

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Garage Theatre, Armagh Road, Monaghan, on Monday 15th June, 2020 at 11.00 a.m.

Chair: Cllr S. Coyle, Cathaoirleach

Present: Cllrs. Aughey, Bennett, Campbell, Carthy, Conlon, Connolly (remotely via MS Teams), Gilliland, Keelan, Maxwell, McCooey, McElvaney, McKenna, O’Hanlon, P. Treanor, S. Treanor, R. Truell.

Mr. E. O’Sullivan, Chief Executive, Mr. A. King, Mr. P. Clifford, Ms. P. Monahan, Directors of Services, Mr. C. Flynn, A/Director of Service, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, Ms. M. McGarvey, SSO Corporate Services and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

Apology: Cllr Kerr-Conlon.

Prior to the meeting commencing the members were given a Covid 19 Induction briefing by the Head of Health and Safety Margaret McCusker informing them of measures they should take to avoid contracting the virus and passing it on to someone else.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed everyone to the meeting – the first meeting since the Corona virus broke in March, which was being held in the Garage Theatre in order to comply with Covid 19 social distancing requirements. He requested the formal approval of the elected members to the holding of the Council meeting in the Garage Theatre in order to comply with Government and HSE advice on social distancing arising from the Covid 19 pandemic.

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr Carthy, it was agreed that the June monthly meeting be held in the Garage Theatre in order to comply with Government and HSE advice on social distancing arising from the Covid 19 pandemic.

Former County Manager – Joseph (Joe) Gavin, RIP:

The Cathaoirleach referred to the sad passing of the former County Manager Joseph (Joe) Gavin and extended the sympathy of the Council to his daughters, Catherine, Ann Marie, Aileen and Ciara and their families. Joe had held the position of County Manager of Monaghan County Council from 1977 to 2000. He said that, despite the financial constraints during his term in office, Joe initiated many forward thinking and innovative projects that remain in place today. He acquired the Convent Lands in Carrickmacross that provided for the expansion of that town and developments such as the Civic Offices. He also acquired and developed Lough Muckno in the 1990’s. He bought the old VEC school and developed the County Offices on the Glen Road in 1984, relocated the County Museum to its current home on Hill St., and refurbished the Courthouse following the fire in 1981. His quiet and reserved personality had made him a great friend to Council members and staff and the people of the County.

A number of elected members associated themselves with the Cathaoirleach’s comments and the expression of sympathy as did the Chief Executive on behalf of the Management and staff.

The Cathaoirleach adjourned the meeting for a brief period as a mark of respect to the late Joe and other expressions of sympathy put forward.

1. Confirmation of Minutes

(i) Minutes of Council meeting held on 2nd March, 2020

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr McKenna, it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 2nd March 2020, be confirmed.

2. Correspondence.

The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda for the meeting:

- Letter from the Office of the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Ms. Heather Humphreys, T.D. regarding the installation of Solar PV panels on warehouses.
- Letter from the Office of the Minister of State for Financial Services and Insurance, Mr. Michael, D'Arcy, regarding the availability cost of insurance for childcare providers.
- Email from the Office of the Minister for Justice and Equality, Mr. Charlie Flanagan, T.D. regarding Emyvale Garda Station.
- Email from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Mr Eoghan Murphy, T.D. regarding the introduction of new powers for the SIPO to penalise councillors who are found to be in breach of the ethical framework for local government.
- Letter from the Chairman of the Coach Tourism and Transport Council of Ireland regarding support from Local Government regarding Tourism & Transport.
- Resolution from Sligo County Council regarding LA's to be funded by Government in order to maintain the services to make good the rates shortfall.

Proposals arising out of correspondence:

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr McKenna, it was agreed that we support the document from the Coach Tourism and Transport Council and invite them to a future meeting to outline their issues.

Cllr Maxwell proposed, Cllr McKenna, seconded that the Council writes to the Office of Public Works on state of Emyvale Garda Station

Cllr Connolly proposed an amendment which was seconded by Cllr S. Treanor and accepted by Cllrs Maxwell and McKenna

That in view of the fact that Emyvale is situated on a major border crossing and the fact that there are two huge issues of ongoing concern-namely the Covid 19 (Corona Virus) Pandemic and a likely No Deal Brexit- that we write to the OPW and the Garda Commissioner requesting an update on the rebuilding of Emyvale Garda Station and the likely timescale for same.

The substantive proposal was put to meeting and agreed.

It was further agreed that the letter would be also sent to the Chief Superintendent together with a copy of Council motion from last November and the Minister's response.

On the proposal of Cllr McKenna, seconded by Cllr Carthy, it was agreed that this Council writes to Minister Paschal Donohoe TD requesting that legislation is introduced enforcing penalties on elected representatives who breach Ethics in Public Office criteria.

On the proposal of Cllr O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr McCooey it was agreed that Monaghan County Council request the Minister for Transport to ensure that Bus Operators can claim VAT back on what they spend, the same as their counterparts in Northern Ireland.

