

COMHAIRLE BAILE MHUINEACHÁIN
MONAGHAN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Monday 16th September 2013 at 5.00p.m.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 Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha.

In Attendance: David Fallon, County Manager, Dermot Deeney, Town Engineer, Marie Deighan, Town Clerk and Sinead Tibby-Tracey, Clerical Officer.

At the outset the Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Paul McGeown welcomed Cllr. Robbie Gallagher to the Council Chamber following his recent absence.

1. Confirmation of July Monthly Meeting held on 15th July 2013

On the proposal of Cllr. Thomas Hagan seconded by Cllr Seán Conlon it was agreed to adopt the Minutes of the July Monthly Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Monday 15th July 2013.

2. Matters arising from the Minutes

Cllr Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha was informed by the Town Engineer that it would cost approximately €2,500 (excluding undergrounding of cables) to replace the two public lighting in Belgian Square housing estate with two lanterns.

It was noted by the Members that the Water Services Section of Monaghan County Council will not be carrying out a survey of all manholes in Monaghan Town as it would be an extremely time consuming exercise that would have health and safety implications especially on heavily trafficked roads. The Members were asked to submit locations to the Town Engineer where manholes are causing a particular problem and Water Services will assess them.

David Fallon, County Manager stated that Irish Water will be taking over all responsibility for water and sewerage from January 2014 and that Local Authorities will be carrying out their duties in this area under a service level agreement with Irish Water. Cllr. Seán Conlon stated that Local Authorities could have very little influence in the future in this regard and asked for an update at the next Town Council Meeting on the level of advancement on all Water and Sewerage Schemes and the plans in place to progress the schemes.

The Members welcomed the erection of dog fouling signs around the town and appealed to all dog owners to ensure fouling of public places by their animals be cleaned up immediately. It was also noted there is no response yet from Coillte in relation to a request from the Council to provide dog litter bins throughout Rossmore Park.

The Members welcomed the works recently carried out at Devin Reilly Terrace.

Cllr. Donal Sherry enquired if any more consideration had been given to the provision of bus parking in the Lower Courthouse Car Park. It was noted that the Planning Sub-Committee had recommended that there is no necessity at present for bus parking in this area. Cllr. Conlon referred to a recent incident where a member of the Garda Síochána issued a traffic fine to a bus which was picking up people from the front of a town centre hotel.

Cllr. Seán Conlon congratulated all involved on the success of the provision of allotments in the Killygoan area and stated that this should be used as an example to transform other areas of waste/derelict land. Cllr. Conlon requested a map to be prepared for the next Town Council Meeting identifying parcels of land that might be transformed into more pleasant looking areas.

Dermot Deeney, Town Engineer stated that a plan has been prepared by the Town Council's Horticulturist to address the complaint regarding the overgrown hedges/road verges opposite the new Education Campus at Knockaconny. The proposal has been referred to the Area Engineer in charge of the area.

3. Manager's Orders

The Members noted Manager's Orders numbered 111/13 – 135/13 and welcomed the appointment of a consultant to carry out works in relation to the Famine Memorial for the town.

4. Correspondence

The Members noted the following correspondence:-

- Letter dated 22nd July 2013 from the Department of Social Protection in relation to Rent Supplement limits in Co. Monaghan. Cllr. Robbie Gallagher expressed disappointment with the contents of the letter which stated that the maximum rent supplement limit for a couple or one parent family with 3 children in Co. Monaghan is €450 per month. It was noted that the rent supplement limit does not adequately reflect the rents been charged in the county and that the reduction in rent allowance limits is pushing some families out onto the street and there is no Local Authority housing available to them. On the proposal of Cllr. Robbie Gallagher seconded by Cllr Donal Sherry it was agreed to call upon the Department of Social Protection to revise the Monaghan rent allowance limits figure to reflect what the market reality is.
- Letter dated 25th July 2013 from the Department of Social Protection regarding Jobseeker's payments to retained/part-time fire-fighters. The Members noted that there is now a satisfactory outcome to this matter.

