

Minutes of Adjourned Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Garage Theatre, Armagh Road, Monaghan, on Monday 17th May, 2021 at 11.00 a.m.

Chair: Cllr C. Carthy, Cathaoirleach

Present: Cllrs. Aughey, Bennett, Campbell, Conlon, Connolly, Coyle, Gilliland, Keelan, Maxwell, McCooey, McKenna, O’Hanlon, P. Treanor, S. Treanor, and Truell.

Mr. E. O’Sullivan, Chief Executive, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, Ms. P. Monahan, Director of Services, Mr. Cathal Flynn and Mr. P. McGuinness, A/Director of Services, Ms. M. McGarvey, Senior Staff Officer and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

Apology: Cllr Kerr-Conlon, Mr. A. King and Mr. P. Clifford, Directors of Services.

At the outset the Cathaoirleach stated that he wished to express his solidarity with the people of Gaza on the terrible suffering they are experiencing there currently.

8. To receive nominations for the Civic Offices Steering Group

The following members were nominated to the Civic Offices Steering Group:

Fine Gael	Cllr David Maxwell, Cllr Sean Gilliland
Sinn Fein	Cllr Colm Carthy and Cllr Brian McKenna
Fianna Fail	Cllr Raymond Aughey and Cllr Seamus Coyle
Non Party	Cllr Hugh McElvaney and Cllr Seamus Treanor

9. To consider recommendations and minutes from Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 27th April, 2021.

The members noted the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 27th April, 2021 which had been circulated.

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 27th April, 2021 and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

10. To fix date for Annual Meeting of the Council:

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Gilliland, it was agreed that the Annual Meeting of the Council be held on Monday 21st June 2021 at 11.00 am in the Garage Theatre.

11. To receive Management Report - April 2021

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

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

Cllr Bennett proposed, Cllr Conlon seconded, that in relation to upgrades of roads in the Sliabh Beagh Area, and other priorities on the Sliabh Beagh Masterplan and In pursuit of the outdoor recreation fund, I would call on this Council to ask the Sliabh Beagh groups to attend a meeting and present to Monaghan County Council items that still need to be addressed in the Masterplan.

It was agreed that Cllr Bennett's proposal would be referred to the Corporate Policy Group for consideration.

12. Business submitted by Chief Executive

The Chief Executive informed the members that Monaghan had two winners in the National Student Enterprise Awards. Matthew McVicar, St. Macartans College, took 1st place in the Senior Category and Sean Kerley, Our Lady's Secondary School, Castleblayney who took 1st place in the My Entrepreneurial Journey category. He congratulated both young men on their achievement and commended, John McEntegart, Paul Clifford and Eilin Connolly from the LEO for their mentoring and support.

13. Matters arising out of the minutes of meetings held on 12th, 19th & 22nd April, 2021

Matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meetings held on 12th, 19th and 22nd April 2021 were responded to by the relevant officials.

14. Update on N2 National Primary Road Schemes

An update on this matter had already been provided in the Management Report.

15. To receive update on North South Interconnector project

The members noted the following correspondence:

- Letter from the Office of the Sinn Féin Vice President, Ms. Michelle O' Neil regarding the North/South Interconnector.
- Email from Deputy Pauline Tully, T.D regarding the North/South Interconnector.
- Letter from Deputy Matt Carthy, T.D regarding the North/South Interconnector.

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr Gilliland it was agreed that Monaghan County Council expresses serious disappointment at the response of Eirgrid company representatives at the meeting with Monaghan County Council on 21st April 2021 in relation to the North South Interconnector. This Council again demands of the Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Green Parties in the Republic; Sinn Fein, DUP and all parties to the Northern Ireland Assembly Administration to direct an immediate cessation of all works on the project until a review in line with the motion adopted by Dail Eireann and Seanad Eireann in February 2017 is fully implemented, as the North South Interconnector is the only part of the Eirgrid €4 billion "Grid 25 Strategy" remaining as all others have been undergrounded or scrapped.

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that this Council notes with great concern Eirgrid and ESB networks intention to press ahead with the construction of the North South Interconnector using a pylon supported method which has no community acceptance. Given this reality, I propose we write to Mr Mark Foley the CEO of Eirgrid requesting that he outlines in detail how this project can be constructed on private lands, how hundreds of new accesses can be created onto private property where no consent from the property owners exists.

On the proposal of Cllr Keelan seconded by Cllr P. Treanor it was agreed that this Council notes with great concern Eirgrid and ESB networks intention to press ahead with the construction of the North South Interconnector using a pylon supported method which has no community support or acceptance. Given this reality, and in order to avoid conflict and confrontation with the local community affected by this project in its current form, I propose we write to all Oireachtas members for this constituency requesting that they use whatever means they have to avoid the possibility of such a confrontation, This can only happen by political intervention and a change in Government policy that directs Eirgrid to develop an alternative plan including the undergrounding of the interconnector and that you would keep the members updated on your efforts in this regard.