3. To consider Part VIII of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Act 2000

The members noted the Chief Executive's report dated 11 March 2020 in relation planning permission for the construction of a footpath connecting the existing footpath at Meadow View Estate to the entrance to the Ballybay Wetlands Centre off the R183 and all associated works at Derrynaloobinagh/Derryvally, Ballybay.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Coyle, it was agreed that the Council approve the granting of permission for for the construction of a footpath connecting the existing footpath at Meadow View Estate to the entrance to the Ballybay Wetlands Centre off the R183 and all associated works at Derrynaloobinagh/Derryvally, Ballybay (Ref 19/8010) to comply with the report from the Chief Executive dated 11 March 2020, in accordance with Part VIII of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations 2001 (as amended).

4. To approve Newspapers in accordance with Part 4 Article 18 (2) of the Planning & Development Regulations 2006

On the proposal of Cllr Carthy seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that the Council approve the following newspapers in accordance with Part 4 Article 18 (2) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2006 –

- Northern Standard
- Anglo Celt
- Dundalk Democrat (Carrickmacross-Castleblayney Municipal District only)
- Irish Independent
- Irish Daily Star
- Irish Times

5. To consider Section 183 Notice relating to the disposal of vacant premises off Main Street, Ballybay

The members noted the report which had been circulated recommending the disposal of a vacant premises off Main Street Ballybay (part of Folio MN25263F) and marked in blue on the accompanying map.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Coyle it was agreed that the Council approve the disposal of a vacant premises off Main Street, Ballybay (part of Folio MN25263F), in accordance with notice dated 11 March 2020 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.

6. To consider extinguishment of public right of way at Rakeeragh/Dromore East, Swann's Cross, Co. Monaghan

The members noted the report which had been circulated recommending the extinguishment of the public right of way at Rakeeragh/Dromore East, Swann's Cross.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllrs Truell and P. Treanor it was agreed that the Council approve the extinguishment of the public right of way at Rakeeragh/Dromore East, Swann's Cross, in accordance with the report dated 12 March 2020 and associated map under Section 73 of the Roads Act 1993.

7. To approve the Draft Monaghan County Council Annual Report for 2019

The members considered the Draft Monaghan County Council Annual Report for 2019 which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting. Mr. C. Flynn, A/Director of Corporate Services noted the queries from the members in relation to the report and undertook to contact each members that raised a query after the meeting.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that the Council adopt the Draft Monaghan County Council Annual Report 2019 as presented.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that the appropriate Council Sections collaborate in forming a communications strategy that will address the lack of consultation, as required under the AI Ireland Pollinator Plan, that engages with community groups and residents associations regarding the issue of radically altered grass cutting schedules.

8. To note the Annual Financial Statement and approve over expenditures and transfers to Capital Account for the financial year 2019

The members noted the Annual Financial Statement for 2019 which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting. Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance responded to queries from the members.

On the proposal of Cllr McElvaney, seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed to note the Draft Annual Financial Statement (AFS 2019) and to approve over-expenditures and transfers to Capital Account, as per schedules submitted to the Members, as follows:

2019	Over Expenditure	Expenditure (Over)/Under	Income Over/(Under)	
		Estimates	Estimates	Net Position
Division		2019	2019	2019
		€	€	€
A	Housing and Building	-205,762	383,408	177,646
B	Roads Transportation & Safety	-4,284,764	4,089,076	-195,688
C	Water Services	-1,994,600	1,828,588	-166,012
E	Environmental Services	-267,095	327,413	60,318
F	Recreation & Amenity	-13,041	88,790	75,749

G	Agri, Educ, Health & Welfare	-18,675	22,441	3,766
H	Miscellaneous Services	-348,916	235,941	-112,975

Transfers to Capital

	Transfer	Budget	
	Amount	Provision	Difference
Machinery Account Surplus	253,666	0	-253,666
Municipal District Allocations	450,000	450,000	0
Loan Repayment Reserve	227,144	227,144	0
Disability Initiatives	10,000	10,000	0
Co. Development Fund	75,000	75,000	0
Local Elections	30,000	30,000	0
Members Gratuity Scheme	100,000	100,000	0
Fire Service Gratuities	50,000	50,000	0
Libraries - Provision for Capital Balances	40,000	40,000	0
Libraries - Energy Grant Repayment	19,835	19,835	0
Clones Sports Project	25,000	25,000	0
Computing - Provision for Capital Balance	100,000	100,000	0
New Offices Provision	100,000	100,000	0
Transfer to Capital	60,000	60,000	0
Industrial and Economic Development	150,000	150,000	0
General Maintenance - Fire station	9,576	9,576	0
Swimming pool non capital charges	11,502	11,502	0
Monaghan Branch Library	10,754	10,754	0
Ballybay Branch Library	1,847	1,847	0
Monaghan Museum	6,550	6,550	0
Ballybay Clones MD Office	1,847	6,659	4,812
Carrickmacross/ Castleblayney MD office	4,173	4,173	0
Offices Building Maintenance	18,877	14,065	-4,812
Landfill Scotch Corner Operation	7,720	7,720	0
Gortakeegan Halt Maintenance	3,164	0	-3,164
Central Stores Overhead Charges	899	0	-899
Regional Lighting Running costs	41,796	0	-41,796
Local Lighting Running cost	88,819	0	-88,819
Fire Station Officers and General	44,477	0	-44,477
Heritage Officer Recoupable	116	0	-116
Urban Roads Regeneration	8,224	0	-8,224
Local Roads General Maintenance	53,551	0	-53,551
Maintenance of Playgrounds	1,087	0	-1,087
Swimming Pool loan charges	30,422	0	-30,422
Peace IV	37,609	0	-37,609

