

Minutes of the Strategic Policy Committee Meeting of the Climate Action and Environmental Services Strategic Policy Committee held online on Tuesday 8th September, 2020 at 3.00 pm

Present: Cllrs Noel Keelan (Chairperson of Climate Action & Environmental Services SPC), R Aughey, P. Treanor, C. Bennett, R. Truell, P. Treanor Bernard Treanor, IFA, Patrick McCabe GWS, Brian Duffy, Castleblayney Re Gen, Liam Murtagh, Transition Monaghan, Pat Tierney, PPN Community, Michelle Mayne, PPN Social Inclusion
A.King, P. McGuinness, K. Duffy, B. Smyth, N. O'Connor, S. Finnegan, B.McMahon, V. McKenna, D. Mahon, S. Mallon, I. Williamson

1. Welcome & Minutes of Previous Meeting

At the outset, Cllr. Noel Keelan welcomed members and staff to the first online meeting of the SPC, being held virtually due to the ongoing Covid-19 virus. He acknowledged that while it was not the best or easiest way in which to hold the meeting, it was encouraging to see the participation of everyone involved.

The minutes of the inaugural SPC meeting held on 28th January, 2020 were proposed by Cllr. C. Bennett and seconded by L. Murtagh.

2. Future options for potential income generation at Scotch Corner Landfill

K.Duffy gave a presentation for members on options for potential income generated for the landfill at Scotch Corner. He answered queries raised by members and advised that while we are in the early stages of the project, much work has been done reducing the after care costs for the landfill.

3. Monaghan County Council Litter Management Plan Review

Cllr. Keelan welcomed the new Environmental Awareness Officer, Ms. Sharon Finnegan, to the meeting. Ms. Finnegan gave a brief outline to members on her rollout of the current Litter Management Plan. Cllr Keelan highlighted the issue of litter on the N2 and queried if any plastic bottles could be recycled by using the return facility currently located in Carrickmacross. Cllr Treanor requested that schools, community groups and Tidy Towns would be actively included in the public consultation process.

4. Review of Policy on Litter Fines

N. O'Connor gave a presentation to members on the proposed changes to the litter fines appeal process and policy. A new app has been designed to move away from the current paper based system.

Cllr. Bennett queried if it would be possible to erect CCTV at Hollywood and Rossmore parks. Mr O'Connor replied that these locations are not feasible at the minute due to the cost involved and GDPR issues pertaining to the use of CCTV in public surveillance. The Environment Section are currently concentrating more on CCTV at bottle banks throughout the county.

Cllr. Treanor welcomed a more flexible approach in relation to appeals.

Cllr. Aughey also highlighted the amount of litter that is continually strewn along the by-pass. Mr. O'Connor advised that mobile CCTV had been used in the past, however it was cost prohibitive. It is also difficult to police 'black spots' for this reason.

L. Murtagh praised the voluntary work of Tidy Towns throughout the county.

5. Update on Control & Management of Dogs

B. Smyth gave members an update on the control and management of dogs in Co. Monaghan and highlighted the role of the Dog Warden Service.

6. Revised Grant Allocation for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems & Wells

S. Mallon gave a presentation on the revised well grant and domestic waste water treatment systems (septic tanks) grants issued by the Department of Heritage, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) in June 2020. The presentation included an overview of the revised schemes detailing the increase in grant amounts of 'up to €5,000/85% of approved costs' now available to domestic households subject to eligibility and terms and conditions under the schemes. Well grant applications can be made to the Local Authority by households that are eligible for a grant. Two new grant schemes have been introduced for domestic waste water treatment systems in addition to the existing National Inspection Plan scheme, the two new schemes relate to households that may be eligible to apply for a grant if they are located in a (i) *High Status Objective Catchment area* or (ii) *Priority Area for Action* in County Monaghan as designated under the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021. Under the existing National Inspection Plan, households throughout the County are chosen for inspections based on EPA specific guidance to Local Authority inspectors, should the household receive an *Advisory Notice* detailing remedial works required to their septic tank following such an inspection, they can apply for a grant towards these works to the Local Authority. Households can check if they are located in a *High Status Objective Catchment area* using their Eircode on a map on the DHPLG website and if eligible, apply to the Local Authority for a septic tank grant. Households located in *Priority Areas for Action* that receive a letter from a LAWPRO office identifying their septic tank as causing an issue/polluting local waterways are then eligible to apply to the Local Authority for a grant to upgrade/replace their septic tank subject to the terms and conditions of the schemes. Further information and details are available from Rural Water Section.

7. Delivering on the Climate Change Agenda

As there has been a surge of interest in Climate Change since last year, many plans have been put in place to ensure that work continues on this issue. A. King provided a presentation for members outlining the principal activities in which the local authority was engaged in over the past year. Cllr. Aughey highlighted the issue of overgrown areas of weeds, particularly in the Monaghan MD Area and queried if there were other forms of weed killer that could be used due to their unsightly nature.

It was outlined to the meeting that the Council was endeavouring to develop a programme of weed control which would avoid the use of glyphosates (Round up).

8. Woodland Creation on Public Lands

K. Duffy advised members that this was a relatively new initiative. He gave a brief outline of the scheme and advised that the Council were in the process of identifying areas that may be suitable for the scheme. L. Murtagh queried if the old 9 hole golf course and the White Island at Lough Muckno in Castleblayney could be considered. He agreed to forward a report that he was producing for circulation to members. It was suggested that a dedicated biodiversity session/meeting could be held in the future.

9. Date & Agenda for next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 3rd November at 3.00 pm.

Items for the next meeting: Biodiversity Issues & River Basement Catchment/Mgt Plan

10. A.O.B.

As there was no other business, the meeting concluded. Cllr. Keelan and Mr. King thanked attendees for their contributions to the meeting.