

**Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Mtek Building, Armagh Road, Monaghan on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 at 2.00 p.m.**

**Chair:** Cllr C. Bennett, Cathaoirleach

**Present:** Cllrs. Aughey, Campbell, Carthy, Conlon, Connolly, Coyle, Gilliland, Keelan, Maxwell, McElvaney, McKenna, McNally, O'Hanlon, P. Treanor and S. Treanor.

Mr. E. O'Sullivan, Chief Executive, Mr. P. Clifford and Mr. A. King, Directors of Services, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, Ms. P. Monahan, A/Director of Service, Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner, Mr. T. Gourley, Senior Executive Planner and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

**Apologies:** Cllrs. Crowe and Humphreys

At the outset, the Cathaoirleach commended all those involved in the Cavan-Monaghan Science Festival and she urged the public to attend the events that had been organised.

**Urgent Business:**

The Cathaoirleach stated that two notices of urgent business had been submitted, as follows:

(i) Notice in the names of the Cllrs Aughey, Coyle, McNally and O'Hanlon:

*“ That Monaghan County Council demands of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed T.D. and the government to immediately form a Task Force, comprising of the farm organisations, co-op's, millers, feed suppliers, financial institutions, Dept. of Agriculture etc. to plan, supports i.e. fodder supplies, financial/compensation packages for farmers, who are facing into a very difficult winter and spring of 2017/18. There is severe feed shortages on all farms due to the inclement weather of the past 3 months with much silage/straw etc. not harvested and the housing of livestock in August and early September on many farms, using up the limited fodder supplies. Poor prices have forced farmers to hold cattle on farms, further exacerbating the difficulties of fodder shortage and cash flow problems over the coming months.*

(ii) Notice in the names of Cllrs Campbell, Gilliland and Maxwell:

*As a result of the Report issued by the Citizens Assembly to Government on Green House Gasses & the Reduction of Carbon; we propose that Monaghan County Council write to the following:*

- 1. An Taoiseach – Leo Varadkar, T.D.*
- 2. Minister for Agriculture – Michael Creed, T.D.*
- 3. Minister for Rural Affairs – Michael Ring, T.D.*
- 4. Minister for Enterprise & Innovation – Frances Fitzgerald, T.D.*
- 5. Minister for Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht – Heather Humphreys, T.D.*

*To impress upon them, NOT to impose or introduce any form of tax or carbon levies on the farmers of this country.*

*On the proposal of Cllr McKenna, seconded by Cllr Coyle, it was agreed that the Council go into committee to discuss whether to take the motions as urgent business.*

It was unanimously agreed to take discuss both motions of urgent business when the business of the agenda had been completed.

*On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr McKenna, it was agreed that the Council return to public session.*

## **1. Confirmation of Minutes**

### **(i) Minutes of Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2017**

*On the proposal of Cllr D. Maxwell seconded by Cllr S. Coyle it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2017, be confirmed.*

## **2. Correspondence.**

**The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda for the meeting:**

- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine regarding the Nitrates Action Programme.
- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine regarding extension of time for Slurry Spreading.
- Letter of acknowledgment from the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform regarding 2018 Budget recommendations.
- Letter from Ard-Stiúrthoir GAA, Páraic Ó Dufaigh regarding Sky Sports coverage.
- Letter from Health Service Executive regarding the catering service at St. Davnet's Kitchen
- Proposal from Carrickmacross-Castleblayney Municipal District regarding the instigation of a Commission of Investigation into the death of Shane O'Farrell in August 2011.
- Resolution from Leitrim County Council in relation to banning the use of glyphosate weed killers in all public areas.
- Resolution from Leitrim County Council calling for the review of terms and condition of the Housing Grant Scheme to allow Local Authorities to use discretion in the awarding of house repair grants for older people.
- Resolution from Limerick City & County Council regarding the upkeep, maintenance and repair of all rivers and streams.
- Resolution from Wexford County Council regarding rural post offices.
- Notice of Motion from Ballina MD, Mayo County Council regarding the problems caused by the spread of ragwort and other noxious weeds.
- Email from Brendan Smith, T.D regarding affordable childcare through SIPTU Big Start/Early Years Campaign.
- Nomination Form for All Ireland Community and Council Awards 2018 – IPB Insurance and LAMA.

The following additional correspondence was circulated at the meeting:

- Letter from the Minister of Health's office regarding Vimizim.

- Letter of acknowledgment from Mr. José María Rodríguez-Coso, Ambassador of Spain regarding the Council's resolution regarding Catalonia.
- Emails from Brendan Smith, T.D's office regarding the Tenant Purchase Scheme and the issue of income eligibility limits for social housing.
- Email from the Minister of Training, Skills, Innovation, Research and Development regarding the School Transport Scheme.
- Email of acknowledgment from Commission for Regulation of Utilities regarding North South Interconnector.

