

COMHAIRLE BAILE MHUINEACHÁIN
MONAGHAN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Monday 18th
November 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 and Seamus Treanor
- In Attendance:** Paul Clifford, Deputy County Manager, Dermot Deeney, Town Engineer, Marie Deighan, Town Clerk and Eilish Clarke, Staff Officer.

An apology for inability to attend was received from Cllr Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha.

At the outset the Members welcomed Paul Clifford, Deputy County Manager to his first meeting of Monaghan Town Council.

1. Confirmation of October Monthly Meeting held on 21st October 2013.

On the proposal of Cllr. Robbie Gallagher seconded by Cllr Thomas Hagan it was agreed to adopt the Minutes of the October Monthly Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Monday 21st October 2013.

2. Matters arising from the Minutes

It was noted that a number of Local Authorities have been in contact with the Council seeking details of the Bye-Law introduced to prohibit the holding of Charitable collections in Upper Mill Street, Monaghan. Cllr David Maxwell stated that Monaghan Town Council are the first Local Authority in the Country to introduce such a bye-law.

The Members complimented the efforts of the young people, their parents, the Gardaí and the Town Council on a peaceful Halloween in Monaghan Town. The Members stated that everyone enjoyed the organized activities and the fireworks display and credit is also given to the Town Council for the financial contribution which they make on an annual basis towards the holding of the Towns festivities.

The outdoor staff of the Town Council were commended on the use of the gum buster throughout the town.

Dermot Deeney, Town Engineer stated that the Area Engineer proposes to examine the traffic situation at Flacks Garage to see if additional signage might be a source of rectifying the problem in the area.

The Town Engineer reported that plans are underway at present for the provision of new play equipment at Killygoan Playpark. Cllr. Seamus Treanor referred to correspondence which he received from a resident in the area in relation to the playpark. It was agreed to refer the matter to the Planning Sub-Committee of the Town Council for their attention.

Cllr. David Maxwell stated that the dangerous condition of a traffic island has been discussed at a recent road area meeting of Monaghan County Council.

The Town Engineer undertook to do road markings at Belgium Park/Coolshannagh.

Dermot Deeney, Town Engineer stated that the owner of a dangerous retaining wall in Ard Glas was not aware that he owned the wall and did not intend to repair it. The Town Engineer undertook to obtain a quotation for the repair of it and to seek legal advice on the matter.

It was noted that the Council are awaiting a quotation for the clean-up of the canal off the Mall Road.

It was noted that correspondence has been received from the Mullaghmatt Cortolvin Family Resource Centre indicating that they propose to consult with the residents of Mullaghmatt to get their views on changing the name of the estate. The Members welcomed this and noted that the Town Engineer has put on hold the ordering of signage for the numbering of the estate.

3. Manager's Orders

The Members note Manager's Orders numbered 157/13 – 171/13.

4. Correspondence

The Members noted the following correspondence:-

- Letter dated 18th October 2013 from the Office of the Minister for Justice and Equality regarding Personal Insolvency Practitioners.
- Email dated 5th November 2013 from Adrian McLaughlin, Private Secretary to the Minister for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People in relation to mental health funding. Cllr. Seán Conlon expressed disappointment with the contents of this correspondence.
- Acknowledgement letter dated 11th November 2013 from the Department of Health concerning the Budget and Mental Health Services.
- Letter dated 21st October 2013 from the Courts Service in relation to a request from the Town Council to have signage erected at the Courthouse and the harp symbol installed on the building.
- Letter dated 1st November 2013 from Brendan Smith TD regarding a proposal by the Government to abolish Town Councils.
- Letter dated 30th October 2013 from Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin TD regarding a proposal by the Government to abolish Town Councils. It was noted that no support has yet been received from the Fine Gael TD's in this matter.

- Letter dated 1st November 2013 from Mary White, Monaghan Pink Ladies in relation to a request to decorate the towns Christmas tree with the support of the Town Council. It was agreed that the Planning Sub-Committee of Monaghan Town Council meet with representatives from the Monaghan Pink Ladies to discuss the matter.
- An Expression of Interest form from the Retail and Promotions Committee in relation to the Christmas Lights Concert on the 1st December 2013.
- Letter received from the Retail and Promotions Committee requesting the temporary closing of roads to facilitate the turning on of the Christmas Lights on Sunday 1st December 2013.
- Letter of thanks from the Monaghan Neighbourhood Youth Project in relation to the help received by them from the Town Council in relation to the Halloween Festivities.
- Letter dated 13th November 2013 from the Department of Health in relation to the Budget and Mental Health Services.
- Letter dated 18th November 2013 from the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Belgium Square Centenary Association. It was agreed to refer this matter to the Budget Sub-Committee of Monaghan Town Council.
- Letter from the Retail and Promotions Committee in relation to the Monaghan Town Christmas Lights Concert which is taking place on Sunday 1st December 2013. The letter requests a draw-down of €5,820 to facilitate the committee in their implementation plan for the festival. On the proposal of Cllr Mary Carroll seconded by Cllr Seán Conlon it was agreed to contribute €5,820 towards the costs involved. The Cathaoirleach informed the Members that there is an excellent line-up of local talent participating in this years event. It was noted that the Clontibret O’ Neill Pipe Band will be performing in the town on Saturday 7th December 2013.
- An expression of interest form from Colin Walker in relation to the provision of Children’s Entertainment in the town on 1st December 2013 in relation to the turning on of the Christmas lights.
- An invitation to the Official Opening of Section One of the Ulster Canal Greenway on Thursday 28th November 2013 at 10.30am.

5. Planning Applications

The Members noted Planning Applications numbered M.T. 13/22 – M.T. 13/23.

6. Business submitted by An Cathaoirleach

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr Paul McGeown stated that the Town Clerk and himself attended the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards 2013 in Dublin on Wednesday 13th November 2013 and that Monaghan Town Council were commended under the “Sustaining the Arts” Category of the Competition for the Garage Theatre, Monaghan.

7. Consideration of Reports of Committees:-

The Members noted the Minutes of the Budget Sub-Committee Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Tuesday 22nd October 2013.

The Members noted the Minutes of the Planning Sub-Committee Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Tuesday 22nd October 2013.

The Members noted the Minutes of the Budget Sub-Committee Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Thursday 7th November 2013.

8. Roads/Housing

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

- Railing on Pound Hill to be repaired
- Lights need repair – Dunnes Stores area
- Lighting required at Devin Reilly Terrace.

Cllr Donal Sherry called for improved pedestrian access to Dublin Street from the new Lower Courthouse Car Park.

The Tidy Towns Committee were complimented on the recent planting of flower bulbs throughout the town.

It was noted that telephone directories have been delivered to houses where no-one is living at present. It was agreed to write to the Company asking them to ensure that no deliveries take place to residences that are currently unoccupied.

The Members referred to a letter received recently from Joan Burton TD, Minister for Social and Family Affairs which stated that the maximum rent limit for a couple or one parent family with three children in County Monaghan is €450 per month. The Members referred to a recent report from the property website Daft.ie which mentioned that the average advertised rent is now €547 and that rents are rising in Counties Monaghan and Cavan. It was agreed to refer the report to Minister Burton for her attention.

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 the following report in relation to the Mullaghmatt Remedial Works Scheme:-

Monaghan Town Council has been advised that the process of obtaining the necessary construction bond is as follows:

1. Payment is made by the preferred tenderer to the insurance company issuing the bond and this payment clears the preferred tenderers account.
2. Bond documents are issued by the insurance company for the preferred tenderers signature.
3. Bond documents are returned to the insurance company for their completion
4. Bond issued to Monaghan Town Council.

The following is a chronology of recent correspondence:

10th October 2013 - Monaghan Town Council received confirmation from the insurance company issuing the bond to the preferred tenderer that “subject to payment of fee and completion of usual security requirements” by the preferred tenderer; the insurance company would then be in a position to provide a performance bond for the project in favour of Monaghan Town Council.

24th October 2013 - the preferred tenderer confirmed to Monaghan Town Council that he had paid the necessary premium to the insurance company from which he is obtaining the bond.

7th November 2013 - the preferred tenderer’s insurance broker confirmed that the bond documentation had been issued to them by the insurance company in order to arrange for the preferred tenderer to sign and seal.

15th November 2013 - the preferred tenderer confirmed to Monaghan Town Council that he had signed/sealed the bond documents on 14th November 2013 and that this documentation was now been returned to the insurance company in order for them to complete and issue the required bond.

It is hoped that the bond will be available shortly.
This will allow the Council to issue the Letter of Acceptance.

The Members expressed their frustration at the slow progress of the scheme. On the proposal of Cllr. Robbie Gallagher seconded by Cllr. Seamus Treanor it was agreed to write to the Department to highlight the issue of the delay in obtaining a Bond for the said project.

11. Report of Mixed Use Development at Rooskey

It was noted that the Town Council are awaiting electrical certificates before the Council can take possession of the newly refurbished Lower Courthouse Car Park. It was noted that the Town Council will continue the lease of the Temporary Car Park at Mullaghmonaghan on a month by month basis.

12. Report on Vacant Apartments at Drumbear

Dermot Deeney, Town Engineer stated that he is still awaiting the results from the acoustic testing carried out in one of the vacant apartments at Drumbear. The Town Engineer was requested to examine the possibility of insulating the exterior of all timber frame dwellings in the Local Authority's housing stock.

13. Consideration of Publication of Proposed Amendments to Parking Control (Pay Parking) Bye-Laws and Car Parks Bye-Laws

The Members noted the following documentation:-

- Drawing number PP007
- Schedule showing the 2013 proposed alterations to the Pay Parking Bye-Laws
- Monaghan Town Council Parking Control (Pay-Parking) Draft Bye-Laws 2013
- Monaghan Town Council Car Parks Draft Bye-Laws 2013 (amended)

The Members agreed that there is a need to provide long term car parking spaces in the Lower Courthouse Car Park. It was noted that the Lower Courthouse Car Park will consist of 105 short term spaces, 11 disabled bays, 2 Parent and Baby Parking and 121 long term parking.

On the proposal of Cllr Seán Conlon seconded by Cllr David Maxwell it was agreed to publish the proposed Amendments to the Parking Control (Pay Parking) Bye-Laws and the Car Parks Bye-Laws.

14. Notices of Motion:-

- (a) "That this Council calls on the Government to immediately reinstate the Telephone allowance to OAP's in the interest of fairness and respect".

Cllr. Robbie Gallagher

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

- (b) "That this Council write to Dublin North East HSE regarding ambulance services in the North Monaghan area as it appears that there are very serious delays in the availability of ambulances".

Cllr. Seamus Treanor

On the proposal of Cllr Seamus Treanor seconded by Cllr Donal Sherry it was agreed to adopt the above Notice of Motion.

15. Ceisteanna/Questions

Cllr. Treanor asked:-

- (a) What is the current position regarding the redevelopment of Mullaghmat Housing Estate?

Monaghan Town Council has been advised that the process of obtaining the necessary construction bond is as follows:

1. Payment is made by the preferred tenderer to the insurance company issuing the bond and this payment clears the preferred tenderers account.
2. Bond documents are issued by the insurance company for the preferred tenderers signature.
3. Bond documents are returned to the insurance company for their completion.
4. Bond issued to Monaghan Town Council.

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24th October 2013 - the preferred tenderer confirmed to Monaghan Town Council that he had paid the necessary premium to the insurance company from which he is obtaining the bond.

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15th November 2013 - the preferred tender confirmed to Monaghan Town Council that he had signed/sealed the bond documents on 14th November 2013 and that this documentation was now been, returned to the insurance company in order for them to complete and issue the required bond.

It is hoped that the bond will be available shortly.

This will allow the Council to issue the Letter of Acceptance.

Cllr. Gallagher asked:-

- (b) Can the Town Council contact the OPW and ask them to give some attention to the appearance of their premises (Old Customs Facility) at Coolshannagh?

A letter can be sent to the OPW to ask them to give some attention to the appearance of their premises (Old Customs Facility) at Coolshannagh.

- © What is the update on the “Greenway” project and what is the likely date of completion?
Greenway project will be substantially completed at the beginning of December however the CPO (which has just been approved) will be completed in the early part of 2014.

- (d) Will there be a new Town Manager appointed and when can we expect same to be confirmed?

The New County Manager, Mr. Eugene Cummins is due to take up duty on the 6th January 2014. The role of Monaghan Town Manager is currently being carried out by Paul Clifford, Deputy County Manager pending the arrival of the new County Manager.

Cllr. Gallagher called for the appointment of a local government official with responsibility for the development of Monaghan town to be put in place following the reform of local authorities next year.

16. Resolutions from Other Local Authorities

- (a) “That Buncrana Town Council write to An Taoiseach, Mr. Enda Kenny and Mr. Phil Hogan, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government requesting that the decision to abolish Town Councils should be re-considered in light of the outcome of the recent referendum on the abolition of Seanad Eireann”.

Buncrana Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (b) “This Town Council calls on the Minister for the Environment when introducing legislation for the new Municipal District Councils to ensure that all funds raised in a particular area are retained in that area”.

Ballina Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (c) “That this Council would request An Taoiseach to hold a national referendum before Christmas on the proposed abolition of Town Councils”.

Kilrush Town Council

It was agreed to mark the above Resolution read.

- (d) “That Ennis Town Council request the Minister for Education to provide additional posts for Special Needs Assistants and increased Resource Teaching Hours in Primary and Post Primary Schools for children with special needs throughout Ennis and Clare”.

Ennis Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (e) “That Carrick on Suir Town Council would write to the Minister for Justice requesting recognition of Irish Sign Language as an official language of this state and make it the third official language of the Republic of Ireland thus ensuring inclusion of deaf people in Irish Society”.

Carrick on Suir Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (f) “That this Council express the Council’s extreme annoyance to the Minister’s response in particular to the statement, “It would not be possible to provide an itemized list setting out the estimated savings under each heading” as it feels that you have misled the public in previous press reports regarding the savings and to-date, have not provided figures to backup your assertions”. The Members noted correspondence received by Carrickmacross Town Council from Minister Hogan.

Carrickmacross Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (g) “Balbriggan Town Council call on the relevant Government Department to reverse the decision to abolish the Bereavement Grant or put in place an alternative for those who would need assistance to bury their dead with some dignity and respect and that such assistance be explained clearly to the public”.

Balbriggan Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (h) “Balbriggan Town Council call on the Minister for the Environment to publicly acknowledge and recognize the hard work of Town Councillors over a century and a half and to credit their hard work in their local areas to bring the foundations laid in securing support for County Councillors and T.D’s and also to recognize that even though being elected by proportional representation as they are for a long number of years Town Commissioners/Councillors received no payment”.

Balbriggan Town Council

It was agreed to mark the above Resolution read.

- (i) “That this Council recommend all schools work on reducing school uniform costs”.

Kinsale Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (j) “That Kinsale Town Council calls on the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government and the Oireachtas to postpone consideration of the Legislation initiated in draft form on October 17th 2013 and to refer the issue of Local Government Reform to the Constitutional Convention or to an Independent or Representative new body so that there can be meaningful Local Government Reform developing powers to the lowest levels of democracy in our community, the same to comply with the spirit and intent of the European Charter for Local Self Government ratified by Ireland on May 14th, 2002”.

Kinsale Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (k) “That this Council recognizes that the trafficking, exploitation and abuse of women and girls is taking place in County Tipperary and throughout the country as a direct result of prostitution. The Council believes human rights abuses can be ended by targeting the demand for prostitution by introducing laws that make it an offence to pay for sex and is calling for such laws. The Council notes the success of similar laws in other European countries”.

Nenagh Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

17. Conferences

- (a) Councillors Conferences – “Budget 2014 for Canvassing” – Louis Fitzgerald Hotel, Clondalkin, Dublin – 22nd - 24th November 2013 – (approx. cost €400)
- (b) Celtic Conferences – “Debt Solutions – The new Personal Insolvency Legislation” – Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery, Cork – 22nd – 24th November 2013 – (approx. cost €880)
- (c) Councillors Conferences – “SIPO Councillors Obligations” – Louis Fitzgerald Hotel, Clondalkin, Dublin – 29th November – 1st December 2013 – (approx. cost €570)
- (d) TGR Seminars – “Contemporary Overview of Immigration in Ireland” – Bunratty Castle Hotel, Clare – 6th – 7th December 2013 – (approx. cost €690).
- (e) Ace Training – “Local Authority Employment-Law, Practice and Procedure” – Park Hotel, Clonmel, Tipperary – 6th – 8th December 2013 (approx. cost €570)
- (f) TGR Seminars – “Putting People First, Update on Local Government Reform to date” – Bunratty Castle Hotel, Co. Clare – 13th – 14th December 2013 – (approx. cost €880)
- (g) Celtic Conferences – “Tourism Technology and Competitive Strategies for 2014” – Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery, Cork – 13th – 15th December 2013 – (approx. Cost €)

No attendance is to take place to the above Conferences.

18. Any Other Business

Cllr Donal Sherry stated that he felt that the public should be informed that Local Elected Representatives have no function when it comes to the awarding of contracts by Local Authorities for construction projects or services. Deputy County Manager, Paul Clifford confirmed that Councillors have no direct role in this area and that as Ireland is a Member of the EU, contracts can be awarded to companies from other European countries.

Cllr. Mary Carroll called on all Members, when attending meetings in the Council Chamber to ensure that their mobile phones are either switched off or put on silent.

19. Sympathy/Congratulations

A vote of sympathy was extended to the following:-

- Superintendent Noel Cunningham, Monaghan Garda Station on the death of his father, Patrick Cunningham, Navan.
- Jenny Blackburn on the death of her brother, William Blackburn, Emyvale.
- Peter O' Reilly, Monaghan Town Council Staff Member on the death of his father, James O' Reilly, Clones
- The Donohue family, Monaghan on the death of Lurana Donohue, Coolshannagh Road.
- The people of the Philippines who have been left homeless and have lost loved ones following Typhoon Haiyan.

A vote of congratulations was extended to the following:-

- Conor McManus and Colin Walsh who received GAA GPA All-Star Awards.
- Cora & Sharon Courtney, Grainne McNally and Caoimhe Mohan who received TG4 Ladies Football All-Star Awards
- Donaghmoynne Ladies on reaching the Ladies All-Ireland Club Senior Football Championship Final.
- Truagh and Emyvale Football Teams on their success to date in the AIB Ulster Club Championship Competitions.
- Darren Hughes on winning the Ulster GAA Writers Association Personality of the Year Award
- Eamon Ward, Ardaghey on his success to date with the Glenswilly Football Team, Co. Donegal in the Ulster Club Championship Competition.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

Dated this the 16th day of December 2013

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach