

**Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Mtek Building, Armagh Road, Monaghan, County Monaghan on Monday 09 January 2023 at 10.00am**

**Chair:** Cllr S. Conlon, Cathaoirleach

**Present:** Cllrs. Aughey, Bennett, Carthy, Campbell, P. Conlon, Connolly, Coyle, Keelan, McCooey, McElvaney, O'Hanlon, P. Treanor, S. Treanor, Maxwell, McKenna and Truell.

Ms. P. Monahan, Chief Executive; Ms. N. Woods, Mr. J. Murray, Mr. C. Flynn, Directors of Services; Ms. C. O'Hare, Mr. G. McMahon, A/ Director of Services; Ms. O. McConnon, Accountant, Ms. M. McGarvey, Meetings Administrator, Ms. L. Brannigan, Senior Staff Officer.

On the proposal of Cllr S Conlon, seconded by Cllr PJ O'Hanlon, it was agreed that a vote of sympathy be extended to the family and colleagues of Private Sean Rooney who was killed while serving as part of a UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon in December 2022.

All members and executive associated themselves with the vote of sympathy

**Urgent Business:**

The Cathaoirleach informed the members that he had received a notice of urgent business in the name of the Sinn Fein party as follows:

*In light of the heightened levels of crisis currently impacting the provision of health care, especially with patient bed capacity and outpatient waiting lists, that this Council write to Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly TD and HSE acting Chief Executive Stephen Mulvany seeking increased step down and rehabilitation bed allocation, and expanded clinic service provision, at Monaghan General Hospital.*

On the proposal of Cllr N Keelan, seconded by Cllr C Bennett, it was agreed to enter 'into Committee' to discuss whether to accept the motion submitted as urgent business.

Following a short discussion, it was agreed to take the motion of urgent business at the end of the meeting.

On the proposal of Cllr N Keelan, seconded by Cllr S Conlon, it was agreed that the Council revert to public session.

**1. Confirmation of Minutes:**

**(i) Minutes of Council Meeting held on 05 December 2022**

On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan seconded by Cllr R Aughey it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 05 December 2022, be confirmed.

## 2. Correspondence

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

- Letter from the Assistant Private Secretary of the Taoiseach, Mr. Micheal Martin, T.D., regarding Citizens' Assemblies alongside a report by the Department on the implementation of the Government's Shared Island Initiative in 2022.
- Email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D., regarding health staffing issues.
- Email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Finance, Mr. Paschal Donohue, T.D., regarding the Defective Concrete Products Levy.
- Acknowledgement letter from the Office of the Minister for Social Protection, Ms. Heather Humphreys, T.D., regarding the criteria for Employment Schemes.
- Email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D., regarding the opening hours of the Minor Injury Unit at Monaghan General Hospital.
- Email from Ms. Stephanie Dunne, Communications Manager, RCSI Hospital Group regarding the opening hours of the Minor Injury Unit at Monaghan General Hospital.
- Letter from the Office of the Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Suzanne Hannigan, Health Service Executive regarding retention of an infant's organs at post-mortem without express permission.
- Resolution from Kerry County Council regarding Ukrainian Refugees.
- Resolution from the Northern and Western Regional Assembly regarding the proposed development of a cancer centre for the North-West.
- Resolution from Cork County Council regarding the Proposed Planning and Development Bill.
- Resolution from Cork County Council regarding funding for the Local Improvement Scheme.
- Resolution from Cork County Council regarding personal health insurance.

**2.1** The following additional correspondence which had been received after the agenda had issued, was also circulated:

- Letter of thanks from the Apostolic Nuncio to the European Union, Bishop Noel Treanor following his appointment.
- Resolution from Meath County Council regarding the generation of nuclear power in Ireland.

### **Proposals arising out of correspondence:**

*On the proposal of Cllr S Coyle, seconded by Cllr PJ O'Hanlon, it was agreed that this Council communicate a message of appreciation and good wishes to An Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Micheál Martin TD for his term as Taoiseach during a difficult and challenging period for Ireland, Europe and the World, acknowledging, in particular, his government's investment in Co Monaghan and the initiation of the Shared Island Programme during the period June 2020 to December 2022.*

*(Cllr Maxwell recorded as not in agreement with this motion)*

*On the proposal of Cllr S Coyle, seconded by Cllr R Aughey, it was agreed that this Council reply to the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD, acknowledging the excellence of the staff at the Minor Injuries Unit at Monaghan General Hospital and request him to immediately instruct the RCSI to put in place the necessary funding to have the MIU at*

*Monahan General Hospital open 24/7, 365 days of the year to provide the excellence of their current services and additional services to the people of Co Monaghan and adjoining counties consequently reducing waiting times and queuing at Cavan General Hospital and Our lady of Lourdes, Drogheda.*

*On the proposal of Cllr S Coyle, seconded by Cllr P Connolly, it was agreed that this Council support the Cork Co Co motion to Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD expressing concern at the proposed Planning & Development Bill coming before cabinet shortly which will limit local Councillors' powers. The proposed bill seeks to change the term of the Co-Development Plan to ten years which is far too long.*

*Cllr P Treanor proposed, Cllr B McKenna seconded, that this Council's motion in relation the Citizen's Assembly on a United Ireland be reissued to the new Taoiseach Leo Varadkar TD seeking his support. A vote by show of hands resulted in 14 for, 1 against, 2 abstentions. The Cathaoirleach declared the motion carried.*

*On the proposal of Cllr C Carthy, seconded by Cllr C Bennett, it was agreed that this Council re-issue correspondence to the Department of Health and Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD in relation to putting in place proper, sensitive procedures to avoid any future retention of a baby's organs, at post-mortem, without the express permission of the parent.*

### **3. To consider Section 183 Notice – Disposal of Lands at 56 Killyconnigan, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan**

Mr. C. Flynn, Director of Services, outlined the S183 circulated for the Disposal of 0.126 hectares of land at 56 Killyconnigan, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan to Sean Donohue, 56 Killyconnigan, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan.

*On the proposal Cllr R Aughey seconded by Cllr S Conlon it was agreed that the Council approve the Disposal of Land located at 56 Killyconnigan, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan in accordance with the terms of notice dated 25 November 2022 and attached site location map under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.*

### **4. To approve Newspapers for Publication of Planning Notices**

*On the proposal of Cllr D Maxwell seconded by Cllr S Coyle 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 review Capital Programme 2023-2025**

Mr Alan Hall, Senior Executive Engineer attended the meeting and gave a comprehensive presentation to the members on the Capital Programme. Mr Cathal Flynn, Director of Services, introduced the presentation by advising that the Capital Programme is a three-year

rolling programme, reviewed annually, and was presented to members along with the annual budget. He stated that the Programme includes a total 110 projects, which will require funding of some €313 million over the three-year period. He further stated that it was important to note that consideration of the Capital Programme by the Members does not confer Council approval on any individual project. This can only be achieved through the normal statutory processes and compliance with the Public Spending Code. Funding arrangements also need to be clearly identified and secured in advance of committing to any project. Mr Hall then provided members with an update on the status of the various projects contained in the programme.

A discussion followed to which a number of members contributed and Executive responded. Mr J Murray clarified that the estimated cost of 9 houses at Knockroe is €2.25 million (page 6 of Capital Programme 2023-2025). It was agreed that Housing be placed as a specific item for discussion on a future Co Co Agenda.

Ms P Monahan, Chief Executive, concluded by thanking Cathal, Alan, the capital team, and all the teams throughout the Council that are engaged in capital works. She stated that it is an ambitious programme for the people of Monaghan and thanked the elected members for their support.

*On the proposal of Cllr A McCooey, seconded by Cllr PJ O'Hanlon, it was agreed that based on the data collected in the Housing Needs & Demand Assessment carried out by Monaghan Co Co, we propose that this Council create a Housing Action Plan for Co Monaghan and should reasonable demand for affordable housing options arise, that we, as a local authority, create our own proposal to Minister for Housing & Local Government, Darragh O'Brien TD to develop an affordable housing scheme for Co Monaghan. We must use our own function to assess and determine any affordability constraints in our County.*

## **6. To receive an update on the New Office loan application**

Mr J. Murray, Director of Services, advised members that the Department had refused loan sanction because the project was not yet sufficiently advanced, but stated that the Department had indicated that approval should be forthcoming when the offices had gone through their design and planning stages and were ready for construction.

Mr Murray outlined two options for consideration by members as a result of non-sanction of new offices loan.

- Option 1 – Retaining the ARV increase would result in €665,950 being available in both 2023 and 2024 for investment in the New Office development
- Option 2 – providing a once off credit to rate accounts equivalent to the additional increase of 2.8% on the ARV.

He stated that the Executive were recommending Option 1 – retaining the rates increase.

A lengthy discussion followed, where the majority of members reiterated their full support for the New Offices project.

Chief Executive, Ms P Monahan stated that Monaghan Co Co are aware that putting better facilities in place would come at a cost to ratepayers but the Council had outgrown its home at the Glen which was first occupied at a time when the Council had 100 indoor staff. The local authority now had more than 450 employees and had the potential to add up to 60 new personnel to fill roles and responsibilities.

*Cllr P Connolly proposed, Cllr S Treanor seconded, that Monaghan Co Co proceed with Option 2 – providing a once off credit to rate account*

Cllr B McKenna proposed, Cllr S Coyle seconded, that Monaghan Co Co proceed with Option 1 – retaining the rate increase.

A recorded vote was taken on Cllr Connolly's proposal which resulted as follows:

**For:** Cllrs Connolly, S. Treanor

**Total: 2**

**Against:** Cllrs Aughey, Bennett, Campbell, Carthy, S Conlon, P Conlon, Coyle, Keelan, Maxwell, McCooey, McElvaney, McKenna, O'Hanlon, Truell, P. Treanor

**Total: 15**

The Cathaoirleach declared Cllr Connolly's proposal defeated. As a direct result, the Cathaoirleach declared Cllr McKenna's proposal carried.

## **7. To receive an update on the Bioconnect Innovation Centre**

Mr C. Flynn, Director of Services, advised the meeting that the project is at an advanced stage and is expected to be substantially completed by April/May 2023. He advised that cost increases, primarily attributable to inflation and additional work on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, necessitated a further application for funding of €1.3 million from Enterprise Ireland to complete the work. The Council will be required to provide match funding of €200,000. It is proposed that €200,000 be allocated from the Industrial & Economic Development Fund.

Mr Flynn advised members that the partners in the project comprised Monaghan County Council, Monaghan Mushrooms, Lakeland Dairies, Manor Farm, Bio Marine and other smaller stakeholders distributed throughout the county.

Mr Flynn advised that members were being asked to consider the following:

- Endorse a further commitment to the project of €200,000
- Provide BioConnect with working capital bridging finance of up to €850k, by way of a temporary loan, to address potential delay's in release of funds by Enterprise Ireland

Mr Flynn and Ms McConnon responded to members queries.

*On the proposal of Cllr R Aughey, seconded by Cllr C Bennett it was agreed to endorse a further commitment of €200,000 through the Industrial & Economic Development Fund and to provide BioConnect with bridging finance, by way of a temporary loan, to deal with any delay in release of funds by Enterprise Ireland.*

## **8. To receive a presentation from the Active Travel Unit**

Ms. B. McArdle, Senior Executive Engineer, Active Travel Unit joined the meeting to provide an update to members on the activities of the Active Travel Unit.

Ms McArdle advised that the Active Travel Grants Programme funds important projects supporting strategic pedestrian and cyclist routes, access to schools, permeability links, and urban greenways. In 2022 the NTA allocated funds to Ireland's local authorities with a view to spending €289 million on over 1200 walking and cycling infrastructure projects nationally. Ms McArdle advised that a Regional Cycle Network Plan, a comprehensive, safe and connected cycle network for Monaghan (including urban networks for Monaghan & Carrickmacross) and adjacent counties is due for publication Q1 of 2023.

The Active Travel Grant allocation in 2022 was €2,500,605 towards 46 schemes. The allocation was fully spent with a small overspend of 3%. The expected allocation for 2023 is €3 million.

Ms McArdle outlined the various Active Travel Schemes throughout the County and highlighted in particular, the works on upgrading the Monaghan Town Greenway.

Ms McArdle and Mr G McMahon responded to members queries.

The Cathaoirleach thank Ms McArdle for her informative presentation.

#### **9. To receive a Review of the NOAC 2021 Performance Indicators Report**

Ms M. McGarvey gave a brief overview of the Report which had been circulated. She explained that the report prepared by Monaghan County Council sets out to compare the Council's performance in 2021 with the highest and lowest performers nationally; against similar size counties (Level 5 counties); against similar indicators in previous years (where applicable) and on the basis of these, to establish targets for the following year. She highlighted a number of performance indicators in which Monaghan County Council performed exceedingly well.

A discussion followed during which queries raised by the members were replied to. Members acknowledged and congratulated staff on the standards noted in the review.

#### **10. To receive Reports from Members attending Conferences/Training events**

The members noted the Reports from Cllr. Connolly and Conlon in relation to their attending at the following Conferences/Training events:

- AILG – Recognising Community Leaders, Inclusion & Diversity – Co. Meath
- AILG – Disability Inclusion– Co. Kerry
- AILG – Data Protection– Co. Meath
- LAMA – Spring Seminar – Rural Development – Co. Kilkenny
- AILG – Autumn Training Seminar – Celebrating Local Government – Co. Meath

*On the proposal of Cllr S Coyle, seconded by Cllr R Aughey, it was agreed to extend the meeting to 4.30 pm to conclude the business on the Agenda.*

#### **11. To consider recommendations and minutes from Corporate Policy Group Meeting on 20 December 2022.**

The members noted the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 20 December 2022 which had been circulated.

The incorrect reference at item 2 of CPG Minutes to '2023' Annual Ethics Declarations was noted and will be corrected to read '2022' Annual Ethics Declarations.

*On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan seconded by Cllr R Aughey it was agreed that the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 20 December 2022 and the recommendations contained therein be approved.*

At this point, the Cathaoirleach congratulated Ms P Monahan on her appointment as Chief Executive of Monaghan Co Co.

## **12. To receive Management Report – December 2022**

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

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

## **13. Business submitted by Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive informed the members there was no matters for consideration under this item.

## **14. Matters arising out of the minutes of Council meeting held on 05 December 2022**

There were no matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 05 December 2022.

## **15. To receive update on N2 National Primary Road Schemes**

Discussed under Management Report and Capital Programme item. No further update on the N2 National Primary Road Scheme.

## **16. To receive update on North South Interconnector project**

Mr A Hughes, Senior Planner, advised the meeting that Monaghan Co Co had been contacted by Eirgrid in respect of their Implementation Plan 2023 – 2027. They have prepared a SEA scoping report which is available on their website. This report will inform their implementation plan. The closing date for submissions is 30 January 2023. The consultation process is open to anyone via their website.

*On the proposal of Cllr N Keelan, seconded by Cllr C. Carthy it was agreed that this Council write to An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar TD as head of Government requesting that his office would have a fresh look at delivering the North South Interconnector using the undergrounding technology. That his office would feed into the ongoing review of this project, given that the undergrounding option is the only one which has community acceptance across the affected counties.*

## 17. To receive update on the Ulster Canal project

Discussed earlier in meeting, no further update on the Ulster Canal project

## 18. Questions:

**Cllr C. Carthy asked:**

1. How many homeless presentations were made to MCC in 2022 and what measures are in place to deal with cases of rough sleeping?

**Reply: From 1st January to 14th December 2022, Monaghan County Council received 120 enquiries either directly from individuals themselves or from others on their behalf, reporting homelessness. Upon review, 19 of those presenting were deemed as homeless. The remaining 101 people were having difficulties or at risk of homelessness, but not homeless. Support was provided to both groups. Details of the support provided are outlined in the Chief Executive report for this month.**

**Monaghan County Council Housing Section work primarily in preventing people becoming homeless and work with other agencies to reduce the numbers presenting.**

**Monaghan County Council have emergency accommodation available in the form of a hostel bed, 3 beds with Castleblayney Trust and use of B&B's.**

**Monaghan County Council works in partnership with the Peter McVerry Trust in delivering the Housing First programme and work with Focus Ireland in delivering support services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness**

2. Are any additional supports, similar to the Covid Response in 2020/21, being given to foodbanks in Co. Monaghan?

**Reply: The Community Department is not aware of any future funding supports coming through the Local Authority or the LCDC to support foodbanks. We understand that the funding that was provided in the past was specifically related to the COVID pandemic.**

3. What measures are being looked at to bring the percentage of roads in the Carrickmacross-Castleblayney Municipal District, with a PSCI Rating of 1-4, in line with the other MD's; circa 24% of roads with low rating versus approx. 15% in other two MD's?

**Reply: The allocation of roads funding as agreed with the elected representatives is in line with percentage of roads in each of the MDs. The Members agree a 3-year roads programme based on this funding.**

4. What is the final breakdown of Council housing Grants (applied for, successful and completed) for 2022?

**Reply: In 2022 Monaghan County Council Housing Section have to date (20/12/2022):**

- Received 326 applications
- Approved 233 applications
- Paid out on 234 applications and
- Recouped 241 applications in the amount of €2,031,504 (Actual – additional €33k expected)



**There is in excess of €1m at Recommendation/Works /Final/Recoupment Stages Made up of approximately 152 grants**  
· There are approximately 90 applications at Registration /OT/Initial stages/ and approximately 10 applications pending registration/processing

**Cllr N. Keelan asked:**

5. Given the alarming rise in domestic violence cases against women in particular and indeed men what is the up-to-date position in relation to the provision of much needed emergency accommodation within our county?

**Reply: The Domestic Violence Refuge Design and Project Management Guide intended for practical use at local community level was launched by Safe Ireland on the 8th December 2022**

**The Safe Spaces Series is focused on three elements – and provides practical guides on;**

- **Safe Place (Refuge/DV Accommodation Needs)**
- **Safe Practice (Multi-Disciplinary Good Practice for DV specialists)**
- **Safe Community (DV-Aware Community Development and Engagement)**

**Monaghan County Council's housing section will be meeting Safe Ireland and Tearmann in 2023 to discuss the implementation of these guidelines.**

6. What is the up-to-date position in relation to the launch of the outstanding community plans across the County?

**Reply: During 2022, Monaghan County Council completed and launched community plans in Newbliss and Ballinode, adding them to the plans completed already in Aughnamullen, Oram, Newbliss/ Killeevan and Scotshouse. A draft plan has been prepared for Emyvale and staff are engaging with the community groups to get buy-in. It will only be possible to advance projects of significant scale with consensus and an integrated plan for the village.**

**In addition to driving the planning process in these areas, the community development team have been advising on planning processes underway in four communities, namely Latton, Glaslough, Drum and Rockcorry. This work continues into 2023.**

**It is intended to commence the process of engaging with local communities with a view to preparing local Community Plans in Smithboro and Donaghmoyne in 2023. This will happen following the release by the CSO of Census 2021 statistics at the local level, so that the new Plans will benefit from the most current data available on their communities.**

**In addition to preparing community plans, the staff of the Community Dept. continue to work with individual groups to develop projects to application readiness, so that the Council maintains the high standard of applications which are submitted to government funding programmes such as Town & Village, Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure, CLAR etc.**

7. How many private laneways are currently on the waiting list for resurfacing under the local lane improvement scheme (LIS)?

**Reply: There are currently 94 applications on the LIS waiting list. We received 118 applications and 24 of these did not meet the initial eligibility assessment. New criteria had been introduced in 2021 and the 94 eligible applicants will be written to in early 2023 requesting additional information. Once we have this information, we will be in a position to provide a more up to date list.**

8. In relation to the various grant aid schemes available for private homes, (mobility aids), (housing aid for older people) (housing adaptation) how much money was paid out or

committed in year 2022, how many grant aid applications are outstanding for payment or inspection?

**Reply: In 2022 Monaghan County Council Housing Section have to date (20/12/2022)**

- Received 326 applications
- Approved 233 applications
- Paid out on 234 applications and
- Recouped 241 applications in the amount of €2,031,504 (Actual – additional €33k expected)
- There is in excess of €1m at Recommendation/Works /Final/Recoupment Stages
- made up of approximately 152 grants
- There are approximately 90 applications at Registration /OT/Initial stages/ and approximately 10 applications pending registration/processing.

#### 19. Notices of Motion

No notices of motion received

#### 20. Votes of Sympathy / Congratulations

It was agreed votes of sympathy would be extended to the following:

- Rosemarie Sherry, Rates Department, on the death of her mother, Dymrna Treanor (nee McGuinness)
- The family of Marion Donnelly, Emyvale, former member of Co Monaghan Joint Policing Committee

#### 21. Conferences

*On the proposal of Cllr D Maxwell seconded by Cllr P Conlon it was agreed that the Council be represented at the following training events by the members listed.*

Promoting Authority	Subject/Theme	Venue	Dates	Members Selected
<b>Celtic Conferences</b>	Local Authority Procurement Process	O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork	20 <sup>th</sup> , 21 <sup>st</sup> & 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2023	Cllr S Coyle
<b>Celtic Conferences</b>	Modular Housing in Ireland	Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2023	Cllr A McCooey
<b>Association of Irish Regions</b>	Regional Seminar and Training Event	Four Seasons Hotel and Leisure Club, Monaghan	7 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup> February 2023	Cllr. Seamus Coyle Cllr. PJ O'Hanlon Cllr. Colm Carthy Cllr. Brian McKenna Cllr. Pat Treanor Cllr. David Maxwell Cllr. Peter Conlon Cllr. Paudge Connolly

				Cllr. Aoife McCooey Cllr. Sean Conlon Cllr. Raymond Aughey Cllr. Seamus Treanor Cllr. Aidan Campbell
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**Urgent Business**

*Cllr S Conlon proposed, Cllr C Bennett seconded, that in light of the heightened levels of crisis currently impacting the provision of health care, especially with patient bed capacity and outpatient waiting lists, that this Council write to Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly TD and HSE acting Chief Executive Stephen Mulvany seeking increased step down and rehabilitation bed allocation, and expanded clinic service provision, at Monaghan General Hospital.*

Following a short discussion on the motion, the Cathaoirleach put it to the meeting and the motion was agreed unanimously.

The meeting concluded.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Cathaoirleach**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Meetings Administrator**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_