

COMHAIRLE BAILE MHUINEACHÁIN
MONAGHAN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Monday 16th December 2013 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber of Monaghan Town Council, Town Hall, No. 1 Dublin Street, Monaghan.

Cathaoirleach: Cllr. Paul McGeown

Present: Cllrs Mary Carroll, Seán Conlon, Robbie Gallagher, Thomas Hagan, David Maxwell, Donal Sherry, Seamus Treanor and Padraigín Uí Mhurchadha.

In Attendance: Paul Clifford, Temporary County Manager, Dermot Deeney, Town Engineer, Marie Deighan, Town Clerk and Mary Hughes, Staff Officer.

The Members welcomed Karl Dunne, Contracts Manager, Zilic Developments Ltd to the meeting as an observer.

1. Confirmation of November Monthly Meeting held on 18th November 2013

On the proposal of Cllr. Donal Sherry seconded by Cllr Mary Carroll it was agreed to adopt the Minutes of the November Monthly Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Monday 18th November 2013.

2. Confirmation of Special Meeting held on 28/11/2013

On the proposal of Cllr Thomas Hagan seconded by Cllr Seán Conlon it was agreed to adopt the Minutes of the Special Meeting held on Thursday 28th November 2013.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes.

Cllr. Seán Conlon congratulated the Cathaoirleach of the Town Council, Cllr. Paul McGeown as Chairman of the event associated with the switching on of the Christmas lights in the town which took place on Sunday 1st December 2013. The Members agreed that the occasion was a great success and was enjoyed by all who attended.

Cllr. McGeown thanked the Council Executive and outdoor staff of the Council for their assistance and all of the volunteers who helped out on the day.

In relation to concerns regarding a dangerous wall in Ard Glas it was noted that the wall was built as part of accommodation works for the housing estate and that the approx. cost of erecting a fence on the private wall would be in the region of €3,500. It was noted that legal advice is being sought on the matter.

The Members noted that the pedestrian gate at the rear of the Town Council Offices is now open 24 hours a day. Cllr. Donal Sherry called for additional measures to be put in place to aid disabled people to access Dublin Street from the Lower Courthouse Car Park. Cllr. Seán Conlon called for enhancement works to be carried out to a number of entries leading to Dublin Street.

The Members called for appropriate signage to be erected on the newly opened Greenway to remind people of their responsibilities in cleaning up after their dogs on this dedicated walking and cycling route. Cllr. Mary Carroll suggested that when dog owners renew their dog licenses that they should be given literature containing information about the proper disposal of dog waste.

4. Manager's Orders

The Members noted Manager's Orders numbered 172/13 – 174/13.

5. Correspondence

The Members noted the following correspondence:-

- Acknowledgment letter dated 9th December 2013 from the Office of the Minister for Social Protection in relation to rent limits for County Monaghan.
- Acknowledgement letter dated 26th November 2013 from the Office of the Minister for Social Protection regarding the Free Telephone Allowance to pensioners.
- Acknowledgement letter dated 15th November 2013 from Heather Humphreys TD in relation to the proposed abolishment of Town Councils.
- Email dated 28th November 2013 from the Programme Manager of the Courts Service regarding a request by the Council for signage at the entrance to the Courthouse. Cllr Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha welcomed the correspondence and hoped that the Court Services will also see fit to reinstate the Harp over the door of the Courthouse.
- Letter dated 6th December 2013 from the Chairperson of the Monaghan Community Allotments Ltd requesting a longer term lease to acknowledge the efforts of those who undertook the project. The Members supported this correspondence and requested that a longer term lease be given to the Allotment Society. Paul Clifford, Temporary County Manager stated that a lease gives the a tenant/s more rights and is capable of been registered against the Council property. Cllr. Seán Conlon enquired if the granting of a lease of Town Council property with a private entity is a reserved function.
- Letter dated 11th December 2013 from the Department of Social Protection regarding the telephone allowance to Old Age Pensioners. On the proposal of Cllr Mary Carroll seconded by Cllr Paul McGeown it was agreed to write to Minister Burton requesting the Annual Cost of the Telephone Allowance to Old Age Pensioners.
- The Members noted an invitation from Míse (formerly Monaghan Training Workshop) to attend their Christmas Fun Time 2013 at the Garage Theatre on Tuesday 17th December.

6. Planning Applications

The Members noted Planning Applications numbered M.T.13/24 – M.T. 13/25.

7. Business submitted by An Cathaoirleach

No business was submitted by An Cathaoirleach.

8. Consideration of Reports of Committees:-

The Members noted the Minutes of the Planning Sub-Committee Meeting held on Thursday 28th November 2013.

The Members noted the Minutes of the Budget Sub-Committee Meeting held on Thursday 28th November 2013.

9. Roads/Housing:-

A number of matters were noted for the attention of the Town Engineer:-

- Footpath on Mill Street in dangerous condition
- Manhole lid loose – bottom of Mill Street
- Old kerbing removed – Devin Reilly Tce
- Public light out of order – rear of Courthouse (has been reported to Airtricity)
- Footpaths in need of repair – Dawson Street/Heatons Corner
- Pothole at entrance to Mc Nally car park
- Dunnes Stores – Loose brick on footpath
- Monaghan County Council Machinery Yard, Plantation – poor condition.
- Knockroe Glen Housing Estate – public lights out of order.

Cllr. Robbie Gallagher asked the Temporary County Manager if any local companies had submitted tenders for the installation of new windows at the County Council Offices. Paul Clifford replied that the project was advertised on the etenders website, there were five responses and none of them were from the Republic of Ireland.

Cllr. Robbie Gallagher proposed and Cllr. Seamus Treanor seconded that the Council write to the Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board to ascertain the number of Monaghan companies employed during the construction of the VEC Campus at Knockaconny. Following a discussion a vote was taken which resulted as follows:-

In favour of the proposal:- Cllrs. Gallagher, Treanor, Conlon, Hagan, Maxwell, Sherry, Uí Mhurchadha, McGeown (8)

Against the proposal: - Cllr. Carroll (1)

The proposal was carried.

The Members referred to a dwelling in a dangerous condition in Old Cross Square.

10. Telecommunication Mast at Killygoan

The Members look forward to the removal of the Telecommunication Mast at Killygoan.

11. Mullaghmatt Remedial Works Scheme

The Members noted the following report:-
Monaghan Town Council has not awarded the Contract for Mullaghmatt Phase 3. The Council is seeking confirmation from it's legal advisors regarding the adequacy of the documentation received to date from the preferred contractor. It is envisaged that the situation will be resolved shortly.
The Members expressed disappointment with the contents of the report and sympathised with the people of Mullaghmatt on the delay regarding the commencement of the works.

Karl Dunne, Zilic Developments Ltd left the Council Chamber.

12. Report on Mixed Use Development at Rooskey

The Members stated that the new car park looks very well and is a great asset to the town.

13. Report on Vacant Apartments at Drumbear

Dermot Deeney, Town Engineer reported that works are expected to start early in the new year on the remaining apartments at Drumbear.

14. Monaghan Town Council (Regulation and Control of the Consumption and Possession of Intoxicating Liquor in Public Places) Bye-Laws.

The Members noted letter dated 29th November 2013 from the Monaghan Town Country Music Festival Committee requesting a derogation for the duration of the 2014 Country Music Festival from the Monaghan (Regulation and Control of the Consumption and Possession of Intoxicating Liquor in Public Places) Bye-Laws. The Members also noted two sets of draft Bye-Laws – the first one dealing specifically with the Amendment of the 1999 Bye-Laws and the second draft been the re-enactment of the entire Bye-Laws to bring them into line with similar Bye-Laws been operated elsewhere. The Members agreed to proceed with publishing the second draft and to suspend the operation of the Bye-Laws for a specified period of time not exceeding 7 days in the designated area or in such part of it as is specified in the resolution.

15. Notice of Motion:-

- (a) “As we enter the year of the 40th anniversary of the Dublin – Monaghan bombings, that this local authority reiterates our support for the Justice for the Forgotten committee and their aims of campaigning for truth and justice for the victims of the Dublin and Monaghan bombings of 17th May 1974”.

Cllrs. Uí Mhurchadha, Conlon, Sherry, McGeown

On the proposal of Cllr Seán Conlon seconded by Cllr Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha it was agreed to adopt the above Notice of Motion.

Cllr. Mary Carroll requested that the error contained in the information display board in Church Square be amended before May 2014.

16. Ceisteanna/Questions:-

Cllrs. Uí Mhurchadha, Conlon, Sherry, McGeown asked:-

- (a) Further to requests made last May from the Sinn Féin members and subsequent replacement of damaged railings at Upper Mill Street, will Executive undertake to similarly replace damaged railings on the opposite side of the street and consider immediate removal of this pedestrian hazard?

The railing referred to is currently being manufactured and will be installed on delivery. The old railing has been removed.

- (b) In reference to Council owned dwellings that have undergone energy saving insulation installation, when will appropriate wall insulation be fitted to council dwellings at Beechgrove Lawns?

The Town Council own five houses in Beechgrove Estate. Recent BER ratings for three of them indicated satisfactory ratings and no further energy improvement works are programmed for them. Single glazed windows are to be replaced in the fourth house. A BER assessment will be carried out on the remaining house and appropriate improvements carried out as required under the 2014 Energy Efficiency Programme.

17. Resolutions from Other Local Authorities:-

- (a) “That this Council totally condemns the present government policy of deliberately withdrawing discretionary medical cards from some of the most sick in our society”.

Letterkenny Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (b) “That Macroom Town Council calls on the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Members of Dáil Eireann and Seanad Éireann that in the light of recommendations published on Wednesday October 30th 2013 by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, part of the Council of Europe which states that Ireland needs greater Constitutional Protection for Local Government and it is failing to protect Local Democracy and the continued centralization of power and decision making at National level, instead of greater devolution to local communities”.