It was agreed that this resolution would be passed to Sean Murphy, ESB and to the Northern Ireland Executive.

16. To receive update on the Ulster Canal project

The members noted the following correspondence:

- Email from Dermot Kelly, Department of Housing and Local Government regarding the Ulster Canal Advisory Forum
- Email acknowledgement from the office of Nichola Mallon, MLA, Minister for Infrastructure Northern Ireland in relation to the Ulster Canal.

On the proposal of Cllr McKenna, seconded by Cllr Connolly it was agreed that the Council writes again to An Taoiseach Michéal Martin, TD, Minister Catherine Martin, TD, Minister Darragh O'Brien TD and Nichola Mallon MLA and the North South Ministerial Council seeking an update on the progression of the Ulster Canal Project from Clones, Co. Monaghan to Middletown, Co. Armagh.

17. Questions

Cllr P. Connolly asked:

1. In view of the increased number of EV cars, what plans have Monaghan County Council to increase the number of charge points throughout County Monaghan?

Reply: Monaghan County Council has no plans or financial resources for the provision of EV Charge Points across the county, apart from the FASTER (Facilitating a Sustainable Transition to EV's in the Region) project, in which, Monaghan County Council are associate members (for the provision of 72 Rapid Chargers in Scotland, NI and ROI (border counties)).

Cllr A. McCooey asked:

2. Can the County Council give details on any plans to reinstate recycling bins at the Commons in Castleblayney?

Reply: They bring bank facility at the Commons, Castleblayney is operational, accepting aluminium, glass and textiles.

Plastic banks were removed in 2020 and there are no plans to reinstate these at present

Cllr C. Carthy asked:

3. Can Monaghan County Council outline the timeframe for this year's roads programme throughout the county (with a Municipal District breakdown)?

Reply: The roads programme is currently underway with 7 of the 33 tendered roads (23 local and 10 regional) completed to date.

- BBY CLN local roads to be completed by 28th May
- Mon local roads to be completed by 11th June
- CMX CBY Local Roads to be completed by 30th July

The contractor will then undertake the resurfacing of the remaining Regional Roads which is forecast to take a period of 6 weeks- 2nd July to 10th August inclusive.

4. Following on from the Council's advertising in local media for land and houses for sale, a number of months ago, can the Housing Section give a breakdown on the response it received and the expected outcome of the process (i.e how many units MCC expects to purchase and the area of new lands, if any, that has been earmarked for housing)?

Reply: An excellent response was received to the advert for Expressions of Interest in the Sale of land / Housing to Monaghan Co Council. The advert facilitated the acquisition of 20 individual houses throughout the County in 2020 and resulted in a group of 6 turnkey houses being completed in an unfinished housing development in the Monaghan Municipal District.

A further group of 6 houses that require significant renovation and upgrading were purchased in Ballybay under the same process. The houses are in the possession of Monaghan County Council and a local Contractor has been appointed to carry out the work required prior to letting. It is envisaged that the houses will be ready for letting in Autumn 2021.

A number of Expressions of Interest in the sale of land and development of houses under turnkey construction contracts was received and are being actively pursued.

The process has resulted in the following delivery and potential development opportunities for Monaghan County Council:

Delivery to date resulting from the process:

20 individual house purchases throughout County Monaghan

6 turnkey houses in Monaghan Municipal District (completed and occupied)

6 buy & renew houses in Ballybay town (purchased and contractor appointed to renovate)

Potential Development Opportunities

30 houses in Carrickmacross town -construction

30 houses in Castleblayney town - construction

30 houses in Carrickmacross-Castleblayney Municipal District - construction

20 houses in Monaghan Municipal District - construction

8 houses in Clones town (turnkey construction)

Monaghan County Council is working towards the submission of funding applications for all potential development opportunities identified.

In addition to the 150 houses mentioned above, Monaghan County Council is exploring additional potential development opportunities arising as a result of the Expression of Interest process that will yield further significant numbers of houses in the coming years.

As the Expression of Interest process has been so successful and as it is anticipated that Government investment in Housing is set to continue at a high level for the foreseeable future, it is intended that a further Expression of Interest process will be launched before the end of Quarter 2 of 2021.

5. Has the Council any further information/updates on possible future uses of Hope Castle, and Annex Building, Castleblayney; what plans are in place to progress this project?

Reply: Monaghan County Council and Failte Ireland has engaged Terry Stevens and Associates to prepare a Visioning Report for Castleblayney, Lough Muckno Estate and the surrounding area. Despite the restrictions imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic, it is anticipated that this body of work will be completed over the coming weeks.

6. Is the Council Executive planning for the future use of the unused back building and grounds at the Workhouse in Carrickmacross and, if so, what is the next step in the process (feasibility study, public consultation etc)?

Reply: In 2020, Monaghan County Council submitted an application under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund Category 2 to conduct public consultation and prepare detailed plans to develop the Workhouse buildings and site as Community facility for the south of the county, in a similar process to that underway for the Market House in Castleblayney. It is planned to submit an application for funding again in 2021.

7. What is the expected timeframe for the delivery of the Active Travel Scheme projects recently announced and can the executive give a complete description of each project?

Reply: The Table Below shows the list of the proposed Active Travel Projects with a brief description. Timeframes will vary depending on the nature and scale of individual projects.

NTA Active Travel Funding Application's 2021

Details of initial proposals

Project Code:	Project Location	Brief description of works
MN/21/0017	Monaghan County	Appoint a consultant to produce sustainable urban mobility plans for Monaghan, Ballybay & Clones.
MN/21/0001	Monaghan Town	Construct an urban greenway along the length of the N2, Monaghan Town Bypass and provide links to the existing Ulster Canal Greenway and to the Annagh Industrial Area. Upgrade footpaths to connect to residential areas and to link to the town centre and the educational campus.
MN/21/0018	Detailed review of the Castleblayney & Carrickmacross: Active Travel Town Walking and	Detailed review of the Castleblayney & Carrickmacross Active Travel Town

MN/21/0002	Cycling Strategies and Town Public Realm and Economic Plans, 2019. Upgrade of Monaghan Town Greenway	Walking and Cycling Strategies; Town Public Realm and Economic Plans, 2019. Upgrade of the existing Greenway: Public Lighting, Landscaping, Fencing, Drainage and Surfacing.
Footpath Schemes:		
MN/21/0003	R162 Monaghan Road Ballybay	Improving access to Ballybay Town Centre for local residents, residents of Cuan Mhuire Addiction Treatment Centre and Kepak Meat Factory by linking two sections of incomplete footpaths.
Carn Lane Clones		Provision of public lighting to Carn Lane, Clones to improve access to Clones town centre.
Cannons Lane, Clones		Widening of the lane and the provision of public lighting.
LT21101	Tirnahinch Road, Clones	Provision of a new footpath and public lighting for pedestrian connections to Clones town from Tirnahinch.
R193,	Rockcorry	Upgrade and renewal of existing footpath between the village of Rockcorry and Rockcorry National School located on the R193.
Smithboro Village		Provision of footpath and bridge running parallel to an existing old railway bridge to link an existing footpath with Grove Farm
Magherarney,	Smithboro	Provision of a footpath and lighting along the link road (to the N54)

18. Notices of Motion

Cllr Coyle proposed, Cllr McCooey seconded:

1. *That Monaghan County Council demand of the Minister for Higher & Further Education, Research, Innovation & Science, Mr. Simon Harris TD and the Government, a full review and reform of the SUSI Student Grant Scheme as the current scheme is being described as “not fit for purpose” by many applicants and their families, with many low income families being excluded from going to third level education, with reform necessary before the commencement of the 2021-’22 Academic year.*

Following a short debate on the motion, the Cathaoirleach put it to the members and it was agreed. It was agreed that the motion would be circulated to the Oireachtas members for Cavan/Monaghan.

Cllrs Keelan, proposed, Cllr Bennett seconded:

2. *As a follow on from the most recent presentation by the National Broadband Scheme indication that it will take a full seven years to have high speed broadband available to every home and business in County Monaghan and all 26 counties, that this Council writes to An Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD, also to the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications Eamon Ryan TD, and to Leo Varadkar TD, Minister for Enterprise Trade and Employment requesting that they take whatever action/measures available to them, and government in order to speed up the delivery of this critical infrastructure.*

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

Urgent Business:

Cllr Coyle proposed, Cllr Aughey seconded

That Monaghan County Council expresses its outrage and total opposition to unilateral proposals by the British Government to grant an amnesty by introducing a statute of limitation, banning the prosecution of those involved in horrific murders and crimes during the Northern Ireland conflict, including the Monaghan and Dublin bombings in 1974 which cost 34 people their lives, 7 in Monaghan and 27 in Dublin, demanding that An Taoiseach, Michéal Martin TD, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney TD, the Government and all parties to the Stormont House Agreement, ensure that this proposal by the British Government is scrapped immediately”.

(This Motion if adopted be forwarded to all Oireachtas Members for Cavan-Monaghan, the Taoiseach and Minister for Foreign Affairs).

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

19. Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations.

It was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to the family of Lord Rossmore, RIP formerly of Monaghan and London.

As the day of the meeting, the 17th May, was the 47th anniversary of the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings, the members remembered all those who lost their lives in both tragedies and their families.

A period of silence was observed by all present as a mark of respect.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Meetings Administrator

Date: _____