9. Overview of MCC financial position at 31 May 2020

Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance gave the members an overview of the Council's financial position. He explained that taking into account loss of rates income (circa €3.5m) housing rent adjustments (circa €300,000) and pay parking income (circa €450,000) he would anticipate that the Council would see a drop in income of €4.5 - €5 million this year. He had requested each Director to identify what potential savings could be achieved within their Directorate, but he expected that these savings would be limited as there was very little discretionary spend available.

On the proposal of Cllr Treanor, seconded by Cllr McKenna it was agreed (on a once-off basis) that Notice of Motion 20(2) is taken at this time.

Cllr P. Treanor proposed, Cllr McKenna seconded

That in light of the serious financial shortfall facing Monaghan County Council, because of the loss of rates, reduction in rents due to the steep increase in unemployment and reduced income from Council services like paid-parking and planning applications, that this Council seek an urgent meeting with the Taoiseach and the relevant Ministers to seek compensation, so that we can continue to deliver services to the people of the county.

The Chief Executive stated that there is a concerted effort by the CCMA through its Finance Committee and the Heads of Finance, to ensure compensation is secured for losses of income by local authorities due to Covid 19. To date, four acute financial matters papers have been submitted to the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government on behalf of local authorities. He referred to the Business Re-start grant which is available to business ratepayers with a turnover of less than €5m. He encouraged all eligible business in the county to make application for the Re-start grant which ranges from a minimum of €2,000 up to €10,000 and would be of assistance to businesses in getting up and running again.

The Cathaoirleach put Cllr Treanor's proposal to the meeting and it was agreed.

10. To approve the allocation of funding under the Community and Environment Grant Scheme 2020

The members noted the recommendations in relation to the allocation of funding under the Community and Environment Grant Scheme 2020.

On the proposal of Cllr Bennett, seconded by Cllr Carthy, it was agreed that the Council approve the allocation of funding under the Community and Environment Grant Scheme 2020, as per the reports circulated with the Agenda.

11. To approve the allocation of funding under the Arts Partners Grant Scheme 2020

Before any discussion commenced on this item, Cllr Bennett indicated an interest – as Manager of the Garage Theatre – and withdrew from the meeting.

Mr. S. MacConghail, Arts Officer outlined the recommendations for the allocation of funding under the scheme for 2020 and responded to queries from the members.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr McKenna, it was agreed that the Council approve the allocation of funding under the Arts Partners Grant Scheme 2020, as per the report circulated with the Agenda.

When the item was finalised, Cllr Bennett re-joined the meeting.

12. To consider recommendations and minutes from Corporate Policy Group meetings

The members noted the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meetings held on 17th April and 19th May, 2020 which had been circulated.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell proposed, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meetings held on 17th April and 19th May, 2020 and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

13. To approve nomination to the Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC

Mr. C. Flynn, A/Director informed the members that the vacancy on this SPC was advertised in the Northern Standard newspaper, following which two nominations were received from the North Monaghan Tours Group. Following consultation with the two nominees, it was agreed that Mr. Paddy Sherry would be the Group's nominee to the Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC.

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Truell, it was agreed that the Council approve the nomination of Mr. Paddy Sherry, North Monaghan Tours, to the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC.

14. To confirm date for MCC Annual meeting 2020

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr Keelan it was agreed that the Annual meeting of Monaghan County Council be held immediately after the June Council meeting in the Garage Theatre, Monaghan.

15. To receive the Management Report – May 2020:

The members noted the Management Report for the month of May which had been circulated with the agenda.

The Chief Executive and Directors of Services responded to queries from the elected members.

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr O'Hanlon, it was agreed that this Council writes to the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation Heather Humphreys TD as a matter of urgency calling on her office to include Community Centres as one of the eligible sections in relation to the Business Re-Start Fund.

16. Business submitted by the Chief Executive.

There was no business submitted by the Chief Executive.

17. To discuss arrangements for future Council meetings

It was agreed that the July meeting of the Council would be held on Monday 13th July, 2020 in the Garage Theatre, Monaghan.

18. Matters arising out of the minutes of Council meeting held on 2nd March, 2020

There was no discussion on this item.