- Letter dated 22nd August 2013 from the Department of Finance in relation to NAMA and outstanding works to be carried out to the Knockroe Glen Housing Estate.
- Acknowledgement letter dated 16th July 2013 from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government in relation to the EU Directive Regulation 56.
- Acknowledgement letter dated 15th July 2013 from the Department of Finance in relation to a Motion requesting the Minister to rescind his decision to force the Post Office to cut their interest rates to small savers at the behest of the main banks and building societies. Cllr. Seamus Treanor expressed disappointment with the contents of this letter.
- Letter dated 26th July 2013 from Chambers Ireland stating that Monaghan Town Council has been shortlisted in the 10th Annual Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards for the project Garage Theatre. It was agreed that the Cathaoirleach, Cllr Paul McGeown and the Town Clerk, Marie Deighan attend the presentation of awards on Wednesday 13th November 2013 in the Burlington Hotel, Dublin. It was agreed to congratulate the Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board on the award.
- Letter dated 19th March 2013 from Stephen Crotty and Martin Rushe in relation to the naming of the Ulster Canal Greenway. It was agreed to refer this correspondence to the Planning Sub-Committee of the Town Council.
- Various letters of support in relation to a Notice of Motion adopted by the Members at the February 2013 Monthly Meeting regarding the regulation of the quantity, quality and labeling of packaging materials.
- Letter dated 9th September 2013 from Monaghan County Council in relation to the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018.
- Copy of the Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) Survey carried out on 28th March 2013 on Monaghan Town which gave a disappointing result. It was noted that two out of the three areas which let the town down are in private ownership.
- National Tidy Towns Competition 2013 Adjudication Report on Monaghan town. The Members congratulated the Tidy Towns Committee, Town Council staff and Gardener and all of the voluntary workers who contributed to the high marks achieved (+8 on 2012) in this years National Tidy Towns results. The Members also congratulated the Tidy Towns Committee on the success of the Tidy Towns Awards held in the Westenra Arms Hotel on the 11th September. On the proposal of Cllr Seán Conlon seconded by Cllr David Maxwell it was agreed to meet with a few representatives from the Tidy Towns Committee on a quarterly basis in order to provide as much support as possible to the Committee. The Tidy Towns Committee, Town Council Staff and Gardener were all complimented on the great work they carry out on a daily basis.
- Email dated 15th August 2013 from the GOAL charity.
- Email dated 20th August 2013 from Dr. Matthew Potter, Historian in relation to the 400th Anniversary of Monaghan's first Charter.
- Letter dated 24th July 2013 in relation to the Civic Reception held to honour the victorious Monaghan GAA teams. This matter was dealt with in-committee.

- Letter dated 30th August 2013 from Seán MacCionna, Rúnái, Coiste Chontae Mhuineacháin thanking Monaghan County Council for the Civic receptions afforded to the Monaghan Senior and Minor football teams in the towns in the county.
- Letter of reply dated 3rd September 2013 from the County Manager to Seán MacCionna, Rúnái, Coiste Chontae Mhuineacháin in relation to the Civic Receptions for the victorious Senior and Minor Football Teams.
- Email dated 26th July 2013 requesting a civic reception for Tommy Bowe, Rugby player.
- Letter and details of costs associated with the running of the Halloween event in Monaghan Town. It was agreed to contribute €5,500 to Foróige in relation to the event.
- Letter of thanks from the Monaghan Town Country Music Festival Committee in relation to the festival which took place in the town in July 2013.
- Letter from the Treasurer of Monaghan Cancer Treatment Support thanking the Members for their contribution of €20 to the organisation.
- Letter dated 16th September 2013 from the Monaghan Town Country Music Festival Committee setting out details of their income and expenditure in relation to the festival. It was noted that €20,000 will be donated to various local charities. The Members and the County Manager congratulated the organizing Committee on a fabulous weekend for the town, the Civil Defence volunteers and the Gardaí who helped out at the Festival. The Members also stated that everyone enjoyed the festival which has put “Monaghan on the Map”.

5. Planning Applications

The Members noted Planning Applications numbered M.T. 13/17 – M.T. 13/20.

6. Business submitted by An Cathaoirleach

No business was submitted by An Cathaoirleach.

7. Consideration of Reports of Committees:-

The Members noted Minutes of a Planning Sub-Committee meeting held on Thursday 25th July 2013. On the proposal of Cllr. Mary Carroll seconded by Cllr Thomas Hagan it was agreed to proceed with the provision of Parent and Baby parking in Glaslough Street Car Park (2), Lower Courthouse Car Park (2) and Upper Courthouse Car Park (2).

A discussion took place regarding a traffic fine which was issued to a vehicle in the Tirkeenan area of the town.

On the proposal of Cllr David Maxwell seconded by Cllr Mary Carroll it was agreed to proceed on a trial basis (six months) with the recommendation to allow businesses to advertise their business by paying a refundable deposit of €200 plus €20 per sign/banner. It was noted that the deposit will be refunded if the business complies with the conditions set out in S.I. 454 of 2011.

8. Roads/Housing

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

- Excessive cut grass lying on green in Highfield Close
- Fencing required to top of concrete retaining wall in Ard Glas
- Three sided sign at Convent Car Park needs cleaning
- Drifts of leaves blowing down Park Street
- Dog Fouling sign required at the Infant School
- Convent wall needs urgent attention (referred to Area Engineer)
- Dip in road – crossing at Heaton's
- Handrail hit by car on the Pound Hill
- Weeds along footpath and road edges throughout the town need attention.
- Two Eircom covers loose on Dublin Road
- Fence at Belgium Park needs painting
- Traffic island bollard missing at entrance to Killygoan
- Pedestrian traffic light on the North Road is activating by itself
- Yellow Junction box required at entrance to Car Park in the Diamond
- Clean-up of Ulster Canal Route (Mall Road area) – to be referred to Budget Sub-Committee.

Cllr. Thomas Hagan referred to the danger of skateboarding in the Diamond and called for “No Skateboarding” signs to be erected.

Cllr. Donal Sherry referred to residential properties that are being allowed to fall into disrepair/neglect. Cllr. Thomas Hagan referred to derelict buildings in Park Street and it was agreed that this matter could be discussed further with the Monaghan Tidy Towns Committee.

9. Telecommunication Mast at Killygoan

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

10. Mullaghmatt Remedial Works Scheme

The Members noted a report from the Engineer on the update on the Mullaghmatt Remedial Works Scheme, Phase 3 which stated that a Letter of Intent was issued to the preferred Tenderer on 15th August 2013. The Letter of Intent notes that subject to there not been a legal challenge to the outcome of the procurement process that the Council will issue a Letter of Acceptance to the preferred Contractor subsequent to receipt by the Council from the preferred contractor the evidence of insurances and bond as outlined in the Contract. It was also noted that the Housing Agency, on behalf of the Council are in regular contact with the preferred Contractor and it is hoped that all documentation required in the Letter of Intent will be provided shortly.

Cllr. Robbie Gallagher enquired if the installation of parking bollards would prevent people from parking their cars on the footpaths in the Mullaghmart estate. Cllr. Gallagher also called for the introduction of signs to the estate which would show the location of dwellings within the estate and which would assist emergency services find the location of particular houses.

11. Report on Mixed Use Development at Rooskey

Cllr. Seamus Treanor referred to a photograph which appeared in a recent edition of the local newspaper showing Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin and Cllr. Seán Conlon with Tommy Clarke, Contractor on the site of the former Mixed Use Development (Lower Courthouse Car Park). Cllr. Treanor branded this a publicity stunt and accused both Sinn Féin representatives of being complicit in the squandering of public money by their support for the Mixed Use Development and the proposal to construct new County Council Offices. Cllr. Conlon defended the actions of himself and Deputy Ó' Caoláin and stated that they have been engaging with the Contractor on an ongoing basis in order to bring resolution to the project.

12. Report on Vacant Apartments at Drumbear

The Town Engineer reported that one of the apartments at Drumbear has now been renovated and that acoustic testing has been carried out. The Council are awaiting the results of the test.

13. Consideration of Sale of Fee Simple Interest.

On the proposal of Cllr David Maxwell seconded by Cllr Donal Sherry it was agreed to approve of the Sale of Fee Simple Interest on No. 13 Mall Road, Monaghan in accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and as per notice dated 30th August 2013.

14. Consideration of North East Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2014-2017

The Members noted the North East Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2014-2017 for Louth, Monaghan and Cavan. This plan was prepared by Louth County Council in consultation with the Regional Homeless Consultative Forum.

15. Consideration of Monaghan Town Council Street Collection/Begging Bye-Law 2013

The Members noted the Monaghan Town Council Street Collection/Begging Bye-Law 2013 and noted that there were no objections/submissions received during the consultation period. On the proposal of Cllr David Maxwell seconded by Cllr Donal Sherry it was agreed to approve of the Monaghan Town Council Street Collection/Begging Bye-Law 2013. It was noted that signage will be erected in the near future.

