Martin, B McKenna and Treanor Total (7)

Against: - Cllrs Bannigan, Carville, Coyle, Gallagher, Humphreys, Keenan, Kieran, McElvaney, P McKenna, McNally and O'Brien (11)

The Mayor declared this motion defeated

Business Submitted by Mayor:

The Mayor stated that with effect from the October Council meeting he was going to implement Standing Order 29 which allowed Members to speak on three items only.

On the proposal of Cllr Kieran, seconded by Cllr Gallagher it was agreed that, in accordance with Standing Orders, the meeting be extended beyond 1.30 p.m. to facilitate a presentation from the Irish Farmers Association.

20. Presentation by the Irish Farmers Association

The Mayor welcomed the IFA representatives Mr David Marron, Mr. Donal McDaid and Mrs. Kathleen Ward.

Mrs. Kathleen Ward began by thanking the Members for allowing the IFA to make this presentation today. She also thanked the Council for implementing the Farm Waste Plastics Collection Scheme which had proved very successful.

The purpose of the presentation is to highlight the World Trade Organisation talks and the huge implications this will have on Rural and Urban life.

The also wished to inform the members of their findings in relation to the present production of beef in Brazil and the issues it raises with regard to food safety. A number of IFA Members had gone on a fact-finding mission to Brazil and were appalled what they saw. They had brought their report back to Brussels and while they were giving their presentation, Minister Coughlan, TD, Department of Agriculture and Food, had called a press conference in which she said Brazilian Beef was safe to eat, this had been done to sabotage their presentation.

Mr. David Marron said the up to 3000 tons of Beef, were being imported from Brazil annually and this was set to double in the next ten years. He said that Brussels was trying to encourage farmers in Europe not to produce while at the same time encouraging imports. Beef in Europe was traceable which means higher production costs.

Mr. Donal McDaid stated that by the end of the last century, Europe was 101 percent self sufficient, now in 2007 they were 83 percent. By 2020 Europe will face food shortages and he was calling on local and national politicians to seriously look at this problem. In Ireland the Beef industry accounts for 2/3rds the agricultural industry so they will be seriously affected. Mr. Peter Mandelson, European Commissioner for Trade had been given direction by the EU Ministers to talk with the WTO; he is intent on increasing the imports from Brazil which would result in a reduction in cattle prices to 65p/lb. Beef in Brazil is affected by Warble Fly; there is no control over foot and mouth, there is no policing of vaccinations in Brazil. The IFA had encountered all of these problems on a recent trip to Brazil and have produced a video of their findings.

The Group responded to queries from the Members. The Mayor thanked the IFA for their presentation and they withdrew from the meeting.

A short debate followed during which the following proposals were made.

On the proposal of Cllr P Treanor, seconded by Cllr McNally it was agreed that Monaghan County Council supports the Irish Farmers Association stance on the WTO talks and the issue of food security and that we write to the Minister for Agriculture and Food and the sixteen M.E.P.'s to put forward our support for the interests of Irish agriculture ”

On the proposal of Cllr Bannigan, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was proposed “That this Council calls on the Government to support Agriculture in the WTO talks. That agriculture be treated on its own merits and that it does not be sacrificed for big business interests.

A roll call vote was requested on Cllr Bannigan’s proposal, which resulted as follows:

For: - Cllrs Bannigan, Carthy, Carville, Coyle, Crowe, Gallagher, Humphreys, Keelan, Keenan, Kieran, McElvaney, P McKenna, McNally, O'Brien and Treanor Total (15)

Against - Nil

The Mayor declared this motion carried

On the proposal of Cllr Bannigan, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was proposed "That this Council calls on Mr Trevor Sargent, Minister for Food to immediately ensure that food labelling rules are adhered to and that a proper inspection regime be put in place. Furthermore new legislation needs to be introduced so as to ensure food labelling rules are adhered to and any offenders face the full rigors of the law"

A roll call vote was requested on Cllr Bannigan's proposal, which resulted as follows:

For: - Cllr Bannigan, Carthy, Carville, Coyle, Crowe, Gallagher, Humphreys, Keelan, Keenan, Kieran, McElvaney, P McKenna, McNally, O'Brien and Treanor Total (15)

Against: - Nil

The Mayor declared this motion carried

On the proposal of Cllr Bannigan, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was proposed that " In light of Ministers Coughlan's deliberate attempt to sabotage the IFA attempts to high light the serious issues with Brazilian Beef inputs into he European Community, this Council proposes a vote of 'no confidence' in Minister Coughlan "

A roll call vote was requested on Cllr Bannigan's proposal, which resulted as follows:

For: - Cllrs Bannigan, Carthy, Carville, Crowe, Humphreys, Keelan, Keenan, McElvaney, P McKenna, and Treanor, Total (10)

Against: - Cllrs Coyle, Gallagher, Kieran, McNally and O'Brien, Total (5)

The Mayor declared the motion carried

Votes of Congratulations:

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

- Ms Laura Beagon, on winning the all Ireland, Solo Fiddle competition at the Fleadh Ceoil na hEireann in Tullamore

