

Municipal District of Monaghan

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan Municipal District held in M-tek 1 Building, Knockaconny, on Monday, 16th May 2022 at 10a.m.

The Leis Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Seamus Treanor presided.

Present: Cllrs. Cathy Bennett, Sean Conlon, Raymond Aughey, and Brian McKenna

Apologies: Cllrs. David Maxwell and Paudge Connolly

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

1. Confirmation of Minutes:

On the proposal of Cllr. Conlon, seconded by Cllr. Bennett, it was agreed that the minutes of the Municipal District of Monaghan meeting held on 21st April 2022 be confirmed.

2. Matters arising:

Heaton's Corner- Yellow Box Junction – Cllr. McKenna requested update to which Mr. McElwain advised that NDS to proceed in the next number of weeks with NRA in support. To be completed by June.

Belgium Park/Square Dumping - Cllr. Aughey requested an update to which Mr. McElwain advised works complete on weeding, fence repair and footpath repair. Riverside Residents Group to fix fence. Mr. McElwain will follow-up on dumping issue.

3. Report from Municipal District Co-Ordinator

Mr. McElwain outlined the report to the members.

Broad Road Carpark – Cllr. Aughey asked will amendments impact delivery date of November 2022. Mr. McElwain advised in review part of the process with pressure still on team to deliver for November 2022.

Glaslough Pedestrian Crossing – Cllr. Aughey welcomed this development.

Hollywood Park – Cllr. Bennett asked for a further update. Mr. McElwain advised when committee comments reviewed and agreed, update will be circulated to Cllrs.

Grass Cutting & Weed Spraying – Cllr. Treanor asked what the current schedule is. Mr. McElwain advised outdoor staff are to do spot spraying, weather permitting, over next few weeks.

Cllr. Conlon advised of issues in areas where grass is not being cut for biodiversity purposes – Can Cllrs. have a schedule of areas been cut and if there is a pollinator area, can MD please erect a sign for public information.

Cllr. Aughey advised, Michael is to meet with Residents Groups to discuss cutting schedule, weeding and pollinator areas. Mr. McElwain to follow-up with Michael. Mr. McElwain advised additional staff recruited for cutting over summer periods.

Small Village Scheme – Cllr. Treanor asked in relation to the €50 million available, would information. Mr. Murray will seek clarity on the scheme and what project would qualify.

Clontibret Footpath – Cllr. Aughey asked why the footpaths failed and also why the MD re-tendered the repairs? Mr. McElwain advised the quotes received for the Slurry mix repair were very high so the MD re-tendered for full replacement of the footpath. Mr Deeney advised the total length is 150m. Mr. McElwain advised that tests were inconclusive as to why the materials failed and advised that 3 areas is a very low percentage of the overall footpaths installed.

Bridge Works – Cllr. McKenna asked in relation to bridges hit by vehicles, is there funding available from any other areas/departments as he is aware the Stonemasons are required but costly and in order to restore the bridges to their original stonework features and preserve their look. Mr. McElwain advised that the MD office has a list of bridges requiring repairs however the only budget available is the discretionary budget and therefore the MD is limited as to the number of bridges repaired.

Rossmore – Cllr. Aughey asked regarding the purchase of Rossmore – the damage at the entrance beside the house, could this be repaired to improve visual of park. Mr. McElwain advised that the reps. of Lord Rossmore apparently had appointed a contractor to do the repairs and this was to be completed soon.

4. Questions & Motions

Cllr Conlon asked:

1. For the purpose of complying with disability legislation and Access For All principles, have this Council contacted the ESB seeking the relocation of the light pole in the middle of the footpath on the Broad Rd. in front of Kinga's Cafe.

Response: The Municipal District has requested a quotation from the public lights contractor to relocate this pole to improve accessibility

2. In consideration of the severe shortage of housing accommodation, can the Council owned vacant property at 4/5 Mill St. be converted into apartments that will help reduce lengthy Council housing waiting lists?

Response: The council are currently investigating possible future uses for this building and will bring a report to the members at the next Municipal District meeting.

3. Has any progress occurred in efforts in re-instating Wi-Fi provision in Monaghan Town?

Response: The Monaghan Town public wi-fi scheme was installed by Magnet Networks in 2019.

The underlying idea was that Magnet would deliver the service and look after maintenance of the network, with a view to potentially selling on advertising for local events through the wi-fi network in the future. However, take up was low at the start so the prospect of selling advertising was never developed. In the process, a number of broadband lines were installed, and the wi-fi points were installed by an authorised contractor. The concept was that the broadband would be installed in and made available from commercial premises within Monaghan Town.

The Covid-19 pandemic closed down much of the wi-fi activity within the town and also made access to any of the host sites difficult for the contractor. Magnet Networks also came under new ownership in 2021.

At the beginning of the year (and again following this recent query), I tried to contact Magnet Networks to clarify what the position was in relation to the wi-fi network, noting that we had a number of issues around equipment not working. I have only received a response from Magnet this week and we have a meeting planned next week. I am unsure whether Magnet plan to continue to support this project or not.

As it stands, only 2 of the 8 wi-fi access points are currently up and running. If we are going to try to get the additional wi-fi points running ourselves without the support from Magnet, we will probably need to get an electrical contractor, hire a hoist, and probably additional wi-fi equipment. There may also be significant delays and costs in getting replacement equipment. So, there is potential for some significant costs for the Municipal District.

The related question is whether public wi-fi is as necessary now as it was several years ago, given that most people have significant data allowances with their phones, so I am uncertain whether re-establishing this will deliver any value for money. We are currently looking at other options for using digital technology within the urban area and will forward on more details when these are available.

Cllr Connolly asked:

1. What plans have Monaghan MD to resolve surface water flooding issues at Tullyree, Glaslough?

Response: Monaghan Municipal District has this work scheduled into the drainage works programme which will be carried out when the road surfacing program has been completed.

Motions:

“That we, Monaghan Municipal District write to the Ministry of local government, Darragh O’Brian to increase the amount of funds to Monaghan Co. Co. for housing adaptation grants for older people and people with disability as the fund in 2021 was depleted by June 19th.”

Cllr Seamus Treanor outlined his motion which was seconded by Cllr Aughey and agreed by all members.

Cllr. Aughey asked how long is the current waiting list? Mr. Murray to compile a report for next MD meeting.

Cllr. McKenna asked is there houses getting grants which were built in the last 20 years that should have had accessibility included at the time of build? Also, should the council commit additional funding to this budget at council budget approval to assist with additional works? Mr. Murray to include this in his report.

Cllr. Bennett supported the need to retrofit homes to save money especially in current climate and asked if grant applications can also be submitted to SEAI. Mr. Murray advised that SEAI grants are open to all. Grants with Monaghan County Council are for people with a disability/carers to apply for adaptations to homes.

Mr. Murray advised all members that Monaghan County Council currently commits 20% which equals €300,000 to receive Department funding of 80% €1.2 million. If County Council was to increase funding to €400,000 there is no guarantee that Department will increase their 80% contribution in line with council increase. Mr. Murray advised that the extra funding comes from housing budget.

Mr Murray also advised that although allocations are made for the adaptations, the owners need to engage a contractor within their allocated budget which is not always possible to get a contractor on site quickly. The grants section cannot reallocate the funding once promised unless the owners advise they are unable to proceed with the adaptations.

Grants section do give approval to some property owners to complete works with the understanding that the works will be paid for from the next years budget in January next year.

Mr Murray will include number of applications and age of housing in his report to be presented at June MD meeting.

Cllr. Treanor also reference the increased costs of building is having an impact on the adaption grants being utilised.

Cllr. Treanor would also like to discuss option to introduce Vacant Property Tax in County Monaghan. Cllr. Conlon also supported the introduction of Vacant Property Tax and requested information regarding the pro's and cons on Vacant Property Tax for the June meeting.

Mr. Murray advised that the approval time for the Vacant Property Tax is at the Annual Budget. Mr. Murray asked Cllrs to note that Vacant Property Tax can apply to all vacant property and assessment can be included to advise how many avails of same.

6. Active Travel Presentation

Kevin West gave a detailed presentation on the current and upcoming projects under the Active Travel for members and public information.

All Members thanked the Active Travel team for their presentation.

Cllr. Bennett thanked them for the works completed in Scotstown and asked to ensure that Scotstown to Ballinode project incorporates Hollywood Park and the GAA training ground which is to be further developed and is at tender stage.

Cllr. Aughey asked if the proposed path at Coolshannagh which includes pedestrian crossing could be moved closer to St. Davnets. Cllr. Aughey welcomed the works at Ballyalbany horseshoe bridge via Active Travel Team and requested information of when the 2023 Active Travel Projects are to be submitted for the members input. Mr West advised the

funding is approved in October annually, so MD should submit their list to the Active Travel team in September. To be included in the agenda for September 2022 MD meeting.

Cllr Conlon also asked regarding the Mall Road contra-flow cycling if separated by orange bollards can dedicated outdoor staff be appointed to replace damaged bollards to prevent failure of the scheme and ensure a stock of the bollards is in place to do replacements asap. Cllr Conlon asked regarding the N2 Spur which maybe held up due to the length, can this be done in 2 stages? And can a pedestrian crossing with lights to reduce need for over/under pass.

Cllr. McKenna welcomed works at Horseshoe Bridge and asked if Active Travel Team can provide a footpath from Emyvale village to the football field for the safety of the community.

Cllr. Treanor asked in relation to the junction Old Armagh Road at Beech hill being blocked by traffic failing to adhere to yellow box. Mr. McElwain advise that the Yellow Box had been extended only the previous week and they will continue to observe the area.

7. Renaming of Road L14105 – Mr. McElwain outlines the process taken and the submissions received. All submissions were in support to the renaming of the road. Recommendation to rename road Ógie Ó Dufaigh Way / Slí Ógie Uí Dhufaigh. Cllr. McKenna proposed to accept the Recommendation. Cllr. Bennett seconded the recommendation. Cllrs. Aughey, Treanor and Conlon all associated with accepting of recommendation.

8. Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations

Sympathies were extended to the following: -
George McMeel and the McMeel Family on the passing of Peggy McMeel, Tydavnet.

This concluded the business of the meeting

Dated this 16th day of May 2022

Signed: _____

Cathaoirleach

Signed: _____

Meetings Administrator