19. Questions:

Cllr C. Bennett asked:

1. (a) In light of the lifting of Covid 19 restrictions, can Monaghan County Council please give me the number of available houses owned by Monaghan County Council that are not presently rented. I would consider this an essential service and works need to be continued in advancing all houses to be ready for rentals ASAP.

- (b) When will these houses be ready for tenants?

Reply: Monaghan County Council currently have 20 vacant houses throughout the county of which seven have recently been allocated to tenants who will be receiving keys shortly. Works prior to re-letting are continuing for all vacant properties by Monaghan County Council Staff and/or contractors, depending on the type of work required to prepare the properties for allocation to tenants. Six vacant properties require significant works prior to re-letting inclusive of energy efficiency works, plumbing, heating system, electrical rewiring works and carpentry works and will be delivered on a phased basis between July and September.

7 properties have been allocated and tenants are due to receive keys in the coming days.

3 further properties are currently undergoing works due to be completed in June.

8 further properties are currently undergoing works due to be completed in July.

1 further property currently undergoing significant works due to be completed in August.

1 further property currently undergoing significant works due to be completed in September.

2. In relation to representations that I have received, can Monaghan County Council please inform me about a recent planning application at Sean Mhuileann, Ballinode. Are these to be sold by a Private developer to the Public or to be purchased by Monaghan County Council?

Reply: RPK Construction has submitted a Planning Application for the development of Social Housing on their privately owned land in Ballinode.

In 2019 the Developer submitted an Expression of Interest in providing Social Housing for Monaghan County Council in Ballinode as a Turnkey Construction project. The potential Turnkey Construction of 20 houses in Ballinode is listed as a potential project in Monaghan County Council's housing delivery programme under Rebuilding

Ireland which was presented by Housing Section at a Council Meeting in 2019 however Monaghan County Council has not entered into any contract with the Developer.

Monaghan County Council expects that the Developer will submit further information regarding their Expression of Interest which will allow it to be fully assessed and, if the proposal is found to be suitable, a Funding Application for the acquisition of the proposed houses may be made to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (subject to contract / contract denied and without prejudice).

The Planning Application submitted by RPK Construction will be assessed by Monaghan County Council in its capacity as Planning Authority.

3. In relation to potholes on the roads, it is my understanding that the filling of potholes is a function of Monaghan County Council. I therefore would like clarity on whose responsibility it is to fix burst tyres that have been caused by potholes that are not filled by Monaghan County Council and are extremely hazardous to drivers.

Reply: In general the Council is not liable for damage caused by potholes. In accordance with the principle of nonfeasance the Council is not liable for damage caused as a result of failing to repair a pothole.

4. In relation to the unsightly Telecom phone box at the corner of Mill Street in Monaghan town, can Monaghan County Council please ask Telecom Eireann to remove it as it is unsightly and also hazardous.

Reply: Monaghan Municipal District have contacted Eir and requested the removal of this Telecom phone box at the corner of Mill Street.

5. In relation to the lack of broadband in certain locations in Monaghan, can I please have an update on these essential works and a timeframe for the delivery of broadband to every house and business in County Monaghan.

Reply: NBI

The onset of Covid-19 has demonstrated the need to make high speed broadband available everywhere and the National Broadband Plan will ensure that every single home and business has affordable access to high quality broadband services in the coming years.

National Broadband Ireland (NBI) are tasked with the rollout of the National Broadband Plan across the country, including more than 17,500 premises in County Monaghan. Under the terms of the National Broadband Plan, the full rollout will take up to 7 years. Under the plan, 133,000 home will be covered by the end of year 2, with 70-80,000 premises passed each year thereafter. Survey work started in Monaghan in May 2020 and build-out related to this part of the rollout is expected to start before the end of the year. This is the first phase of a staggered rollout which will involve up to 12 different rollout phases within the county.

One of the priorities in year one is the rollout of High Speed Broadband to 13 Broadband Connection Points, offering internal and external wifi to communities where there is no access currently to fast broadband. These BCPs represent communities, a national school and a business hub which will deliver 150Mb broadband inside and outside the buildings. The majority of these BCPs have been already surveyed and detailed plans developed to deliver this broadband. Provisional installation dates have been set for seven of the BCPs in July- September and it is expected that all BCPs will be installed by the end of 2020.

NBI were originally scheduled to deliver a presentation at the Council meeting in May which was postponed. NBI have since proposed dates to deliver a briefing about the

National broadband Plan delivery in Monaghan to all of our councillors. The NBI customer call centre number is 0818 624 624 (local call rate) or email contactus@nbi.ie for any queries. For further information on the NBP see www.nbi.ie or www.broadband.gov.ie

Imagine Broadband

In relation to the provision of High Speed Broadband by other providers, Imagine Broadband are also currently focused on prioritising the Need for Quality High-Speed Broadband in Rural Ireland to facilitate working from the home and education from the home. Imagine recently launched a new service around the Carrickmacross area, offering access to approximately 2,663 premises, including 423 within the amber area.