16. Consideration of Draft Section 85 Agreement under the Local Government Act 2001

On the proposal of Cllr Mary Carroll seconded by Cllr Thomas Hagan it was agreed to approve of the Draft Section 85 Agreement under the Local Government Act 2001 between Monaghan Town Council and Monaghan County Council regarding the Ulster Canal Greenway Scheme. It was noted that the Oral Hearing into the objections received against the confirmation of the Order was held on the 10th September 2013.

17. Notices of Motion:-

- (a) “That this Council calls on Minister for Finance, Michael Noonan TD to scrap the vat charged (vat rate 23%) on fees charged by the Personal Insolvency Practitioner”.

Cllr. Gallagher

On the proposal of Cllr Robbie Gallagher seconded by Cllr Seán Conlon it was agreed to adopt the above Notice of Motion. Cllr. Gallagher stated that there is now new clarity on the matter but that there are other developments which have arisen which need to be addressed, i.e. what will happen to individuals with no assets, what are unemployed people on social welfare meant to do if they find themselves in difficulty, who can avail of the scheme, what are the fees for availing of the service and are there any conditions attached to the scheme?

- (b) “Following the recent publication of the Tidy Towns Survey and Results where it is stated about Monaghan town, “The Courthouse did not have any external sign indicating the function of this building and had to ask a passer-by to confirm that it was indeed the Courthouse”, that this Council once again requests of the Court Services that appropriate signage, including the harp symbol, are installed on the Courthouse building”.

Cllrs. Conlon, Uí Mhurchadha, 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 and to refer the matter to the Courts Service and to Joe Smith, County Registrar. It was also agreed to include a copy of the Tidy Towns Report with the correspondence.

18. Ceist/Question

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

- (a) In an effort to enhance the appearance and tidiness of the town footpaths, will Executive implement a schedule for the “gum buster”?
The gum buster machine is scheduled to be in operation in October when resources become available at the end of the grass cutting season.

19. Resolutions from Other Local Authorities:-

- (a) “As the Government is having a Referendum on the Seanad that the Council now request the Government to include the abolition of Town Councils and abortion amendments to give the people a vote on these issues and we ask all other Councils to support same”.

Letterkenny Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (b) “Bandon Town Council calls upon the Taoiseach, Minister for the Environment and Oireachtas Members to immediately amend the legislation with regards to rates/rate valuations:- The process involved with regards to valuation needs to be amended to take into account the ability to pay rather than the physical building and the location of the business. Also the current practice of arrears of rates being passed onto a new business owner who has taken over an existing business unit needs to be amended as this affects economic growth”.

Bandon Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- © “That Carrickmacross Town Council notes that a significant piece of immigration reform legislation is currently due to come before the US House of Representatives. This has the potential to positively transform the situation for the estimated 50,000-70,000 undocumented Irish people in the United States. That we hereby agree to write to Congressman John Boehner, Speaker in the US House of Representatives commending this legislation and encouraging its approval by Congress. That we circulate a copy of this Motion to each local authority on the island of Ireland and to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr. Eamon Gilmore”.

Carrickmacross Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (d) “In light of the Government’s improved financial situation that this Council calls on the Minister for Social Protection to increase all Old Age Pensions to match the inflation rate over the last three years”.

Monaghan County Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (e) “That this Council calls on the Minister for the Environment to use the opportunity of the Referendum on the future of the Senate to consult the relevant people on the abolishment of the Town Council”.

Ballina Town Council

It was agreed to mark the above Resolution read.

- (f) “That this Council calls on the Government to give official recognition status to Irish sign language which would improve the lives and well being of our deaf and hard of hearing citizens”.

Dundalk Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (g) “Leixlip Town Council writes to the Minister for Social Protection and the Minister for Education expressing our disgust and rejects the proposed cuts to special education needs in our schools which target some of the most vulnerable in society”.

Leixlip Town Council

It was agreed to mark the above Resolution read.

- (h) “That Clones Town Council calls on the Minister for Health, Dr. James Reilly, TD to confirm that discretionary medical cards will not be withdrawn from cancer patients who are not considered terminally ill. I would ask that the Minister make a clear unambiguous statement on this matter. Is the criteria being changed or is it not? Are the rules on the discretion by which medical cards will be issued being changed or are they not? The fact that we are getting mixed messages is causing cancer patients further distress. In recent days I have listened to the genuine and extreme distress of people suffering from cancer and this situation needs to be clarified immediately so that patients can concentrate on getting better and not have to worry about how they are going to afford treatment”.

Clones Town Council

It was agreed to mark the above Resolution read.

- (i) “That this Council calls on the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government in the context of his proposed reform of Local Government, to devolve to Cashel and Tipperary Municipal District Council (MDC), the representation, powers and resources to enable it to function effectively as a proper local council and representative body for the Municipal District. In particular, to ensure that the elected representatives in this MDC have control over the expenditure of property tax, commercial rates and other income, raised in this area to ensure they are spent on local public services in this area”.

Tipperary Town Council

It was agreed to mark the above Resolution read.

- (j) “That Macroom Town Council calls on Minister Phil Hogan to write to all Town Councils explaining the breakdown of exact savings that are to be made by the proposed abolishment of Town Councils”.

Macroom Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (k) “That Kilkee Town Council calls on Minister of State Jan O’ Sullivan to give special consideration to the social houses that remain under the control of former Town Commissioners when considering applicants under the “Energy Efficiency Investment”.

Kilkee Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

20. Conferences

- (a) 2013 Biennial National Social Housing Conference – “Growth, Renewal and Innovation: A transforming agenda for Social Housing” – Whites Hotel, Wexford – 18th – 19th September 2013 – (approx. cost €850).

- (b) Rattoo Heritage Society Annual Environmental, Cultural and Heritage Conference and Training Seminar – Golf Hotel, Ballybunion, Kerry – 18th – 21st September 2013 – (approx. cost €900)
- (c) Ace Training – “Industrial and Reformatory Schools Ireland”- Park Hotel, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary - 20th – 22nd September 2013 – (approx. cost €700)
- (d) TGR Seminars – “Councillors Seminar and Professional Development Day – Poverty in Ireland today – overview of contemporary facts and figures” – Bunratty Castle Hotel, Co. Clare – 27th – 28th September 2013 – (approx. cost €60)
- (e) Celtic Conferences – “The Life and Times of Michael Collins – Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery, Cork – 27th – 29th September 2013 – (approx. cost €80)
- (f) Greystones Town Council/Ards Borough Council/La Touche Legacy Committee 2013 Autumn Seminar (25th and final year) – “Local Government – A New Dawn”- Charlesland Golf and Country Club Hotel, Greystones, Wicklow – 27th – 29th September 2013 – (approx. cost €600)
- (g) Ace Training – “New Tendering Requirements for Local Authorities” – Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford – 4th – 6th October 2013 – (approx. cost €30)
- (h) Irish Planning Institute Autumn Planning Conference – “Planning to Harness Ireland’s Energy Opportunity” – Gibson Hotel, Dublin – 11th October 2013 – (approx. cost €350)
- (i) LAMA Autumn Seminar 2013 – The Falls Hotel, Ennistymon, Clare – 11th – 12th October 2013 – (approx cost €700)
On the proposal of Cllr Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha seconded by Cllr Paul McGeown it was agreed that Cllr Seán Conlon attend the LAMA Conference.
- (j) Ace Training – “Sport and Community Planning” – Park Hotel, Clonmel, Tipperary - 11th – 13th October 2013 – (approx. cost €700)
- (k) Celtic Conferences – “Design Guidelines for the Planning and Development of Rural Housing” – Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery, Cork – 25th – 27th October 2013 – (approx. cost €80)

21. Any Other Business

Cllr Mary Carroll brought to the Councils attention that there is a misprint in the Monaghan Town Heritage Trail which refers to the victims of the 1973 Monaghan bombings instead of the 1974 Monaghan bombings. The County Manager undertook to have the error amended.

Cllr Thomas Hagan called on the public to attend the exhibition currently on view in the Market House, Monaghan on the 9/11. Cllr Seán Conlon called for the erection of a banner at the Market House advertising the Exhibition.

22. Sympathy/Congratulations

A vote of sympathy was extended to the following:-

- The family of the late Tim O’ Hanrahan, 6 Killyconnigan, Monaghan.

A vote of congratulations was extended to the following:-

- Monaghan United Ladies Soccer team and their Manager John Crudden who were victorious in the Senior League Cup Competition.
- Somhairle MacConghail, Arts Officer, Monaghan County Council on the success of the Monaghan Harvest Time Blues Festival.
- The Monaghan Minor and Senior Football teams who won the Ulster Championships in July.

The Members wished the Monaghan Ladies Football team every success in their game against Cork in the All-Ireland Football Final on the 29th September 2013

The Members stated that they read with disappointment that David Fallon, County Manager is to retire on 1st December 2013. The Members expressed good wishes to the County Manager on his retirement.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

Dated this the 21st day of October 2013

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach