

Comhairle Baile Mhuineacháin

Monaghan Town Council

Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Monday 16th November 2009 at 5.00pm in the Council Chamber of Monaghan Town Council, Town Hall, 1 Dublin Street, Monaghan.

Cathaoirleach: Cllr. Seán Conlon

Present: Cllrs. Mary Carroll, Robbie Gallagher, Thomas Hagan, David Maxwell, Paul McGeown, Donal Sherry, Seamus Treanor and Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha.

In Attendance: Declan Nelson, County Manager, Gareth Mc Mahon, Town Engineer, Marie Deighan, Town Clerk and Sinead Tibby-Tracey, Clerical Officer.

1. Confirmation of October Monthly Meeting held on 19th October 2009.

On the proposal of Cllr Robbie Gallagher seconded by Cllr Mary Carroll it was agreed to adopt the Minutes of the October Monthly Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Monday 19th October 2009.

2. Matters arising from the Minutes

The Town Engineer stated that the signage project proposed to indicate the location of a number of business premises off Dublin Street was underway and would be located near the hoarding at the rear of the Northern Standard premises.

Gareth Mc Mahon, Town Engineer stated that work has commenced on repair work to windows and doors in dwellings in the Killygoan area. It was noted that works to the back gardens of dwellings in the area would be carried out in dry weather.

The Members welcomed details of public lighting upgrades to be carried out in the following locations in 2009 – Canal Street/Mall Road, Laneway off Canal Street, Golden Road, Dr Mc Kenna Tce, Beech Hill Slip Road, Annahagh Lane, Ashgrove Lawns, Park Road, Mill Street, Milltown Road, Belgium Square, Coolshannagh Road, Woodview and St. Davnet's Road.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr Seán Conlon proposed that a letter be issued to Airtricity Utility Solutions, the company who will now oversee Local Authority street lighting, highlighting the fact that there are a considerable number of lights not functioning in the town and outlying areas and to enquire as to what their response time procedure is. On the proposal of Cllr David Maxwell seconded by Cllr Seán Conlon it was further agreed to request Airtricity Utility Solutions to attend a meeting of the Town Council to discuss the matter.

It was noted that a public consultation meeting was held recently in the Market House regarding the preparation of a Local Area Action Plan for the Backlands North of Dublin Street. Gareth Mc Mahon, Town Engineer stated that a draft proposal would be put together by the Planning Office and a further period of consultation would take place.

3. Manager's Orders

The Members noted Manager's Orders numbered 237/09 – 255/09.

4. Correspondence

The Members noted the following correspondence:-

- Acknowledgement dated 5th November 2009 from the Office of the Minister for Defence in relation to the former Military Barracks, Knockaconny, Monaghan.
- Letter dated 30th October 2009 from the Department of Social and Family Affairs regarding the National Carers' Strategy
- Letter dated 4th November 2009 from ESB Customers Supply regarding meter readings
- Letter dated 2nd October 2009 from An Garda Síochána regarding binge drinking in Mullaghmatt Estate
- Letter dated 21st October 2009 from An Garda Síochána regarding Telecommunication Mast at Killygoan, Monaghan.
- Letter dated 5th November 2009 from Monaghan Neighbourhood Youth Project thanking the Members for their contribution of €6,000 towards their Halloween activities. The Members praised the NYP for the organisation of the successful Halloween celebrations in the town.
- Letter dated 29th October 2009 from Monaghan Chamber of Commerce regarding the official switch-on of the Christmas Tree lights on Sunday 29th November 2009
- Letter dated 22nd October 2009 from the Harvest Blues Festival Committee seeking a Town Council representative for the committee. It was agreed to defer this matter until the next meeting of the Town Council.
- Letter dated 28th October 2009 from the Office of the Department of Finance regarding VAT
- Letter dated 28th October 2009 from the Office of the Department of Finance regarding the National Spatial Strategy
- Letter dated 11th November 2009 from Barry J. Aughey, Monaghan Retail Park regarding a planning application for Aldi in Monaghan Retail Park. Declan Nelson, County Manager stated that he did not wish to comment on the correspondence as he understood that a further planning application is to be received by the Planning Authority.
- Letter dated 6th November 2009 from the Office of the Minister for Housing and Local Services regarding special tax designation status for certain towns.
- Letter dated 27th October 2009 from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government regarding special tax designation status for all towns designated Hubs and Gateways in the National Spatial Strategy.

A number of letters were received in relation to the Councils request to all Oireachtas Members along the Border Region to collectively look after the Border towns and to put a case forward to Government which might address the specific problems which currently exist in the area:-

- Letter dated 29th October 2009 from Dr. Rory O' Hanlon, TD
- Letter dated 29th October 2009 from Margaret Conlon, TD
- Letter dated 27th October 2009 from Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, TD
- Letter dated 30th October 2009 from Séamus Kirk, TD
- Email dated 9th November 2009 from Frank Feighan, TD
- Letter dated October 2009 from Dermot Ahern, T.D.
- Letter dated 10th November 2009 from Pat The Cope Gallagher MEP
- Letter dated 12th November 2009 from Eamon Scanlon, TD
- Letter dated 12th November 2009 to Margaret Conlon, TD from Brian Lenihan, T.D., Minister for Finance.
- Letter dated 6th November 2009 to Frank Feighan, TD from Brian Lenihan, T.D., Minister for Finance.
- Letter dated 6th November 2009 from Séamus Kirk TD
- Letter dated 13th November 2009 from Seymour Crawford TD
- Acknowledgement dated 9th November 2009 from Dermot Ahern, TD.

On the proposal of Cllr Mary Carroll seconded by Cllr Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha it was agreed to reiterate the Members appeal for a significant VAT reduction in the December budget in order to stem the flow of shoppers northwards. Cllr Maxwell also referred to correspondence received from the Office of the Minister for Finance in May 2009 which stated that a 1% vat reduction would cost the Irish Exchequer €390m in a full year and correspondence from the Tánaiste in April 2009 which outlined the extent of the border trading loss which stated that the value of cross border shopping in 2009 could reach €650m.

5. Business submitted by An Cathaoirleach

No business was submitted by An Cathaoirleach.

6. Planning Applications

The Members noted Planning Applications numbered 09/26 – 09/28

7. Consideration of Reports of Committees

On the proposal of Cllr Thomas Hagan seconded by Cllr Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha it was agreed to adopt the Minutes of the Housing Sub-committee Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Monday 19th October 2009.

On the proposal of Cllr Seamus Treanor seconded by Cllr Seán Conlon it was agreed to adopt the Minutes of the Planning Sub-Committee Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Monday 19th October 2009.

The Members agreed with the recommendation of the Planning Sub-Committee of Monaghan Town Council that Monaghan Town Football Club be awarded the use of Belgium Park Football Field for the 2009/2010 winter season.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr Seán Conlon stated that the Town Council Members had met earlier in the evening with the Chamber of Commerce who have arranged, with the help of Monaghan Rotary Club an event to be associated with the official switching on of the Christmas Tree lights on Sunday 29th November 2009. It was noted that Monaghan Gospel Choir along with local school choirs will also entertain and the big switch-on will be carried out by special guest, Eoghan Quigg, X-Factor finalist.

It was noted that pay parking will be suspended for a limited period from Friday 18th December 2009 to Thursday 24th December 2009 from 12 noon – 6pm. This will apply to all on-street car parking and public car parks in the town.

The Town Engineer circulated a preliminary outline of a proposal to create a plaza effect in The Diamond area. On the proposal of Cllr Seán Conlon and seconded by Cllr David Maxwell it was agreed to proceed to enter into detailed consultation with the traders in the area and with the Chamber of Commerce in order to advance the design as quickly as possible. It was noted that the development would be subject to a planning application which would give a further opportunity for public consultation.

One Way Traffic System Proposal – Mill Street

The Members were circulated with a report and drawing number NR09-102 outlining a proposed one-way traffic system in the Mill Street area of the town. The Members noted a letter from An Garda Síochána stating that they have no objection to the implementation of a one-way system on Mill Street. The Members welcomed the proposal and noted that 5 no. extra car parking spaces will be provided. On the proposal of Cllr David Maxwell seconded by Cllr Paul McGeown it was agreed to proceed to advertise the one-way system proposal. It was also agreed to circulate a copy of the proposal to businesses and residents in the Mill Street area.

8. Roads/Housing

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

- Public lighting requires upgrading – Mullaghmat/Hospital to Milltown
- Pound Hill – Gullies blocked
- Mall Road – Review of line markings in this area to be undertaken
- Spouting broken on Town Council dwelling in Belgium Square
- Clones road – footpath overgrown
- Stop sign required at Beech Hill College junction
- Traffic calming measures required on Old Armagh Road.

The Members welcomed the recent works in Park Street.

The Town Engineer stated that it is proposed to include in the Roads Programme 2010 pedestrian safety measures to be undertaken at the bottom of the Hospital Hill.

The Members raised a number of flooding issues with the Town Engineer. On the proposal of the Cathaoirleach, Cllr Seán Conlon seconded by Cllr Thomas Hagan it was agreed to send a letter to the Office of Public Works highlighting the fact that flooding regularly occurs in the town centre and requesting that funding be made available to alleviate the problem.

On the proposal of Cllr Donal Sherry seconded by Cllr Paul McGeown it was agreed to seek clarity from the Health Service Executive as to whether Ambulance services operating in the area of Monaghan Town are equipped with adequate Satellite Navigation technology as it took an ambulance twenty five minutes on one occasion to reach an incident in the town, having gone to different locations.

The Members noted that the Town Engineer is awaiting a Garda Report on the proposed parking arrangements introduced recently on the North Road.

Cllr. Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha stated that she stood over an account which she gave at the October Monthly Meeting of the Town Council regarding a minor traffic accident at St. Macartan's College, despite a letter which appeared in the local newspaper making reference to her comments and which appeared to cast doubt on whether the incident took place.

9. Telecommunication Mast at Killygoan

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

10. Mullaghmatt Remedial Works Scheme

It was noted that work is continuing to take place on the Mullaghmatt Remedial Works Scheme.

11. Setting of Date For Annual Statutory Budget Meeting

The Members noted that the prescribed period for the holding of the 2010 Budget Meetings for Town Councils is from 24th November 2009 – 15th January 2010. It was agreed to hold the Annual Statutory Budget Meeting on Monday 14th December 2009 at 4pm (prior to the December Monthly Meeting at 6pm). It was agreed to hold a Budget Sub- Committee Meeting on Tuesday 1st December 2009 at 5pm.

12. Notice of Motion

- (a) “That this Council calls on the Minister for Finance, having put NAMA in place and drawing on mortgage systems abroad, to focus on the development of a mortgage system that best protects the citizen into the future”.

Cllr Gallagher

On the proposal of Cllr Robbie Gallagher, seconded by Cllr Seamus Treanor it was agreed to adopt the above Notice of Motion.

13. Questions

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

- (a) In the event of social welfare benefit entitlements being reduced in the upcoming Government budget, what mechanism is in place for reviewing increased Council rents. Will rent review forms be issued to S.W. recipients?

If, at any time there is a reduction in the total household income of a Council housing tenant a corresponding reduction in Council rent will be applied. Any tenant who has a reduction in income should furnish to the Council all proofs of income and their rent will be reviewed based on the documentation submitted.

Following a discussion it was agreed that a Rent Revision for Local Authority tenants be carried out again in January 2010 following the Budget in December 2009.

- (b) If there is a reduction in the total household income of a Council housing tenant, after a rent review, will a corresponding reduction in Council rent be applied?

If, at any time, there is a reduction/increase in the total household income of a Council housing tenant a corresponding reduction/increase in Council rent will be applied.

Condition 5 of the Tenancy Agreement states: - “The Tenant shall furnish to the Council full and detailed particulars of his/her income and the income of each member of the household residing with him/her and shall immediately notify the Council of any change of income of himself/herself or of any member of the household residing with him/her as soon as such change shall occur and shall furnish to the Council all proofs which they may require in respect of any statement made by him/her and on his/her own behalf and that of every member of the household residing with him/her”.

- (c) This Council recently approved a leasing arrangement for the taking in charge of the cinema car park located at The Diamond Centre. What is the status of this arrangement?

It is hoped to take charge of the car park and have the preparatory work complete in time to facilitate reopening it before the end of November.

Cllr. Robbie Gallagher asked:

- (d) Would the Council liaise with the Chamber of Commerce in order to review the success of the parking arrangements that were put in place for Christmas 2008 with a view to formulating best practice for the period up to Christmas 2009.

At a recent meeting between the Chamber of Commerce and Council Staff, preliminary discussions were held regarding parking arrangements in the run up to Christmas. The Chamber requested that consideration be given to free parking from 12pm daily for the 6 day running into Christmas

At this meeting the issue of enforcing 2-hour parking on-street was also raised. The Chamber expressed the view that enforcing the existing law would help in the turnover of available spaces on-street and would benefit trade in the town. Monaghan Town Council are now preparing public information leaflets in advance of commencing this changed policy.

- (e) Would the Council give an update on progress in relation to the Remedial Scheme in Mullaghmat?

Culverting the stream has been completed

The construction of the new road is 80% complete

Work to the decant houses is ongoing and nearing completion.

Work on the first block of houses has commenced.

The Contractor is on schedule to complete the works within the contract time period

14. Resolutions from Other Local Authorities

- (a) “Granard Town Council proposes that the recommendations to abolish Town Councils, contained in the Mc Carthy report be withdrawn”.

Granard Town Council

It was agreed to mark the above Resolution read

- (b) “That Mullingar Town Council deploras the recommendations of An Bord Snip Nua Report on the elimination of Town Local Government and requests that the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, John Gormley, TD gives his full public support to all Town Councils and to immediately commence the implementation of his Party’s Local Government Policy, which was published prior to the last General Election”

Mullingar Town Council

It was agreed to mark the above Resolution read

- © “That this Council would appeal to the Government to waive VAT on specialised items of medical equipment where the purchase is being funded through voluntary fundraising”

South Tipperary County Council

The Members supported the above Resolution

- (d) “Listowel Town Council calls on the Government to support the Family Resource Centre Programme and, in particular, the thirteen Family Resource Centres based in County Kerry. We support the three campaign principles of the Family Resource Centre National Forum which are:
1. The Family Resource Centre Programme delivers a value for money for support for families across Ireland. At times of financial hardship, the services of Family Resource Centres will be needed more than ever. Rather than considering closing or reducing the FRC programme, it should be developed and expanded.
 2. The Family Support Agency is the best vehicle to deliver the Family Resource Centre Programme and the Agency should be maintained.
 3. If any changes are to be made in the FRC programme or Family Support Agency, the Family Resource Centre National Forum must be consulted on the way forward”.

Listowel Town Council

It was agreed to mark the above Resolution read

- (e) “That Shannon Town Council calls on the Government to set up a separate redress scheme for women detained in Magdalene laundries as demanded by the survivors and this demand be circulated to all Local Authorities”

Shannon Town Council

The Members supported the above Resolution

15. Any Other Business

On the proposal of Cllr Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha seconded by Cllr David Maxwell it was agreed to invite Cecelia Mc Kenna, Chilean Ambassador to Ireland to address the Members of Monaghan Town Council in the New Year. It was also agreed to extend the invitation to the Monaghan Chamber of Commerce and to the Mc Kenna Clann.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr Seán Conlon reminded the Members that the 1st Joint Policing Committee Public Consultation Meeting is being held in Corcaghan Community Centre on Tuesday 17th November 2009 at 8.30p.m.

16. Sympathy/Congratulations

A vote of sympathy was extended to the following;

- Gerard Carolan, Monaghan Town Council employee on the recent death of his mother, Dympna Carolan, Milltown.
- Hilda Swift and family, Fairview Drive on the recent death of Seán Swift
- Heather Humphreys, Mayor of Monaghan on the recent death of her brother-in-law, Tommy Humphreys
- Cllr Brian Mc Kenna, Monaghan County Council on the recent death of his mother, Rosaleen Mc Kenna

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

- Joe Mc Elvaney, Monaghan County Librarian on his recent retirement
- Michael Fitzpatrick, Director of Services, Monaghan County Council on his recent retirement from the Local Government Service
- Monaghan United Football Club who secured 5th position in the Eircom League
- Coláiste Oiriall on being accredited official Department of Education recognition.
- Emyvale Football Club on reaching the Ulster Club Football Final.
- St. Macartans College and Monaghan Collegiate on their joint venture to document historically the County Monaghan people of all religious denominations who had fought in the First World War.
- Eugene Murray, Monaghan Town Council employee on his initiative in raising money for charity.
- Northern Sound Radio on celebrating 20 years of independent radio in Ireland this year.

This Concluded the Business of the Meeting.

Dated this the 14th day of December 2009

Cathaoirleach