In addition to the Imagine network in Carrickmacross other premises in Monaghan are covered by sections of their network which see into Monaghan from surrounding counties, particularly Louth and Cavan. Their future plans for Monaghan are demand driven, so if the Carrickmacross area is successful it allows for future expansion. Their current estimate is that in total, Imagine broadband can deliver broadband to over 1 million premises in Rural Ireland, 300,000 of which are classed as Amber having little to no broadband. Sandra Dinan is the designated point of contact for Monaghan and will take queries from any of our elected representatives. Her contact details are 087 4377358 and email sandra.dinan@imaginegroup.ie www.imagine.ie

Cllr P. Connolly asked:

6. In view of the fact that the Minister for Justice recently apologised over the manner in which a direct provision centre was opened in Co Kerry and the issues involved around Covid-19 and “leaving little or no time for community engagement” (Min Flanagan) are any of the Government Departments in talks or negotiations with Monaghan County Council in relation to
 - (a) The provision of Direct Provision Centres?
 - (b) How Co Monaghan is performing in relation to its sharing of the national quota for direct provision?
 - (c) How many Direct Provision Centres in total have Co Monaghan and where are they located?
 - (d) In the event of change of use of a building to Direct Provision is Planning Permission required?
 - (e) What (if any) role, particularly in view of the current Covid-19 pandemic, have Co Co’s in monitoring the level of occupancy in Direct Provision Centres and other private providers of accommodation?

Reply: The provision of Direct Provision system is overseen by the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA), a body of the Department of Justice and Equality. Monaghan County Council do not have any role in either the provision, management or monitoring of the Direct Provision Centres and we are not involved in any talks or negotiations for new centres in Monaghan.

Monaghan County Council have not been informed of any quota system for direct provision and the numbers and location of centres are overseen by the Department of Justice.

Planning permission may be required for the change of use of a building to a direct provision centre, but this is dependent on the previous use of the subject building.

Cllr S. Conlon asked:

7. Can this Council provide the list of both successful and unsuccessful applicants to the recent Covid-19 Emergency Fund provided by the Government to assist community and voluntary groups supporting efforts in combating the pandemic.

Reply: Yes. A second round of funding is currently underway. On finalisation of these applications a list of all funded groups will be provided.

8. In reference to the re-opening of the Council owned Monaghan Leisure Complex, have members, groups and swim clubs been engaged with, and provided with assurances that optimum user fee structures will be in place mindful of the necessary restrictions that must occur at the facility? Also, have national stakeholder groups such as Ireland Active and Swim Ireland been consulted with for guidance in relation to the re-opening of the Complex?

Reply: Coral Leisure Monaghan Ltd, manage, operate and maintain Monaghan Leisure Complex under Licence Agreement with Monaghan County Council. Please note Coral Leisure Monaghan Ltd's response to Cllr. Conlon's question 'We have not entered into discussions with any groups with regard to changing prices. All prices are currently the same as what they were; however we will be following advice from Ireland Active and Swim Ireland in conjunction with Monaghan County Council as ultimately the deficit at year end will be far outside what was initially budgeted to be a profit. Swim Ireland's call on Monday next is to help finalise an extensive Return to Swimming Protocol Document which is due to be launched on 15th June. This will be useful for Coral Leisure and Swim Clubs across the country as we plan for the future. As we stand right now, no prices have been changed and as always we will do whatever we can to ensure each service offered is kept as affordable as possible. It is very important though to remind all parties that we cannot allow any individual pillar to fall as it would have the potential to bring the whole lot down. Swim Clubs will obviously be working off reduced numbers but so will all sections of the complex'.

9. Have the protracted issues of subsidence, as well as noxious sewer gas odours throughout the vicinity where Council tenants reside at Knockroe Glen, been addressed by the Housing Section?

Reply: The common areas, roads, footpaths and services are in the ownership of a private Developer that purchased the unfinished portion of the Knockroe Glen housing estate. Any issues highlighted by Monaghan County Council either concerning the localised subsidence of paved areas or odours have always been addressed in an efficient and prompt manner by the Developer. In February 2020 reports of an odour of sewage were investigated by the Developer and it was found that the sewage pumps in the housing estate were clogged with rags, nappies and baby wipes. To address this the Developer arranged cleaning and repair of the sewage pumping station and Monaghan County Council issued an Irish Water information leaflet to residents regarding items never to be flushed down the toilet (please see attached).

On 3 June 2020 Monaghan County Council received a complaint that there was again an odour of sewage in the housing estate and contacted the Developer who attended to the issue on the same day, 3 June 2020. The sewage pumps in the estate had again become clogged with rags. The Developer arranged inspection of the sewage pumps and cleaning of the underground tank. This was then followed by the installation of a new sewage pump. This work by the private Developer dealt with the issue

immediately and efficiently. The Planning Bond associated with the recent construction of 22 houses at Knockroe Glen remains in place.

The Developer has given assurances that any further issues arising will be addressed.

