

Municipal District of Monaghan

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan Municipal District held via Teams on Monday, 19th April, 2021 at 14.30pm.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Treanor presided.

Present: Cllrs. Brian McKenna, Paudge Connolly, Cathy Bennett, David Maxwell, Raymond Aughey and Sean Conlon

In Attendance: John Murray, Director of Services, Donal McElwain, Municipal District Co-ordinator, Dermot Deeney, Executive Engineer, Bernie McElvaney, Senior Staff Officer.

1. Confirmation of Minutes:

On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr. Bennett, it was agreed that the minutes of the Municipal District meeting held on 15th March, 2021 be confirmed.

2. Report from Municipal District Co-ordinator:

Cllr Connolly queried how long the cycle trail would take to complete, and in relation to 4/5 Mill Street, who is footing the bill and are we the owners of the property. Mr McElwain responded that it is planned to have cycle trail completed by Autumn 2021. He added that Monaghan County Council are the owners of 4/5 Mill Street and responsible for the cost. Cllr Bennett referred to the surface dressing programme and queried does the tabling of roads still occur to which Mr McElwain responded that roads are not tabled on a regular basis, as the council do not have the number of staff they had in years gone by, but such works are carried out where specific drainage issues arise. Mr Murray responded that this has not happened since a major redundancy scheme in 1988 whereby the outdoor workforce was reduced by over one third and after this, work practices changed in relation to maintenance of roads.

Cllr Conlon sought a report from January 2020 for number of seasonal workers recruited as outdoor staff.

Cllr Treanor stated that the residents of Devin Reilly Terrace would like the green area turned into car parking spaces. Following discussion Mr McElwain advised that the MD would review the previous survey.

Cllr Aughey welcomed the Outdoor seating grants but disappointed that traditional pubs are not included in the grants. Cllr Connolly suggested that we write to Bord Failte and ask that the grant be extended to pubs.

Cllr Conlon referred to promotions by the Town Team and advised that we need to engage the local media, Northern Standard and Northern Sound, on what we are doing e.g. small ads to highlight competitions, initiatives.

3. Questions:

Cllr Bennett asked:

- 1) Can the Monaghan Md please outline how the recent allocation of funding for footpaths in Scotstown Village will be spent?
Response: It is proposed to spend the recent Active Travel allocation of €40,000 for Scotstown Village on upgrading the footpath linking the village to the residential areas on the Tydavnet road, Urbleshanny school, the Community Creche, the Chapel and football amenity area. The scheme will need to be fully evaluated, and the Project Grant Application Form returned to the NTA seeking approval to expend this allocation.
- 2) Can the Monaghan MD please give me a date when the repairs to fencing at Rossmore parks playground will take place?
Response: Temporary measures have been put in place to close any damaged fence panels. The Municipal District are obtaining quotations for the repairs and plan to have this work completed in May.
- 3) Can the Monaghan MD, please outline plans and dates for upgrading works at Hollywood park with the recent funding announced under Towns and Villages?
Response: The tender documents are completed and uploaded to e-tenders to procure consultants to design and manage the upgrade/development the project. The project must be fully completed by Aug 2022. Match funding of €30,000 is required for the project.
- 4) Can Monaghan MD please repair signage at Knockbalyrone that has been knocked down?
Response: This sign has been scheduled into the works programme and will be repaired as soon as the resources become available
- 5) Can Monaghan MD please outline how funding allocated for the Monaghan Greenway will be spent?
Response: The scheme will need to be fully evaluated, and the Project Grant Application Form returned to the NTA seeking approval to expend this allocation. When evaluate, proposals will be brought to the members for approval.

Cllr Aughey asked:

- 1.) Can the MD please update members with regard to the Monaghan Biotechnology Innovation Centre, its progress and its estimated time of delivery?
Response: Tenders were received and a decision to award the contract to construct the facility will be made in the coming weeks, by the company. It is anticipated that construction will take approx. 21 months.
- 2.) Can the MD please update members with regard to the Monaghan Town Park, its progress and its estimated time of delivery?
**Response: The field along the Greenway at Tullyhirm was purchased with the intention of creating a 'Welcome to Monaghan' statement, this being the entrance to the town from the approach from Northern Ireland along the Greenway. We wanted whatever the land was used for to speak of the values of the community, and also of the Council – what we hold dear, and what we are trying to achieve for the future of the town and its people. We have been working with Monaghan Education Centre and a group of teachers on the concept of a park which enables children to explore the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Maths) subjects in a practical way, enabling them to learn through practical experimentation, whilst at the same time building life skills such as team work, communication skills and how to assess and manage risk. The teachers feel this would be a great aid to the classroom and would also be a popular attraction for schools not just in Co. Monaghan, but in the surrounding counties also, thus potentially becoming a source of income to the town.
The project started as an idea within the Community & Enterprise section and has grown to involve the Creative Monaghan team. At this stage in its development, a discussion is required at Council level as to whether it is in favour of committing to the overall concept**

of providing a resource for the schools, as once complete, there will be upkeep and insurance costs to be met and it is as well to consider whether the local authority is prepared to shoulder these costs before going any further with the project.

If the Council is in favour of the concept, then a design would be required. The draft concept for the park is 'The Innovation Orchard', which draws on the county's renown for producing entrepreneurs and innovators and looks to the playground to nurture the next generation of Monaghan's innovators and entrepreneurs. One proposal for development of the design is to involve local businesses in the STEAM fields in designing individual features within the park, e.g. to ask an engineering firm to work out how best to help children to explore some of the principles that they use in their work, e.g. levers. Perhaps our own staff might design a feature which enables children to explore the relationship between wide channels/ slow moving water, dams, and narrow banks/ fast moving water and how they affect the amount of electricity produced to power something fun and creative at the end of the installation.....

The above proposed use for the site is subject to planning consent. The Planning section has been asked to advise on any constraints which may be presented by the site, but their advice has not yet been received.

- 3.) Can the MD please update members with regard to new strategies to combat littering, illegal dumping and dog fouling blighting our communities?

Response: Monaghan County Council continue to record, investigate and if adequate proof, initiate legal proceedings under both the Litter Pollution Act and the Waste Management Act. In 2020, 200 litter fines were issued to alleged offenders with both Warning Notices and Section Notices issuing under the Waste Management Act.

Over the month of January a communication awareness campaign "Your County Your Waste" specific to Monaghan was produced with weekly adverts being placed in the Northern Standard, targeted social media campaigns and promotional materials circulated to the Tidy Towns, PPN and community groups all with the objective of creating awareness on littering and its impact on the environment. Contact information for Environmental Services, both email and telephone number, was included on all campaign materials. In February and March over 600 litter pickers and bags were distributed throughout the county to interested groups, families and householders to assist them in carrying out a litter pick within their local area. As a further measure Environmental Services provide skips free of charge to community groups to assist them in April's National Spring Clean month and again in September for World Clean Up Day.

A dog fouling campaign is currently being organised for delivery in May/June throughout the county as dog fouling is a repetitive and hazardous problem. In addition, and at a significant cost, dog fouling bins are located along targeted walkways and dog fouling bags are replenished weekly within dog dispensers by MD staff who also empty the dog bins. Joint inspections will continue between the Dog Warden and Litter Patrol Officer at various locations.

Monaghan County Council has further resources to assist in the detection of illegal dumping including CCTV at bottle banks, use of private aerial surveillance and the recent purchase of a drone.

There are a number of ways to report littering, with email and mobile based applications such as

- **See it, Say it App**
- **Fix My Street App**
- **FREEPHONE – 1800 200014 confidential line**

➤ Email litter@monaghancoco.ie

The Litter Management Plan 2021 – 2023 is currently in draft, following a pre-consultation with the three main groups (Tidy Towns, PPN Network and Comhairle na nOg) to review and evaluate the current Litter Management Plan and to seek their views on what objectives they would like to see included in the new plan. This was commissioned by Environmental Services and delivered via an external consultant and proved an extremely valuable exercise for both Monaghan County Council and the various committees.

Further engagements have taken place at Tidy Town meetings, PPN meetings and Green School's meeting to further promote environmental awareness to those within our county.

- 4.) Can the MD please update members with regard to the Biodiversity Plan and cutting/ non-cutting of public green areas and its schedule for 2021 within the MD area?

Response: Landscaping is as per the presentation on Vegetation Management for Biodiversity and Pollinators given to the members in March, the MD have taken the feedback from last year to set the grass cutting plan for 2021 and also are carrying out a number of project to enhance the urban landscape. The grass cutting has commenced within the MD. The cutting was delayed allowing the growth of early pollinator plants which are a vital source of food for pollinators in the Spring. The majority of areas selected for pollinator friendly cutting will be cut every 6 weeks with the grass removed. This regime keeps grass at a manageable level while increasing the growth of wildflowers as a food source for pollinators.

Most residential groups have now been consulted, with more consultations to be completed this week.

Several new areas in Monaghan Town have been planted up this year with either pollinator friendly bulbs or native wildflower seeds, Castle road along the lower courthouse car park was planted to complement the previous planting completed there last year. Clones road to enhance the approach into town. Also, an area in Rooskey along the Greenway was planted with native wildflower seeds and an area on the Cootehill road is currently being prepared. Fruit trees are also planted in planters on the Diamond. The existing flower beds and planters are currently been prepared for planting.

CLlr Conlon asked:

- 1) Regarding the very poor drainage and excessive puddling during rainfall along the Mall Rd which is resulting in a deterioration of road that was resurfaced in the last four years, will this Council undertake an inspection to assess the efficacy of existing drainage gullies? Also, do any current road schemes include the Mall Rd whereupon additional gullies could be installed?

Response: Watermain Contract trenches were reinstated on sections of the Mall Road in 2018, however, the complete road is on the 2022 Roads Program which will include drainage works and pavement overlay as part of the complete road's rehabilitation works.

- 2) I ask the Housing Section to give an explanation regarding the issue of Taking in Charge of the Riverside Housing Development in Monaghan that results in the lack of publicly funded play facilities for the children in this estate of over 120 houses and apartments.

Response: The Riverside housing development has not been taken in charge by the Council. The developer or the majority of the owners of the houses can make an application for Taking in Charge to the planning authority, subject to necessary works being carried out/completed to a standard satisfactory to the planning authority.

- 3) I ask the Roads Section to provide an update on the submissions to Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) regarding the realignment of the N12 Armagh Rd from Silverstream to the County Armagh border at Tyholland.

Response: Monaghan County Council has submitted to Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) a request for two projects on the N12 to be included in the Minor Works list of Potential Future Road Schemes for consideration:

- **N12 Phase 1 (Silverstream to Tyholland) Road Upgrade (2.1km)**
- **N12 Phase 2 (Tyholland to Co Armagh Border) Road realignment (2.4km)**

A Project Information Summary Note and Scheme Cost estimate for each scheme has been provided to TII.

4. Motion:

That this MD look at the fencing in the new play park in Rossmore and report to the members on same,

1. Is the fencing as per contract agreed
2. If it is, can the MD look at strengthening the fence so it can withstand some abuse
3. That the beehive structures in the play park are also looked at to see what works can be done to strengthen them against damage.
4. Can the Md and Coillte look at the provision of cctv / trail cams around the play park to deter against vandalism and also give parents more security with their children using the play park.

Cllrs. Aughey and Maxwell

Cllrs Maxwell and Aughey outlined the motion and asked could we look at strengthening the fence and invest in trail cams to deter vandalism and give security to parents. Cllr Aughey agreed with Cllr Maxwell and asked that the beehives be repaired. He expressed the need to keep the Park in pristine order.

All members supported the motion. Mr McElwain stated that fencing will be strengthened and that we are looking for a similar product to replace the beehives. He added that there is no ESB in the park and the small power source at gate would not be sufficient. A cost in the region of 80,000 would be required to provide a full supply.

Cllr Aughey requested we ask Coillte to extend the car park at the entrance to which Mr McElwain responded that Coillte are not in favour of removing trees for extra car parking. A discussion took place on the parking issue.

5. Correspondence:

Letter for Dept of Transport dated 29th March acknowledging letter regarding learner drivers.

Letter from DOHLGH dated 16th March regarding Serviced Sites Fund

Email from TII dated 24th March regarding provision of bus stops.

Letter of Acknowledgement from Dept of Transport dated 24th March regarding learner drivers.

Email dated 8th April from NTA regarding provision of bus shelter at Annyalla.

Letter from Dept of Transport dated 13th April regarding learner drivers

6. Votes of Sympathy:

The members and Executive conveyed their deepest sympathy to the McKenna Family on the passing of Hugh McKenna RIP.

Dated this 19th day of April 2021

Signed: _____

Cathaoirleach

Signed: _____

Meetings Administrator