**Proposals arising out of correspondence:**

*On the proposal of Cllr Gilliland, seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council write to the Minister for Rural Affairs Michael Ring to seek a meeting as a matter of urgency in relation to the future of the Post Offices in Rural Ireland.*

*On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr S. Treanor, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council write to Páraic Ó Dufaigh Ard-Stiurthoir, G.A.A. wishing him well on his retirement from his position in the G.A.A.*

Cllr Seamus Coyle proposed, Cllr Padraig Mc Nally, PJ O' Hanlon seconded

*That Monaghan County Council disassociates the Council from the comments of Cllr Sean Conlon on the "Joe Finnegan show", particularly the use of the words "atrocities" etc, in relation to the G.A.A and corresponds to the G.A.A Ard Stiurthoir, Páraic Ó Dufaigh, commending the association on the excellence of its work locally, nationally and Internationally in promoting what is best for Ireland, and our people and its communities.*

*A recorded vote was taken which resulted as follows:*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <i>For:</i> Cllrs. Aughey, Campbell, Connolly, Coyle, Gilliland, Maxwell, McElvaney, McNally, O'Hanlon, and S. Treanor. | Total 10 |
| <i>Against:</i> Cllrs Carthy, Conlon, Keelan, McKenna and P. Treanor  | Total 5  |
| <i>Abstention:</i> Cllr Bennett   | Total 1  |

*Cllr Carthy proposed, Cllr Keelan seconded that the Council adopt the motion from Carrickmacross-Castleblayney MD calling on the Government to instigate a Commission of Investigation into the events which led to the death of Carrickmacross man Shane O'Farrell in August 2011 and the subsequent responses of An Garda Síochána, the Courts Service and the DPP, as a matter of urgency.*

*Cllr Carthy further proposed that the wording of the motion be amended so that the words 'Commission of Investigation' be replaced with the words "Public Inquiry". The amendment was agreed and the substantive motion was put to the members and agreed.*

*On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that this Council accepts an invitation to meet with officials from the School Transport Section and we also request that the Minister, Mr. John Halligan be in attendance, (if possible). It was further agreed that this meeting would take place in the New Year, and that the Council Members would forward their School Transport issues to the Meetings Administrator, as this would be helpful to our upcoming meeting.*

*On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr O’Hanlon, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council request the Minister for Housing Planning and Local Government to address the anomaly of where tenants in Part V constructed dwellings are ineligible to purchase their homes, despite a clause in their tenant handbook to be able to purchase their residence after a period of 12 months, of a tenant purchase scheme is available.*

*On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr McKenna, it was agreed that Council Executive forward the nominations previously sent to Chambers Ireland for their annual awards event being held this month to the IPB/LAMA annual awards scheduled for February 3, 2018.*

**3. To consider Section 183 Notice – Disposal of land at Bree, Castleblayney**

*On the proposal of Cllr. Campbell and Cllr. Carthy seconded by Cllr. McNally it was agreed that the Council approve the disposal of 50 square metres at Bree, Castleblayney to ESB Networks in accordance with the notice dated 18 October, 2017 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001.*

**4. To consider entering into a Section 85 Agreement with Louth County Council for the upgrading of the N2 Ardee to Castleblayney road**

Ms. P. Monahan, A/Director of Services referred to the draft Section 85 Agreement which had been circulated to the members. The draft agreement provides for Monaghan County Council being appointed as the lead authority for the N2 Ardee to Castleblayney road improvement project, subject to the consent and agreement of Louth County Council.

*On the proposal of Cllr. Campbell and seconded by Cllr. McElvaney it was agreed that Monaghan County Council hereby resolves to enter into an agreement with Louth County Council under Section 85 of the Local Government Act, 2001 thereby agreeing to perform the powers, functions and duties of Louth County Council relating to the carrying out of that part of the N2 road improvement within the administrative of Louth County Council which forms part of the National Primary road improvement extending from the Castleblayney Bypass in County Monaghan to Ardee in County Louth.*

*On the proposal of Cllr McNally, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was agreed that Monaghan County Council in conjunction with An Garda Siochana initiate a public campaign to encourage roads users to report dangerous drivers, by way of electronic mobile billboards similar to those used for various road works and events.*

**5. To consider Draft Bye-Laws for Lough Muckno Park, Castleblayney**

The members noted the draft Bye-laws for Lough Muckno Park, Castleblayney that had been circulated with the agenda.

*On the proposal of Cllr. Campbell and seconded by Cllr. McElvaney it was agreed that the Council approve the draft Bye Laws for Lough Muckno Park, Castleblayney, as circulated, and place them on public display for a period of one month.*

**6. To receive comments from the elected members in respect of the draft National Planning Framework**

Mr. T. Gourley, Senior Executive Planner referred to the draft submission to the National Planning Framework prepared by the Council's Planning office which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. He invited comments from the members on the draft submission.

The following is a summary of the comments put forward by the members.

- An objective to provide a railway connection directly serving the northwest should be specifically mentioned within the framework.
- Monaghan Town's status as a hub town under the National Spatial Strategy should be maintained under the National Planning Framework in recognition of its role and function as a county town and to ensure it continues to fulfil that role for its hinterland.
- Greater focus is required within the framework on the implications of the UK leaving the EU, particularly in respect of the Central Border Area and counties such as Monaghan.
- Specific mention of an objective to reopen the Ulster Canal should be made within the framework given its importance to tourism.
- Greater clarity is required within the framework in terms of addressing rural deprivation.
- It is considered that the document is aspirational with a lack of detail in the framework in terms of the delivery of objectives.
- Galway as the urban driver for the region gives rise to significant concern, given that Monaghan is at a remove from Galway and clearly orientated towards the greater Dublin Area and the Eastern Economic Corridor.
- Greater focus should be given to the potential that the UK leaving the EU offers for places like Monaghan in terms of UK businesses locating there to ensure they have a continued presence in the EU.
- There should be a greater focus on rebates for installation of solar panels to ensure achievement of objectives in terms of carbon neutral electricity generation.

It was agreed that the members' comments would be included in the Council's submission to the NPF.

*On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr McNally it was agreed that Monaghan County Council seek an immediate opportunity to present their submission via a presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee dealing with the National Planning Framework.*

**7. To consider the mid-term Revision of County Monaghan Development Contribution Scheme 2013 – 2019**

Mr. P. Clifford, Director of Service referred to the copy of the Development Contribution Scheme which had been circulated with the agenda. He stated that there were a number of minor amendments contained in the mid-term revision of the Scheme. In addition, three projects were added to the original scheme – the Market House, Carrickmacross, Clones Post Office Community Arts Centre and the Patrick Kavanagh Centre Inniskeen.

*On the proposal of Cllr. Maxwell, seconded by Cllr. McKenna it was agreed that the Council note the mid term revision of the County Monaghan Development Contribution Scheme and that the scheme be placed on public display with the public being invited to forward comments or submissions within the prescribed timeframe of one month.*

**8. To consider the allocation of funding under the Graveyard Grants Scheme 2017**

*On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that the following grants be allocated under the Graveyard Grants Scheme 2017:*

| <b>Name of Graveyard</b>   | <b>Proposed Allocation</b> |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| St. Patricks, Donaghmoyne  | 1000                       |
| Round Tower, Inniskeen     | 1000                       |
| Donagh                     | 1000                       |
| Tydavnet Old & New         | 1300                       |
| Abbey Graveyard, Killeevan | 1000                       |
| Drumsnatt                  | 1000                       |
| Errigal Truagh             | 1000                       |
| Edraguil                   | 1000                       |
| Kilfargy, Scotshouse       | 1000                       |
| Chapelmoyle                | 300                        |
|                            | €9,600                     |

**9. To approve minutes and recommendations from CPG meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2017**

*On the proposal of Cllr McKenna seconded by Cllr Maxwell it was agreed that the minutes of the CPG meetings held on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 and the recommendations contained therein be approved.*

**10. To receive Management Report – March 2017**

The members noted the Management Report for the month of October which had been circulated with the agenda. The Chief Executive responded to a number of queries from the members in relation to the report.

*On the proposal of Cllr Campbell, seconded by Cllr McElvaney it was agreed that the Council calls on the Roads Section of Monaghan County Council to go back to the Kinnigan Junction to put a counter on this to monitor the traffic movement and go back to TII and ask them to look at this dangerous junction with a view to putting in a near side passing lane and upgrade signage as this road is now so heavy with traffic.*

**11. To receive reports from Members attending Conferences/Training events**

The members noted the reports from Cllrs Carthy, Conlon, Connolly, Coyle, Keelan, and McNally in relation to their attendance at the following conferences/training events:

- AILG, Minding our Mental Health, Tuam, Co. Galway.
- Autumn LAMA Seminar, Clonmel, Co Tipperary.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Thomas Darcy, McGee Summer School, Carlingford, Co Louth.
- AILG Training, Tivoli, Co Cork

**12. Business submitted by the Chief Executive.**

There was no business submitted by the Chief Executive.

**13. Matters arising out of the minutes of Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2017.**

Matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2017 were responded to by the relevant officials.

**14. To receive update on North South Interconnector project.**

The following correspondence was circulated and noted:

- Letter from the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment acknowledging correspondence from the Council.
- Letter from Eirgrid, acknowledging correspondence from the Council.
- Email from Brendan Smith, T.D's office confirming that he had been in contact with the Minister and the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee in relation to Eirgrid.
- Letter of acknowledgement from the Office of the Taoiseach in relation to the North/South interconnector.

**15. To receive update on the Ulster Canal project.**

The Chief Executive advised the members that a meeting of the Ulster Canal Advisory Forum was scheduled for the 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 in the Council meeting room. It was noted that the Council representatives to the Forum are Cllrs P. Treanor and S. Coyle.

**16. To receive update on Brexit.**

The members noted the report – Brexit and the Border Corridor which had been circulated at the meeting.

**17. To receive presentation from Shane Campbell, Chief Executive of ICBAN in relation to Broadband**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Shane Campbell, Chief Executive of ICBAN and invited him to address the members. Mr. Campbell thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak to them in relation to broadband in the ICBAN region.

In his presentation to the members Mr. Campbell referred to the National Broadband Plan which represented a €13m infrastructure investment into the county. It was very important that the county got this investment as quickly and efficiently as possible, but that this may not be completed until 2025. He described the Plan's target of providing 100% access to a high speed broadband by 2020 as very ambitious.

He referred to the recent report on broadband prepared by ICBAN entitled '*Ireland's National Broadband Plan: Delivering on the Promise*'. Subtitled, '*A Guide for the County*

*Councils and Stakeholders of the Central Border Region of Ireland/Northern Ireland.* The report presents the work of the organisation in engaging with industry professionals, The Bit Commons, on how to help maximise delivery of the ambitious NBP for the good of the border region's communities. He stated that the report focuses on two areas, namely, the impact of the National Broadband Plan on the five County Council areas within the Central Border Region (Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan and Sligo) and the status of Mobile Broadband services in the area. Central to this are seven key findings and 20 recommendations, which if adopted will help Councils and Stakeholders in working with Government, ComReg and telecoms providers in meeting the ambitions set.

Following the presentation, Mr. Campbell replied to questions from the elected members.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Campbell for a very informative presentation and he then left the meeting.

A short discussion took place during which the following motion was agreed:

*On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that this Council explores all avenues and opportunities, researching models of best practice throughout Europe, in examining the potential of Monaghan County Council becoming facilitators in providing businesses and interested parties in accessing giga-byte strength broadband.*

## 18. Questions:

**Cllr P. McNally asked:**

1. (a) How many hedge cutting notices has this Council issued in 2016 & 2017 to date?

**Reply: Seventeen notices were issued in the period 2016/2017.**

- (b) Has this Council carried out a check to establish how many of these landowners have failed to cut their hedges as requested?

**Reply: Initially a landowner will receive a verbal request or a letter from the Municipal District and this is followed up to ensure the hedges are cut. In most cases the landowner will carry out the requested works.**

- (c) What powers has this Council to compel landowners to cut dangerous hedges?

**Reply: The empowering legislation is contained in section 70 of the Roads Act 1993.**

**The owner or occupier of land shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that a tree, shrub, hedge or other vegetation on the land is not a hazard or potential hazard to persons using a public road and that it does not obstruct or interfere with the safe use or the maintenance of a public road. Non compliance with a request from the Council can ultimately lead to the initiation of prosecution proceedings against the landowner or occupier of land, which, if successful, could lead to the imposition of a maximum fine of €5,000.**

2. (a) How many applicants are presently on Monaghan County Council's Housing List?

**Reply:** The number of applicants currently on the housing list is 1069. This figure comprises the following categories:

| Category                 | Number of Applicants |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Applicants on HAP Scheme | 388                  |
| Applicants on RAS Scheme | 94                   |
| Tenant Transfers         | 83                   |
| Co-Op Voluntary Housing  | 11                   |
| Net Housing Need         | 493                  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>1069</b>          |

**Clr P. McNally asked:**

- (b) How many new applicants have been added to the list on 2016 & to date (2017)?

**Reply:** The number of applicants added to the list in 2016 was 218. Of this number, 104 applicants are in receipt of housing support through the HAP/RAS Schemes, while 20 of the applications refer to Council tenants on the housing transfer list. The number of applicants added to the list in 2017 to date was 254. Of this number, 113 applicants are in receipt of housing support through the HAP/RAS Schemes, while 14 of the applications refer to Council tenants on the housing transfer list.

- (c) How many have been housed in the same period 2016 & to date (2017)?

**Reply:** The number of applicants who were allocated housing in 2016 was 100. The number of applicants who were allocated housing in 2017 up to 31/10/2017 was 108. An additional 22 applicants are scheduled to be allocated housing before the end of November 2017. Returns from the Approved Housing Bodies show that the number of new tenancies that commenced in 2016 and 2017 to date was 58.

3. (a) Has Monaghan County Council Environment Section, any figures as to how many septic tanks are not up to standard in County Monaghan.  
(b) Are their figures available as to how many have been inspected and approved for grant aid to upgrade same.

**Reply:** The National Inspection Plan sets out each year the number of inspections of Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems to be undertaken by each Water Services Authority. Following inspection, a person receives either a Notice of Compliance or an Advisory Notice outlining a list of measures to be undertaken by the owner. Subject to a person meeting all qualifying criteria the Water Services Authority may pay a grant to a person who carries out repairs, upgrades or replaces a septic tank or other domestic waste water treatment system. The table below is a breakdown of inspections to date.

| Year         | Number of Inspections | In progress | Compliance Notices | Advisory Notices | Grants |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------|------------------|--------|
| 2013         | 4                     | -           | 2                  | 2                | 0      |
| 2014         | 47                    | -           | 29                 | 18               | 3      |
| 2015         | 33                    | -           | 23                 | 10               | 5      |
| 2016         | 34                    | 4           | 20                 | 10               | 1      |
| 2017         | 34                    | 8           | 19                 | 7                | 0      |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>152</b>            | <b>12</b>   | <b>93</b>          | <b>47</b>        |        |

**Cllr P. Connolly asked:**

4. To ask Monaghan County Council in relation to the unfinished developments at Cnoc na Greine, Tydavnet and Chapel Court, Carrickroe
  - (a) What actions have been taken to resolve these unfinished developments?
  - (b) That in view of the acute housing shortage in the north Monaghan area what plans has Monaghan County Council to ensure that both these developments are resolved in the near future?

**Reply:** In respect of Cnoc na Greine, the Planning Authority successfully drew down the related performance bond in October of this year. Discussions will now be held with the owner of the development so as to agree a programme of works to the value of the bond (€30,400.00).

In respect of Chapel Court, significant remedial works have previously been carried out on this development with funding obtained through the Public Safety Initiative (€18,387.00) and the related performance bond (€20,000.00). The developer is no longer in place and there are currently no other funding streams available to carry out further remedial works.

**Cllr C. Carthy asked:**

5. Has the Council received any notification from the Housing Association charged with completing the Magheross housing estate in Carrickmacross as to when the project will commence on site?

**Reply:** On 19 October 2017 notification was received from Tuath Housing (Approved Housing Body) that contracts for the development had been successfully renegotiated with the current Property Owner/Developer. Tuath Housing has reported that commencement is imminent.

6. How many applicants (both individuals and families) have been added to Monaghan County Council's housing list since January 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 and how does this figure compare to the number of applicants allocated housing (please give a breakdown of both social housing and private rented through HAP)?

**Reply:** The number of applicants added to the list in 2017 to date is 254.

Of this number, 113 applicants are in receipt of housing support through the HAP/RAS Schemes, while 14 of the applications refer to Council tenants on the housing transfer list. The number of applicants who were allocated housing in 2017 up to 31/10/2017 is 108. An additional 22 applicants are scheduled to be allocated housing before the

end of November 2017. Returns from the Approved Housing Bodies show that the number of new tenancies that commenced in 2017 to date was 16.

170 HAP tenancies commenced in 2017 to date – 5 of these have been closed for the following reasons (1 offered LA housing, 1 housed by RESPOND, 1 moved to Louth, 2 others voluntarily exited HAP). The Total remaining HAP tenancies that commenced in 2017 is 165.

**Cllr C. Carthy asked:**

7. In relation to the recent finding by the EU that Social Housing in Ireland is sub-standard; is Monaghan County Council's housing section satisfied that its own stock is to an acceptable standard?

**Reply:** Yes, Monaghan County Council is satisfied that its stock is to an acceptable standard. We work with tenants on a case by case basis in relation to any issues raised via the Repair Line. We inspect up to 1000 properties each year and a planned maintenance programme is put together from the findings of these inspections.

**MCC maintenance budgets for 2017 are as follows:**

- Response Maintenance: €745,000
- Planned Maintenance: €450,000
- Similar spending expected for 2018.

8. Has the Housing Section any update on the management plan for the Group Home for persons with physical and sensory difficulties in Carrickmacross and, if not, will it consider contacting the HSE on the matter to try and speed up the process?

**Reply:** Monaghan County Council contacted the HSE and Respond! Housing Association for an update and was informed that the HSE is still awaiting some of the formal handover documentation from Respond! Housing Association. The HSE stated previously that the procurement process for the service provider does not commence until formal handover, this is in accordance with HSE policy. Monaghan County Council will continue to contact the HSE and Respond! Housing Association regularly to try to speed up the process.

**Cllr E. Humphreys asked:**

9. What is the up to date position regarding the proposed drainage of the Bunroe River to alleviate flooding along the root, in particular at Doapey Creamery and the environs?

**Reply:** The following question has been forwarded to the Municipal District of Ballybay-Clones.

10. What plans have Monaghan County Council to improve road safety at Gransha School?

**Reply:** Road markings were altered recently to extend the existing 'no overtaking zone' in front of the school and additional 'no overtaking' signs were erected.

11. What is the current position on how Monaghan County Council proposes to spend the recent allocation of Local Improvement Scheme funding?

**Reply:** The allocation of €250,000 together with contributions from applicants will allow for improvement works on thirteen non public roads throughout the county.

**Cllr E. Humphreys asked:**

12. What plans have Monaghan County Council to review the policy of requiring legal agreements in respect of hedge cutting to be placed upon landowners' deeds, in order to satisfy visibility splays for site distance?

**Reply:** All matters relating to access requirements for developments shall be reviewed through the development plan process, which is currently ongoing, and which will be concluded by March 2019.

**Cllr N. Keelan asked:**

13. Given that Monaghan County Council is spending in excess of €300,000 per annum of tax-payers money on rented accommodation for office space etc., which is not in the public interest, what plans, if any, has the Council to address this situation?

**Reply:** The Corporate Assets section seeks to maximise the use and condition of the Council's own buildings. However, rented facilities make up part of the Council's building facilities. Rented property is used where a need to provide a service has been identified and existing Council owned facilities are not available or suitable.

A significant challenge is the provision of suitable office facilities for the effective delivery of services. The current HQ building is over 30 years old and is of insufficient size to deliver the wide range of Council services to customers. Efforts to address this will be prioritised in 2018. Previously to augment facilities at the HQ campus, temporary buildings were provided as an interim measure, these are now beyond their design life and offer poor facilities to customers and staff. Due to a lack of space on the HQ campus, Motor Tax, Council Chamber, Roads and Water Services sections of the Council have been located in rented accommodation in different locations around Monaghan Town at considerable costs.

14. How much funding has been collected in the year 2016 from the business community in terms of Commercial Rates; how does this figure compare with the years 2010/2011 and also what is the average percentage of rates collected per annum; how does this figure compare with other counties of similar size?

**Reply:** Rates collected in each of the years above are as follows:

|      |             |      |             |
|------|-------------|------|-------------|
| 2016 | €10,148,303 | 2010 | € 9,423,700 |
| 2011 | € 9,166,954 |      |             |

The difference arises from new valuations as there has been no increase in commercial rates since 2008.

The percentage collection for 2016 for Monaghan and comparable size counties is as follows:

|          |     |           |     |
|----------|-----|-----------|-----|
| Monaghan | 82% | Leitrim   | 81% |
| Carlow   | 88% | Longford  | 84% |
| Cavan    | 83% | Offaly    | 87% |
| Laois    | 76% | Roscommon | 91% |
| Sligo    | 76% |           |     |

**Cllr N. Keelan asked:**

15. In terms of energy costs, how much is it costing to run the Council's public lighting network per annum; how much is it costing to run our Council offices/buildings/heating/electricity/lighting etc; what progress has been made in terms energy saving measures including the upgrading and retro fitting of the Public Lighting Network with energy saving LED lighting, and also what plans, if any, has the Council to fit solar panels on our Council buildings etc.? I note that Tipperary County Council have taken a lead in terms of an energy saving policy /action plan?

**Reply:** During 2016, total electrical energy costs for Monaghan Co Council were approx €775,000. 64% of this is used for lighting (unmetered, metered and festive). Monaghan Country Council has made good progress towards achieving energy efficiency targets of 33% by 2020. From the 2009 baseline, an energy efficiency improvement of 24.4%, up to end of 2016, has been achieved, with a further 3.5% planned by the end of 2017. This places Monaghan County Council among the best performers in the public sector in achieving our energy targets and in reducing the Council's annual energy costs.

To date, Monaghan County Council has installed 180m<sup>2</sup> (33 kWp) of solar PV panels on three buildings – CMX Civic Offices, Monaghan Fire Station and Peacelink Clones. The following energy efficiency projects have been completed by the Council this year after receiving funding from SEAI through the Better Energy Community (BEC) scheme.

- Glen HQ Building – boiler replacement and roof insulation.
- Monaghan Fire Station HQ – Solar PV system
- Clones Library HQ – Change lighting to energy efficient LED lights.
- Monaghan Branch Library – Boiler replacement, convert lights to energy efficient LED lights and install new double glazed windows.
- Clones Town Centre Street lighting – Upgrade of lights to smart LED lighting in conjunction with wifi.

Public Lighting is the single biggest energy user in Monaghan County Council, equating to 35% of total energy usage. The Council have an ongoing programme to convert all public lights in the county to energy efficient LED lights by 2020. This is funded directly by the Council for Non National Roads and paid back through energy cost savings. TII have also provided funding to upgrade public lights on the National routes at a number of locations in 2017.

16. In relation to Monaghan County Council's Housing Waiting List, what is the average waiting time for an individual/family to be accommodated in a secure social/ voluntary home; how many families/individuals have been waiting for longer than 5 years to get secure social/voluntary housing accommodation?

**Reply:** The average waiting time for applicants who were allocated housing during the year 2017 to date was 39 months.  
The number of applicants who have been on the housing list for more than 5 years is 200.

Just over half of those applicants are currently in receipt of social housing support as follows:

|                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| Local Authority Tenants  | 16 |
| Applicants on HAP Scheme | 33 |
| Applicants on RAS Scheme | 55 |

**Cllr N. Keelan asked:**

17. What action is the Council taking to purchase land banks across the county for the provision of much needed housing and also the provision of Industry land for employment creation?

**Reply:** Each year Monaghan County Council advertises for suitable land for housing and is in the process of dealing with and in some cases acquiring properties under derelict sites legislation. Monaghan County Council is examining potential sites, looking for suitable land and exploring various possibilities for the provision of housing and for industry and employment creation.

**Cllr B. McKenna asked:**

18. (a) When is it expected that tender documents will be issued to possible contractors for realignment works of the section of N2 from Corracrin to Emyvale village?

**Reply:** A request for tenders was advertised on etenders on 22 August 2017.  
The closing date for receipt of tenders is 17 November 2017.

- (b) Can the Council confirm that the necessary funding for these works is available from the TII?

**Reply:** The TII has indicated that funding will be available for these works in the 2018 allocation.

- (c) When is it expected that these works will commence?

**Reply:** Following tender assessment and award of contract, works are planned to commence early in 2018.

**Cllr R. Aughey asked:**

19. Can Monaghan County Council detail the public realm works to be completed in each town or village as part of the town and village regeneration funding?

**Reply:** Funding has been awarded to carry out Public Realm and Economic Plans for seven towns and villages in the County. The Plans will be prepared following stakeholder engagement, which when completed, will identify specific projects for the relevant settlements, that shall enhance and improve the way that they function, as well as resulting in long-term socio-economic, cultural and environmental benefits for residents, communities, businesses and visitors.

**Cllr R. Aughey asked:**

20. Can Monaghan County Council detail the cost of works done to prepare for, or repair after storm Ophelia?

**Reply:** MCC are currently compiling the costs associated with the storm and will advise councillors when full costs are available.

**Cllr A. Campbell asked:**

21. With regard with the consultation process that has taken place with Hope Castle and The Annex by CHL Consulting.

(a) What date will we have the completed report?

**Reply:** The consultants are on course to complete the report by end November.

(b) What will the next steps be regarding this report?

**Reply:** The report, with the preferred options outlined, will be made available for public comment for a period thereafter.

22. When is work due to commence on the refurbishment of the back Gate House to Hope Castle known locally as St Vincent's? How long is it envisaged that the work will take?

**Reply:** Monaghan County Council recently ran a tender competition for a Consultancy Design Team in relation to the proposed refurbishment of the Hope Castle Gate Lodge No.2. The successful tenderer has been identified and Monaghan County Council is currently in the process of reviewing relevant documentation with the intention of formally appointing the Design Team by mid November 2017. It should be noted that any proposed refurbishment works will be dependent on Departmental approval of a funding grant application.

**Cllr S. Treanor asked:**

23. The Department of Justice and Equality has estimated the cost of housing migrants is 278 thousand each per year. This based on 11.3 million euros it cost to home 40 child migrants per year from Calais. What is the estimated cost to household charges and the ratepayers of County Monaghan for housing these 90 migrants?

**Reply:** The cost of resettlement is being borne by the Department of Justice there is no cost to Monaghan County Council and therefore no charge against the Household Charge or Commercial Rates.

**Cllr S. Treanor asked:**

24. Has an impact study been carried out to determine the impact of these 90 migrants on our schools GP services housing waiting list and social services if not why not?

**Reply:** An impact study is not necessary given the limited number of households and the intention to settle them in a number of locations throughout the County.

Councillors are reminded that the Resettlement Programme comprises 90 Syrian Refugees, in 20 individual households and are being resettled in Monaghan as part of a group of people who are currently being brought to Ireland through the UNHCR Resettlement Programme.

To allow a planned approach to the resettlement to occur an Interagency Resettlement Working Group has been established which includes representatives from statutory, community and voluntary groups. Organisations involved to date include HSE, CMETB, Monaghan County Council, Monaghan County Childcare, An Garda Síochána, TUSLA, the Department of Social Protection, Monaghan Integrated Partnership and Citizens information Service.

The inter agency group will ensure that a planned and managed integration of the individual households into the various areas will be achieved.

**19. Notices of Motion:**

- 1. Cllr P. Connolly proposed, Cllr S. Treanor seconded, and it was resolved,**

*That in the event of colour coded warnings being issued from the Met Office that Monaghan County Council calls on the Department of the Communications and Climate Change to establish guidelines/directives for services, employers, retail outlets etc. in relation to which services should remain open and which services, functions or events should automatically close thereby eliminating any form of confusion for the public in general.*

- 2. Cllr S. Treanor proposed, Cllr Connolly seconded**

*That Monaghan County Council rejects the demand by the Department of Justice and Equality to home ninety asylum seekers without funding from Central Government.*

Following a discussion on the motion, to which a number of members contributed, Cllr Treanor agreed to withdraw the motion following confirmation from the Chief Executive that the cost of resettlement is being borne by the Department of Justice there is no cost to Monaghan County Council and therefore no charge against the Household Charge or Commercial Rates.

**20. Votes of sympathy/congratulations.**

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

- Frank Corrigan on the death of his mother Margaret (Peggy) Corrigan, RIP late of Carrigans, Emyvale.
- The McGilly family Newbliss on the death of Sean McGilly a former employee of the Council.
- The wife and family of the late Frank Treanor, Luton, former President of the Monaghan Association of Beds and Herts.

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

- Frank & Ann Marie McKenna and the Four Seasons Hotel on receiving the 4 Star Quality Assurance status from Fáilte Ireland.
- Connolly's Organic Eggs on receiving a prestigious award at the Blas na h-Eireann Irish Food Awards held in Dingle Co. Kerry.
- Carrickmacross Emmets on winning the 2017 McElvaney Waste and Recycling Intermediate Football Championship
- Latton Ladies GFC on winning the Ulster Ladies Intermediate Football Championship
- Latton Ó Rahilly GFC on winning the Maguire International Minor Football Championship, Division 2 title.
- Corduff Ladies GFC on winning the Ulster Ladies Junior Football Championship.
- Scotstown GFC on winning the Greenfield Foods Monaghan Senior Football Championship.
- Conor McManus on his selection as Vice-Captain of the Ireland International team for the Australian tour.
- Our Lady's Secondary School Castleblayney on winning the All Ireland Arts Choir title in Dublin and to Cara Murray the Director of the choir group.

## 21. Conferences/Training

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

| Promoting Authority       | Subject/Theme   | Venue  | Dates  | Members Selected   |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Celtic Conferences</b> | The Fair Deal Scheme  | The Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork       | 17 <sup>th</sup> , 18 <sup>th</sup> & 19 <sup>th</sup> November 2017 | Cllr. P. Connolly<br>Cllr. S. Gilliland<br>Cllr. D. Maxwell<br>Cllr. A. Campbell                                 |
| <b>URBACT</b>             | URBACT Ireland Training Course: Towards Sustainable Urban Development                   | Custom House, Dublin                             | 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2017                                       | Cllr. S. Conlon  |
| <b>AILG</b>               | LGMA (Local Government Management Agency) & NOAC (National Oversight & Audit Committee) | Shirley Arms Hotel, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan | 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2017                                       | Cllr. C. Carthy<br>Cllr. J. Crowe<br>Cllr. B. McKenna<br>Cllr. S. Coyle<br>Cllr. P. McNally<br>Cllr. PJ O'Hanlon |

### **December Council meeting:**

The Cathaoirleach stated that, with the consent of the members, she proposed to hold the December meeting of the Council in the Sliabh Beagh Hotel in Knockatallon, commencing at 2pm. This was agreed.

### **Urgent Business:**

(i) *Cllr Coyle proposed, Cllr McNally seconded*

*“ That Monaghan County Council demands of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed T.D. and the government to immediately form a Task Force, comprising of the farm organisations, co-op’s, millers, feed suppliers, financial institutions, Dept. of Agriculture etc. to plan, supports i.e. fodder supplies, financial/compensation packages for farmers, who are facing into a very difficult winter and spring of 2017/18. There is severe feed shortages on all farms due to the inclement weather of the past 3 months with much silage/straw etc. not harvested and the housing of livestock in August and early September on many farms, using up the limited fodder supplies. Poor prices have forced farmers to hold cattle on farms, further exacerbating the difficulties of fodder shortage and cash flow problems over the coming months.*

Following a debate on the motion, the Cathaoirleach put it to the meeting and it was agreed unanimously.

*On the proposal of Cllr McNally, seconded by Cllr Coyle, it was agreed that Monaghan County Council writes to Teagasc, Coolshannagh, Monaghan to establish what the fodder situation is in Co Monaghan with a view to dealing with the problem before it becomes a crisis.*

(ii) *Cllr Gilliland proposed, Cllr Maxwell seconded*

*As a result of the Report issued by the Citizens Assembly to Government on Green House gasses & the reduction of carbon; we propose that Monaghan County Council writes to the following:*

- 1. An Taoiseach – Leo Varadkar, T.D.*
- 2. Minister for Agriculture – Michael Creed, T.D.*
- 3. Minister for Rural Affairs – Michael Ring, T.D.*
- 4. Minister for Enterprise & Innovation – Frances Fitzgerald, T.D.*
- 5. Minister for Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht – Heather Humphreys, T.D.*

*To impress upon them, NOT to impose or introduce any form of tax or carbon levies on the farmers of this country.*

*Cllr Carthy proposed that the motion be amended to include provision for the incentivisation of farmers who use renewable energy and smart technology. The amendment was accepted by the proposer and seconder of the motion.*

*Following a short debate, the Cathaoirleach put the motion to the meeting and it was agreed unanimously.*

The meeting then concluded.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Cathaoirleach**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Meetings Administrator**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_