That the draft Local Government Reform Bill issued on the 17th October 2013 should now be referred to the Constitutional Convention so that a discussion can take place on the issues raised by the Council of Europe which runs entirely contrary to the key principals of the European Charter for Local Self Government which was ratified by Ireland on the 14th May 2002.

Macroom Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- © “That Naas Town Council calls on the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government to apply a waiver for all Council’s from the payment of Local Property Tax for all houses that are within the ownership of Local Authorities, since the Minister’s Department is effectively the owner of these houses”.

Naas Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (d) “Regarding the recent suggestion that Vehicle Motor Tax may be decentralised (similar to driving licence applications) I ask Donegal County Council to support a proposal that Motor Tax should be left with Local Authorities who have excellent records as far as this work is concerned”.

Donegal County Council

It was agreed to mark the above Resolution read.

- (e) “That Donegal County Council acknowledge the vital work of the Credit Union movement within the county and understands that a credit union’s main strength is that it is local. Further Donegal County Council supports the Irish League of Credit Unions in their fight against the over zealous regulatory regime and moves towards consolidation being imposed on them by the Government and Central Bank”.

Donegal County Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (f) “That the Members of Longford Town Council call on the AMAI to challenge the recently published Local Government Bill as it is a direct attack on local democracy and goes against the core principles of the European Charter of Local Self Government”.

Longford Town Council

It was agreed to mark the above Resolution read.

- (g) The Members noted a copy of a Resolution from Clonakilty Town Council.

Following a discussion and on the proposal of Cllr Seán Conlon seconded by Cllr Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha it was agreed to seek of Minister Phil Hogan, TD and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government to sign and ratify the additional protocol to the European Charter of Local Self Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a Local Authority.

18. Conferences

- (a) Celtic Conferences – “Microsoft Excel Training Workshop for Councillors”- Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery, Cork – 20th - 22nd December 2013 – (approx. cost €860)
- (b) Celtic Conferences – “Public Presentation and PR Management Seminar” – Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery, Cork – 3rd – 5th January 2014 – (approx. cost €860)
- (c) Ace Training – “2014 European Elections Information Seminar for Councillors” – Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford – 3rd – 5th January 2014- (approx. cost €400)
- (d) TGR Seminars – “Accessing EU Sports Funding for Irish Communities in Ireland” – Bunratty Castle Hotel, Clare - 10th – 11th January 2014 - (approx. cost €560).
- (e) Celtic Conferences – “Employment Law Mediation – v- Litigation Seminar”- Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery, Cork – 10th – 12th January 2014 – (approx. cost €860)
- (f) Ace Training – “The Building Control Amendment Regulations 2013 – Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford – 10th – 12th January 2014 – (approx. cost €400)
- (g) Celtic Conferences – “Microsoft Word Training Workshop for Councillors” – Clonmel Park Hotel, Clonmel – 15th – 17th January 2014 – (approx. cost €700)
- (h) Ace Training – “Rural Housing – Planning and Development Design Guidelines” – Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford – 17th – 19th January 2014 – (approx. cost €400)
- (i) Celtic Conferences – “Branding in Political Elections – A new quality of Political Communication” – Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery – 17th – 19th January 2014 – (approx. cost €860).
- (j) LAMA Spring Seminar 2014 – Four Seasons Hotel, Monaghan – 31st January – 1st February 2014 – (approx. cost €150)

On the proposal of Cllr David Maxwell seconded by Cllr Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha it was agreed that any Member wishing to attend the LAMA Conference in Monaghan to inform the Town Clerk so that they may be booked into the Conference. Cllr Hugh Mc Elvaney, Monaghan County Council and Chairman of LAMA was complimented on bringing the Conference to Monaghan Town.

19. Any Other Business

Cllr. Seamus Treanor condemned the top-ups and bonus payments from public donations paid to Executives in the Central Remedial Clinic and other charitable organizations.

20. Sympathy/Congratulations

A vote of sympathy was extended to the following:-

- Cllr Thomas Hagan on the death of his brother-in-law Sean Reynolds, Monaghan
- Eddie Neeson, Staff Member of Monaghan County Council on the death of his mother, Patricia Neeson, Emyvale.
- Dympna Condra, Tourism & Marketing Executive with Monaghan County Council on the death of her sister, Una McNicholl.
- Paul Corr, Staff Member of Monaghan County Council on the death of his father, James Corr, Scotstown.
- Pauline Mc Clean, former Staff Member of Monaghan Town Council on the death of her father, Patrick McClean, Killeshandra.
- McKenna family, 5 Coolshannagh View on the death of Jimmy McKenna.

It was noted that a Book of Condolence has been opened in the Town Council Offices to afford people the opportunity to record their sympathy on the passing of the former South African President, Nelson Mandela.

A vote of congratulations was extended to the following:-

- Gerard Cusack and Patrick Mc Donald, Monaghan Town Council staff members on their recent retirements.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

Dated this the 20th day of January 2014.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach