

Comhairle Baile Mhuineacháin Monaghan Town Council

Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Monday 19th October 2009 at 6.00pm 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 Mary Mc Coy, Clerical Officer.

Attendance of Francis McCarron, Social Inclusion Officer, Monaghan County Council

At the outset the Cathaoirleach, Cllr Seán Conlon welcomed Francis McCarron, Social Inclusion Officer, Department of Community and Enterprise, Monaghan County Council to the meeting. Mr McCarron stated that the Social Inclusion Unit of Monaghan County Council was set up in June 2008 and its main objectives are to:-

1. Support Monaghan Local Authorities to tackle social exclusion in a focussed and cohesive manner, including working with other Public Bodies.
2. To embed social inclusion across Local Authority departments, actions, policies and initiatives in accordance with the Local Government Act 2001.
3. To develop a strong social focus within Local Authority practice and policy.

Mr. McCarron circulated the Monaghan Local Authorities Social Inclusion Handbook which assists the Monaghan Local Authorities Management, Staff and Elected Representatives to identify and understand poverty and social exclusion.

A question and answer session followed.

The Members thanked Mr McCarron for his informative presentation and wished him well in his post. Mr McCarron left the Council Chamber.

1. Confirmation of September Monthly Meeting held on 21st September 2009.

On the proposal of Cllr David Maxwell seconded by Cllr Paul McGeown it was agreed to adopt the Minutes of the September Monthly Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Monday 21st September 2009.

2. Matters arising from the Minutes

Declan Nelson, County Manager informed the Members that the Tenders for the new Monaghan Fire Station Headquarters are currently being examined by the Consultants.

The Town Clerk informed the Members that the rent review for 2009 has taken place and that tenants will be notified of their revised rent in the coming days.

The Town Engineer stated that he is in the process of obtaining quotations for the carrying out of repairs to doors, where necessary, in the Killygoan area and that a report on flooding in the back gardens of dwellings in Killygoan will be brought before the Members at the next meeting.

The Town Clerk informed the Members that no reply has yet been received from the Department of Social Welfare in relation to a letter sent to them regarding the lengthy queuing outside the unemployment office in the town. It was noted that staff are working additional hours to alleviate the problem of queuing.

It was agreed that a letter be issued to Eircom Ltd highlighting the random manner in which telephone directories are left outside homes and business premises in the town and which are causing a litter problem as in some instances pages have been torn from them and discarded around the place.

The Town Engineer informed the Members that Council Engineers are examining the situation in consultation with the Gardaí, School and local Business owners/operators in relation to pedestrian dangers in the vicinity of St. Macartan's College. Cllr. Gallagher stated that he understood that pelican lights had been ordered by Monaghan County Council and were due to be installed in the area.

The Members welcomed the funding of €750,000 from the Border Midland and Western Regional Assembly for the enhancement of Dublin Street and the provision of playground facilities in the town. Declan Nelson, County Manager pointed out that the allocation received represents 60% of the cost of the proposed works and the Council will have to raise the balance of 40%, i.e. €500,000. Declan Nelson also stated that the application submitted by the Town Council had included the provision of car parking at the rear of Dublin Street and pedestrian access but this was not allowed in the determination of the application as the provision of car parking is regarded as commercial. The County Manager suggested that some modernisation of The Diamond should be carried out in order to enhance its attractiveness as a commercial location. It was noted that the works must be completed by December 2010.

3. Manager's Orders

The Members noted Manager's Orders numbered 212/09 – 236/09 and it was agreed to circulate the list of the areas in the town which will receive an upgrade of public lighting in 2009.

4. Correspondence

The Members noted the following correspondence:-

- Acknowledgement dated 24th September 2009 and letter dated 15th October 2009 from the Office of the Minister for Social and Family Affairs regarding funding for Family Resource Centres. The Members expressed disappointment with the contents of the letter.
- Acknowledgement dated 24th September 2009 from the Office of the Minister for Social and Family Affairs regarding the publication of the National Carers Strategy.
- Acknowledgement dated 24th September 2009 from the Office of the Taoiseach regarding the publication of the National Carers Strategy.
- Letter dated 7th October 2009 from the Office of the Minister for Transport regarding the Rural Transport Scheme.

- Letter dated 1st October 2009 from the Office of the Minister for Defence regarding a maintenance schedule for the former site of Monaghan Military Barracks. On the proposal of Cllr. Robbie Gallagher seconded by Cllr. Paul McGeown it was agreed to rewrite to the Minister for Defence calling again for a maintenance schedule to be put in place, especially for grass cutting as the site is becoming unsightly.
- Letter of thanks dated 9th September 2009 from Irish Water Safety for contribution received from the Town Council.
- Letter dated 9th October 2009 from Drogheda Borough Council regarding St. Finian's Park Remedial Works Scheme and letter dated the 15th October from the Mullaghmatt/Cortolvin Residents Association seeking clarification in relation to private tenants on the Remedial Scheme for all phases. On the proposal of the Cathaoirleach, Cllr Seán Conlon seconded by Cllr Donal Sherry it was agreed to forward a copy of the correspondence from Drogheda Borough Council to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for their observations.
- Letter dated 5th October 2009 from Angie Mc Kenna, Development Worker, Mullaghmatt/Cortolvin Community Development Ltd requesting the Town Council's support in relation to a community garden proposal for the Mullaghmatt Estate. The Members welcomed the correspondence and it was agreed to inform Ms Mc Kenna that various channels are being explored at present for funding for the initiative.
- Letter dated 15th October 2009 from Paul Clifford, Director of Planning Services, Monaghan County Council regarding reports which were recently published in the local newspapers relating to comments made at a meeting of Monaghan Town Council on the 21st September 2009 in respect of Monaghan County Council's decision to refuse planning permission for an Aldi store at Cornacassa. The County Manager stated that the newspaper articles had caused a lot of discontent among the planning staff and that staff felt let down due to the fact that the issue was raised in the manner it was without the opportunity for them to respond.

The Members noted a report from the Town Engineer on the suitability of a barrier system at the Diamond Car Park. It was agreed not to install a barrier system as outlined in the report and to extend the existing pay and display system by installing new machines which would be linked into the Town Council's existing network.

5. Business Submitted by An Cathaoirleach

On the proposal of Cllr Seán Conlon seconded by Cllr David Maxwell it was agreed that a letter be issued to the Minister for Finance and the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government requesting that consideration be given to the introduction of a special tax designation status for all towns designated "Hubs" and "Gateways" in the National Spatial Strategy with a view to business regeneration.

On the proposal of Cllr Seamus Treanor seconded by Cllr David Maxwell it was agreed that a letter be issued to Brian Lenihan TD, Minister for Finance requesting that consideration be given to a significant reduction in VAT in the forthcoming budget in light of the difficulties encountered presently by traders in border towns.

On the proposal of Cllr Robbie Gallagher seconded by Cllr Mary Carroll it was agreed to call on all Oireachtas Members along the border region to get together collectively to look after the border towns with a view to putting a case forward to Government which might address the specific problems which currently exist in the border region.

6. Consideration of Reports of Committees

The Members noted the Minutes of a Budget Sub-Committee meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Wednesday 30th September 2009. On the proposal of Cllr David Maxwell seconded by Cllr Seán Conlon it was agreed to contribute €100 to the Monaghan Garda Youth Diversion Project to aid in the organising of a soccer league for 14-17 year olds entitled Monaghan Community Challenge Cup.

7. Roads/Housing

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

- Bins required at Belgium Park Football field car park and Rope Walk area.
- Sweeping of leaves in O.A.P. housing estates.
- Illegal dumping in alleyway off Dublin Street
- House numbering directional signage required in Mullaghmat estate
- Public lighting out of order at Traffic Lights junction
- 4 no. public lighting out of order in grounds of St. Davnets.
- Traffic speeding on Hospital Hill

On the proposal of Cllr. Seán Conlon seconded by Cllr. Paul McGeown it was agreed to examine the possibility of the provision of off-street directional signage indicating the location of a number of business premises that are situated in the alleyways off Dublin Street.

The Members called on all parents to be vigilant to ensure that Halloween would be peaceful for all residents in the town. The Town Clerk stated that a leaflet has been distributed to all households in the housing estates requesting people not to provide material to anyone planning to hold illegal Halloween bonfires. It was noted that there will be a Fireworks display and Halloween activities taking place in the town on Saturday 31st October.

It was noted that a public meeting has been arranged for Wednesday evening the 21st October 2009 in the Market House, Monaghan regarding the preparation of a Local Area Action Plan for the backlands, north of Dublin Street, Monaghan. It was agreed to circulate a notice of the meeting to all residents and business owners/operators in the Dublin Street area of the town.

On the proposal of Cllr Thomas Hagan seconded by Cllr. Donal Sherry it was agreed to issue a letter to the Gardaí informing them that “binge drinking” is taking place in the Mullaghmat area of the town.

The Members complimented the executive on the paving outside the Church in Park Street and the new turning system installed in Old Cross Square.

The Town Engineer stated that it is proposed to introduce a one way traffic system in Mill Street as the Post Office depot has now relocated from the street. Gareth McMahon stated that the proposal is with the Gardaí at present for their observations.

8. Telecommunication Mast at Killygoan

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

9. Mullaghmatt Remedial Scheme

It was noted that work is continuing to take place on Phase 2 of the Remedial Works Scheme.

10. Notices of Motion

- (a) “That this Council call on the ESB to resume the previous practice of Meter Readers leaving cards for absent householders to enter their meter reading and post same to the ESB”

Cllrs. Uí Mhurchadha, Conlon, Sherry, McGeown

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

- (b) “That this Council emphatically opposes the threat to the existence of Town Councils as proposed by An Bord Snip Nua (McCarthy Report) and the sentiments of Minister John Gormley on the same subject. Any such proposals are an attack on the most basic democracy available in this state”.

Cllrs. Uí Mhurchadha, Conlon, Sherry, McGeown

It was agreed to incorporate Resolution 12(a) from Kilrush Town Council with the above Notice of Motion.

- 12(a) “That this Council, in the interest of local democracy, condemns unequivocally the recommendation contained in the McCarthy Report to abolish Town Councils and urges the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to bring forward measures to guarantee the constitutional amendment approved in the recent 1999 referendum relating to the enhanced status of Local Government in Ireland into the future. The Council further recommends that the Minister addresses the adequate funding requirement of all local authorities in Ireland following the recent review of Local Government”.

Kilrush Town Council

Cllr Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha proposed and Cllr Thomas Hagan seconded the above Notice of Motion and Resolution. Cllr Seamus Treanor stated that he disagreed with the Motion and the Resolution. Following a discussion a vote was taken which resulted as follows:

In favour of the Motion/Resolution – Cllrs Carroll, Conlon, Gallagher, Hagan, Maxwell, McGeown, Sherry, Uí Mhurchadha (8)

Against the Motion/Resolution – (0)

Cllr Seamus Treanor abstained from voting

The Motion/Resolution was carried and it was agreed to circulate the Motion to all Local Authorities.

11. Questions

Cllrs Uí Mhurchadha, Conlon, Sherry and McGeown will ask:

- (a) Offensive odours occasionally arise from the waste water treatment plant at Rooskey, especially after a rainfall. Are all preventative measures in place to keep this nuisance to a minimum?

All preventative measures are taken to reduce fugitive air borne smells but being an SWT there are invariably some produced in the process. These are normally associated with hot weather when bacteria causing the offensive odour multiply more quickly. There are also deliveries to the STW which sometimes give rise to odours and we will investigate if these reactions can be lessened.

Cllr. Robbie Gallagher will ask:

- (b) What action is the Council taking to ensure the safety of the residents of Mullaghmatt after the discovery of traces of asbestos during the remedial works on the site?

Surveys carried out as a part of the Remedial Works Scheme Phase II Contract have highlighted the presence of trace quantities of chrysotile (white) asbestos in the Textured Decorative Coating (TDC) on the ceilings of some houses. The use of this material was common practice in housing construction at the time this scheme was built. International advice on this type of asbestos containing material (ACM) is that once it is not disturbed, it poses extremely low risk to occupants during everyday living and therefore residents of Mullaghmatt should not be concerned or alarmed by the possible presence of this material. Monaghan Town Council has engaged a specialist in the field (OHSS) to advise in this regard.

The contractor is formulating a safe system of work plan for handling the TDC's.

Integral to this plan will be the use of suitably trained staff. On completion of the works to each house an air test will be carried out to verify that no residual ACM's exist in the air (ACM's only pose a risk when in dust form and airborne)

Monaghan Town Council have contacted all residents of Mullaghmatt to advise them of the situation. Staff have also met the residents association and it has been agreed that residents with concerns or queries should bring their query to the residents association who will collate these and forward same to Monaghan Town Council for answering.

Monaghan Town Council in conjunction with OHSS, will formulate a management plan for the maintenance of our housing stock going forward.

It should be noted that because of the extremely low levels of risk involved with this material and due to the fact that it is ubiquitous throughout the housing stock in the country, this type of material has been taken off the list of hazardous substances in the UK.

- © Would the Council consider repairs to a section of footpath at Tirkeenan which is currently in very poor condition?

This section of footpath has been inspected and will be included in the maintenance programme. However our 2009 budget has been spent and work will not be carried out here until 2010.

- (d) Can the Council ensure that re-surfacing of the road from Coolshannagh out to Sams Bridge is completed as soon as possible and well in advance of the festive shopping period in the town?

The resurfacing of this section of road has been scheduled for the last week of October (week commencing 26th)

12. Resolutions from other Local Authorities:

- (b) "I call on this Council to write to the Minister for Education and Science expressing opposition to the proposals relating to the re-introduction of third level tuition fees. I strongly urge that each and every member of South Tipperary County Council will fully support the Student Support Bill"

South Tipperary County Council

It was agreed to mark the above Resolution read.

- © "That Clonmel Bourough Council calls on the Government and Minister for Social and Family Affairs to reverse the decision not to pay the Christmas bonus to Social Welfare recipients".

Clonmel Borough Council

The Members supported the above Resolution

13. Conference

- (a) Local Authority Members Association Annual Winter Seminar 2009 – “Service Provision in Local Government – The New Reality” – Carlton Castletroy Park Hotel, Limerick – 6th and 7th November 2009 – (approx. cost €750)

Cllr David Maxwell proposed and Cllr Robbie Gallagher seconded that the Town Council send a delegate to the above Conference even though it was agreed at the July Monthly Meeting that no more attendances are to take place to Conferences in 2009 except for the AMAI Conference.

Following a discussion a vote was taken which resulted as follows:-

In favour of attending the above Conference – Gallagher, Treanor, Maxwell, Hagan (4)

Against attending the above Conference – Conlon, Uí Mhurchadha, Sherry, McGeown (4)

Cllr Mary Carroll abstained from voting.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr Seán Conlon used his casting vote which resulted as follows:-

In favour of attending the Conference (4)

Against attending the Conference (5)

The Cathaoirleach declared the Motion defeated.

The Members were circulated with a Report complying with Section 142(5)(f) of the Local Government Act 2001 in relation to the following Conferences:-

(a) John Hewitt Summer School, Armagh – attended by Cllr. David Maxwell

(b) AMAI Conference, Killarney – attended by Cllr. David Maxwell

© AMAI Annual Conference, Killarney – attended by Cllr. Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha

14. Any Other Business

The Members expressed regret that the Monaghan Post newspaper had closed its operations in the Monaghan Town area.

15. Sympathy/Congratulations

A vote of congratulations was extended to the following :

- Darren Doherty, Emyvale on winning a double World Handball title in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A
- Pdraig Mc Kenna, Emyvale on winning a World Handball title in the 40 x 20 U-15 boys singles in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A
- Monaghan Harps GFC on winning the McGuigan Builders Intermediate Football Final on Sunday last
- Terry McElvaney, Monaghan on his participation in the World Handball Competition in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A.
- Aaron McCarey, Monaghan United Football Club on his recent signing with English Premiership Soccer side Wolverhampton Wanderers
- David Carroll, Monaghan on being recently elected as National Chairperson for the Young Greens organisation.
- McKennas Pub, Dublin Street on winning the title “Best Pub in Ulster”

A vote of sympathy was extended to:

- The family of the late Francis Elliott, Mullaghmat on his recent death.
- The Finnan family, Tully on the recent death of Jim Finnan

Mr. Elliott and Mr. Finnan were former members of staff of Monaghan Town Council.

This Concluded the Business of the Meeting.

Dated this the 16th day of November 2009

Cathaoirleach