Clr C. Carthy asked:

10. What is the up-to-date situation with the Carrickmacross Group Home and when it is expected to be opened?

Reply: On 4 June 2020 the HSE advised that there has been no change in the situation. The matter was referred to Senior Management in the HSE and they have not confirmed any opening date as yet.

11. How many applications are currently on Monaghan County Council's Housing Waiting list per Municipal District (with a breakdown of unit size required and including those currently being supported by HAP/RAS)?

Reply:

Total No. on waiting list	1,263
Carrickmacross/Castleblayney MD HAP/RAS (239/1Bed; 137/2Bed; 88/3Bed; 20/4Bed; 10/5Bed;)	494 (Including 212
Clones/Ballybay MD HAP/RAS (98/1Bed; 48/2Bed; 37/3Bed; 12/4Bed; 1/5Bed;)	196 (Including 88
Monaghan MD HAP/RAS (228/1Bed; 179/2Bed; 131/3Bed; 30/4Bed; 5/5Bed;)	573 (Including 324

12. As previously requested, has an extensive list of vacant houses been compiled by MCC and, if so, what plans are in place to bring these units back into use?

Reply: Monaghan County Council is continuing to progress the Vacant Homes Programme and is collating information regarding all properties inspected for vacancy. Since the inception of the Vacant Homes Programme and after reviewing initial desktop information, the Vacant Homes Office carried out onsite inspections listing 292 vacant homes.

Once vacancy is confirmed, Monaghan County Council issues information regarding possible options to bring vacant properties into use and engage with owners if interest is initiated, to advise them of the particulars of each scheme available. Monaghan County Council's Vacant Homes Office is registered with www.vacanthomes.ie where the public can provide the details of any vacant homes in their locality and the website will automatically notify the Vacant Homes Office by email.

Monaghan County Council will continue gathering information and surveying vacant homes to provide a holistic profile on vacancy throughout County Monaghan with the intention of encouraging the use of vacant homes wherever possible towards revitalising and repopulating the areas that are most affected by vacancy.

13. Will the executive consider continuing the use of a support phone line and email, after Covid restrictions are lifted, for businesses, community groups, individuals etc who can request advice and support?

Reply: All MCC divisions have continued to take calls and emails throughout the pandemic, and continue to be available to advise and support businesses, community groups and individuals, as applicable. The main purpose of the Community Call helpline is to match calls for assistance with the relevant outside agencies. The demand for such assistance has dropped dramatically in recent weeks, and it is not envisaged that the service will be required once pandemic restrictions are lifted.

14. What additional costs, above general budget, have been accrued by MCC to implement public distancing, work-place retrofitting, public support measures etc since the Covid restrictions have been implemented (mid-March 2020)?

Reply: As of 3rd June 2020 the following expenditure has been recorded in the Council's financial system in respect of Covid 19 relates costs

Housing Related	€ 12,675
Covid 19 Emergency Fund	€ 40,620
Work-place Retrofitting & Remote Working	€109,778

Cllr. S. Coyle asked:

15. Will Monaghan County Council give a full and detailed update on each of the following Housing Grant Schemes:

- Housing Adaptation Grant for people with Disabilities.
- Mobility Aids Grant for people with Mobility/Disability needs.
- Housing Aid for Older People Grant.

(a) How many applications have there been for each of the above grants in 2020?

- **HGD – 53**
- **HOP – 146**
- **MAG – 43**
- **Total – 242**
- **Additional 50 (approx.) in process**

(b) How many applications have been approved and how much is the cost?

Reply: Number of applications approved plus applications recouped for each Housing Grant Scheme 2020 Budget is

HGD	47	€748,212
HOP	120	€709,981
MAG	36	€184,096
Total	203	€1,642,289

(c) How much of the 2020 Budget remains to allocated to future applications?

Reply: All of Monaghan County Council's budget for 2020 has been allocated at present.

16. Can Monaghan County Council outline their plans for the Rollout of Fast Charging Points for Electric Vehicles in County Monaghan over the remainder of 2020 and the coming years, these facilities will be essential, if we are to increase the number of Electric Vehicles on our roads and to accommodate residences and visitors to our County?

Reply: Monaghan County Council has not planned to provide any EV charging points in the County in 2020. Existing EV charge points are installed, owned and operated by E-Cars a subsidiary of ESN in our main Towns. Monaghan County Council will seek a further update from E-Cars on their plans for new facilities throughout County Monaghan.

Cllr. A. Campbell asked:

17. What is the expected completion date for the new Fire Station in Castleblayney? When will the building be handed over to the Fire Services in Castleblayney?

Reply: Work on completing Castleblayney Fire Station has re-commenced in accordance with appropriate protocols following the closure of the site due to the Covid 19 Pandemic. Construction work is now anticipated to be completed by early July, with a hand over to the Fire Service planned for mid-July.

18. With regard renovations to Gate House number 2 at the entrance to Hope Castle in Castleblayney.

- (a) When will this Project be going to tender?

Reply: The Castleblayney Market Square Regeneration project was advertised on E-Tenders on the 4th June 2020. The tender period is 28 days. The closing date for submission of tenders is the 2nd July 2020.

- (b) How long is this work envisaged to take?

Reply: The duration of the project construction works are estimated to be 16 months.

- (c) What is the exact scope of work?

Reply: The main scope of the project works includes the refurbishment and construction of an extension to the Hope Castle Gate Lodge No. 2, a protected structure, to provide a modern 21st century public library, gallery space, cultural and creative space. The works will involve demolition and removal of non-original two storey lean to, at the rear of the Gate Lodge and construction of a modern extension, part single storey and part two storey. External project works include enhanced public realm, paving, street furniture, natural landscaping, lighting, signage and new works linking the library to the existing car park to the rear. The existing ESB overhead cables in the Market Square area of Castleblayney will be undergrounded and new decorative public lighting will be installed.

19. How many businesses have applied for the Business Continuity Voucher which enables business the help of a consultant during the Covid-19 crisis to get ready for back to business in some form when the Covid-19 outbreak which available through the Local Enterprise Office.

Reply: The number of companies the applied for Business Continuity Vouchers was 222 and the Leo in Monaghan approved 211.

The business areas that the vouchers were quite broad in assisting Companies & Employees returning to work, HR Issues, Business Planning & Developing a Future Strategy to Survive & Reopening of the Business, Remote Working & the ICT software required, Financial Application to Banks for additional funding, etc

20. Has Monaghan County Council communicated all the details of the Business Restart Grants to the Businesses and Rate Payers particular those reopening under Phase 1 and 2 of the reopening of businesses?

Reply: Details of the Business Restart Grants were advertised extensively in national and local media outlets. Online bulletins were issued by the Local Enterprise Office via email to their database. Details were also shared with Town Teams and local Chambers who also notified their members directly.

Cllr. A. McCooey asked:

21. (i) Can the housing section outline the number of social housing units which are being built

in the Carrickmacross-Castleblayney Municipal District in the next 2 years?

Reply: There are 172 social housing units currently under construction or about to commence construction shortly that will become available in the Carrickmacross-Castleblayney Municipal District in the next 2 years.

- (ii) Can it also be outlined how many houses will be available to fulfil the need of single individuals?

Reply: The needs of single Housing Applicants vary. In many instances single Housing Applicants have dependents and/or other needs including medical and caring requirements that increase the size of property and number of bedrooms required to accommodate the need identified.

Of the 172 properties under construction 2 are 1-bedroom apartments and 44 are 2-bedroom properties that are potentially suitable for single individuals. In addition, 15 are small properties described as 3-bedroom townhouses that are potentially suitable for single individuals with additional needs as are some of the larger properties under construction.

22. Monaghan County Council give an update on the progress of capital projects in Castleblayney, the new library in gate house two and the new enterprise centre, and is it anticipated that will these be affected due to Covid 19?

Reply: The Castleblayney Market Square Regeneration project, includes for the refurbishment and extension to the Hope Castle Gate Lodge No. 2 to provide a modern 21st century public library and external public realm works. The project was advertised on the Etenders Procurement Website on 04th June 2020. The tender period is 28 days with a closing date for submission of tenders specified as the 02nd July 2020. Subject to receiving approval from the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) under Stage 3 of the RRDF Funding approval process to proceed to contract award and project construction, the duration of the project construction works are estimated to be 16 months.

It is likely that the Covid-19 crisis will have an impact on the overall project cost and the duration of the construction works. However, the potential impacts of Covid-19 on the Castleblayney Market Square Regeneration project will not be known until the project tenders are received and a full assessment and evaluation has been carried out.

Tenders have been received in relation to the proposed Castleblayney Enterprise Centre project funded under the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund and they are currently being assessed. Covid 19 has contributed to delays in the tendering process.

Cllr. N. Keelan asked:

23. Approximately how many business premises were paying commercial rates to Monaghan County Council prior to the Covid-19 lockdown

(a) How much funding did this bring in?

(b) How many business premises are currently paying commercial rates?

(c) How much is this in monetary terms?

(d) What plans are in place to make up the obvious financial shortfall?

Reply: The value of rate demands issued for 2020 was €14,292,827. Incoming arrears amounted to €3,302,230.

€3,987,704 has been paid to date. Approximately 800 of the 2,479 rate payers have made a payment in 2020.

The Council is awaiting the terms of the Rates waiver scheme that was announced by the Government before the shortfall in rates can be assessed.

All expenditure is being examined in order to determine what spend items can be reduced.

24. Will any Council services including large scale capital projects such as housing provision, local county road upgrades and maintenance, town and village renewal schemes, be curtailed or shelved as a result of the loss of income from business rates, housing rents etc, including government grants?

Reply: Monaghan County Council will continue to advance the delivery of our Capital Programme. To date, no project or programme has had funding curtailed as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, and its impact on Local Government Finances.

25. What plans have Council management in the weeks and months ahead to ensure our County Council, and Municipal District Councils are fully functional again, while protecting the health and well being of our staff and the general public we serve?

Reply: Throughout the Covid 19-pandemic, the Government's priority was primarily, to ensure the health of the public, whilst at the same time ensuring the continuation of public services, especially essential public services. Following the introduction of lockdown restrictions in March, Monaghan County Council implemented our Covid-19 Business Continuity Plan, ensuring measures were put in place to react to the evolving situation and plan for the continued provision of essential services. The measures implemented in preparation for restrictions, particularly remote working capabilities, enabled the majority of technical and administrative staff to fulfil their duties from the home environment. Normal services continued to be delivered, with no reduction or restrictions in service, programme or project delivery. The Monthly Management Report content, available to the elected members, is testament to the nature and extent of services delivered during the lockdown, and evidence of the competencies developed in delivering services remotely.

Following the Government's announcement on 1 May 2020 to launch the roadmap for reopening society and business, Monaghan County Council implemented the return to work safely protocol issued. The protocol was designed to support employers, providing assistance and advice in relation to the adaptation of workplace procedures and practices, to comply fully with the Covid-19 related public

health protection measures identified by the HSE. Monaghan County Council implemented measures to ensure the return of outdoor maintenance and Municipal District services as quickly as possible. While many outdoor resources, including all water and wastewater service staff worked throughout the pandemic, many others, particularly road maintenance staff, were not enabled to work remotely. Municipal District and road maintenance crews returned to normal duties, albeit in a socially distant work environment, on a phased basis, on the week beginning on the 18th May. Safe Operating Guidance documents and new Health and Safety Policies, procedures and processes will continue to ensure the protection of the health and well being of our staff and the public we serve in the weeks and months ahead. Monaghan County Council management continue to monitor the evolving situation and co-ordinate with national and local stakeholders to determine appropriate responses in accordance with the phased reopening of our economy and the latest advice from Government, the NPHE and HSE.

26. In commending Council management and staff for operating the Community Support Helpline, will the Council consider keeping this helpline in place after the Covid-19 crisis passes given how successful this helpline has been in terms of providing a service and support to the most vulnerable in our society?

Reply: All MCC divisions have continued to take calls and emails throughout the pandemic, and continue to be available to advise and support businesses, community groups and individuals, as applicable. The main purpose of the Community Call helpline is to match calls for assistance with the relevant outside agencies. The demand for such assistance has dropped dramatically in recent weeks, and it is not envisaged that the service will be required once pandemic restrictions are lifted.

27. In relation to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that will be needed in the time ahead to protect our Council staff and the general public, including the need to remodel all our Council buildings, public offices etc. in terms of protective screens at public counters etc. and given that the Council promotes shopping local, will Monaghan County Council ensure that, where possible, hand sanitisers, face shields, masks etc. are purchased locally ?

Reply: Due to a worldwide shortage of essential PPE at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, the entire Local Authority sector, through the Office of Government Procurement, collated its PPE needs and sourced PPE as a single entity. In the case of screens, hand sanitizing facilities, signage and other PPE etc. depending on the value of the items to be procured, Monaghan County Council either seek quotes or run open tender competitions for the goods in line with Public Procurement Guidelines. Where quotes are sought, Monaghan County Council endeavour to include competent local suppliers on the list of suppliers from whom quotes are sought. In the case of tenders, these are generally advertised through e-tenders.

20. Notices of Motion:

Cllr S. Coyle proposed Cllr Gilliland seconded:

1. That Monaghan County Council demands of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the government and the incoming government, that a financial support package be put in place to support Cattle Marts to re-open, continue operating in

support of the farming community, their employees and the commercial activity of the areas where they are located, as the Covid-19 Pandemic has closed many marts, deprived them of their peak 2020 spring sales, with a huge falloff in numbers of cattle passing through marts for the foreseeable future.

Following a short debate on the motion, the Cathaoirleach put it to the members and it was agreed.

Votes of sympathy:

It was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to the following:

- Cllr. Raymond Aughey and the Aughey family on the death of Daniel F. Aughey RIP, Loretta Aughey RIP and Anita McCluskey RIP,
- Cllr. Hughie McElvaney and the Lennon family, Ballybay and the extended family on the death of Charlie Lennon RIP
- Michael Leonard, GSS Ballybay – Clones M. D. and the Leonard family on the death of Teresa Leonard RIP
- Donal McElwain, Monaghan MD Coordinator on the death of his mother Annie RIP and the extended McElwain family.
- Helen McCourt, Planning Section and the extended Hughes family, Armagh, on the death of Brian Hughes RIP
- Pauline Maguire, Housing Section, on the death of her mother, Brigid Maguire, RIP and to the extended Maguire family.
- Malachy O'Rourke, former Monaghan GAA Senior County Team Manager on the death of his mother Philomena RIP
- The family of the former Fingal County Councillor – Mags Murray RIP
- The family of the late Larry McCluskey, RIP, former CEO of Monaghan VEC.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Meetings Administrator

Date: _____