

**Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Mtek Building, Armagh Road, Monaghan, County Monaghan on Monday 13 February 2023 at 10.00am**

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

**Present:** Cllrs. Aughey, Bennett, Carthy, Connolly, Gilliland, Keelan, McCooey, McElvaney, O'Hanlon, P. Treanor, S. Treanor, Maxwell, McKenna and Truell.  
Cllr A Campbell attended via TEAMS

Ms. P. Monahan, Chief Executive; 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.

**Apologies:** Cllr P Conlon, Ms N Woods, Director of Services

*On the proposal of Cllr S Conlon, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended via the Turkish and Syrian Embassies to the Turkish and Syrian families who have lost loved ones in the recent devastating earthquake. It was agreed also that the sympathy of the Council be extended to GOAL, an Irish-based aid charity, who have confirmed that a number of its workers have lost their lives in the earthquake in Syria and Turkey.*

*On the proposal of Cllr S Conlon, seconded by Cllr D Maxwell, it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to the family of the late Packie Jones, former Co Councilor who passed away recently.*

Cllr Maxwell stated that Packie Jones first took a seat in Carrickmacross in 1974. He was elected as Cathaoirleach of the Co Co from 1993 -1994. Mr Jones was a great advocate for farmers and the community and the members of Monaghan Co Co want to acknowledge and recognise the huge contribution that Mr Jones made to the people of the county.

*On the proposal of Cllr S Conlon, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna, it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to the family of the late Sean Smith, member of Cavan Co Co. and brother of Deputy Brendan Smith.*

*On the proposal of Cllr C Bennett, seconded by Cllr B McKenna, it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to the family of the late Mickey Boylan, former outdoor staff member of Monaghan MD.*

All members associated themselves with the votes of sympathy. Ms P Monahan, Chief Executive, on behalf of the executive and staff associated herself with the votes of sympathy.

**1. Confirmation of Minutes:**

**(i) Minutes of Council Meeting held on 09 January 2023**

*On the proposal of Cllr N Keelan seconded by Cllr C Bennett it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 09 January 2023, be confirmed.*

## 2. Correspondence

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

- Email from the Office of the Minister of State, Mr. Kieran O'Donnell, T.D., regarding proposed changes to the Development Plan cycle.
- Email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D., regarding retention of an infant's organs at post-mortem without express permission.
- Email from Head of Service, AMRIC Acute Operations, HSE, Ms. Therese Dalchan, regarding retention of an infant's organs at post-mortem without express permission.
- Email from the Minister for Social Protection & Rural and Community Development, Ms. Heather Humphreys, T.D., regarding Community Employment scheme eligibility.
- Email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Mr. Eamon Ryan, T.D., regarding a proposed Solar PV Scheme.
- Acknowledgement email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D., regarding the Minor Injuries Unit at Monaghan General Hospital.
- Letter from the Assistant Private Secretary to the Taoiseach, Mr. Leo Varadkar, T.D., regarding the establishment of All-Ireland Citizen Assemblies.
- Email from Ms. Michelle Curran, Senior Staff Officer, Monaghan Municipal District Office, regarding control.
- Resolution from Cork County Council regarding lack of taxi availability.
- Resolution from Tipperary County Council regarding a reform of dog owner's responsibilities.
- Email from Mr. Eoghan Rackard, Senior Account Manager, Investnet, regarding the upcoming 2023 All Ireland Community & Council Awards.

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

- Email from Information Governance & Communications Manager, Ms. Stephanie Dunne, regarding the Minor Injury Unit at Monaghan General Hospital.

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

*On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr P Connolly, it was agreed that this Council support the Monaghan MD motion in relation to 'dog control' issues in Monaghan.*

*On the proposal of Cllr P Connolly, seconded by Cllr A. McCooey, it was agreed that this Council support the Tipperary Co Co motion calling on the Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Rural & Community Development and Minister for Housing to strengthen the control of Dogs Act Legislation in Ireland. A complete reform of dog owner's responsibilities must take place immediately for public and animal safety. An immediate review of the Dangerous Dogs Act must also take place banning ownership of these dogs in the State. A proper public indemnity insurance requirement must also be enshrined in new legislation for all dog owners.*

*On the proposal of Cllr P Connolly, seconded by Cllr S Treanor, it was agreed that this Council write again to the Minister for Energy and Minister for Finance regarding the November Monaghan Co Co motion re. solar panels for pensioners and retired people and indicate that the response we received did not address the core issue and instead referred to the venerable*

*customer's scheme. Original motion and response received are enclosed.*

*On the proposal of Cllr P Treanor, seconded by Cllr N Keelan, it was agreed that this Council seek a meeting (online if necessary) to receive a briefing on the schemes administered by SEAI and dovetail these with Co Co schemes.*

**3. To consider the Chief Executive's Report prepared in accordance with Part VIII of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) for the refurbishment of the existing Hollywood Park in conjunction with Hollywood Development Association (22/8009)**

Mr. T. Gourley, Planning Officer, outlined the Part VIII circulated for the for the refurbishment of the existing Hollywood Park in conjunction with Hollywood Development Association (22/8009). He advised that no submissions/objections were received during the public consultation period.

*On the proposal Cllr C. Bennett seconded by Cllr D Maxwell, it was agreed that the Council approve the the refurbishment of the existing Hollywood Park in conjunction with Hollywood Development Association in accordance as detailed in the Chief Executive's Report prepared in accordance with Part VIII of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).*

**4. To approve guidelines for acquiring properties where a tenant is in receipt of HAP**

Cllr P Treanor, Chairperson of the Housing SPC, referred to the circulated guidelines for acquiring houses with sitting HAP tenants. He advised that the guidelines outline circumstances where Monaghan Co Co would consider a property for purchase and the conditions that need to be met for that to happen.

Mr J Murray advised that LAs have been given delegated sanction to purchase private properties where there is a risk of homelessness of an existing tenant. Mr. Murray responded to members queries.

*On the proposal of Cllr P Treanor, seconded by Cllr A McCooey it was agreed that the guidelines as circulated with the Agenda be approved.*

**5. To note the County Monaghan Road Safety Plan 2022 – 2023**

Mr. G. McMahon, A/Director of Services and Mr. A. O'Sullivan, Road Safety Officer, gave an overview of the County Monaghan Road Safety Plan 2022-2023. Mr O'Sullivan advised that the Road Safety Working Together Group have produced Monaghan's second Road Safety Action Plan covering the period 2022-2023. This multi-agency document is complementary to the national strategy and outlines the actions to be undertaken in Co Monaghan to improve the safety of our roads. Mr McMahon and Mr O'Sullivan responded to members queries.

The plan was noted by members.

## **6. To consider the Creative Monaghan Strategy 2023 – 2027**

Ms. D. McQuaid, Senior Executive Librarian, joined the meeting to provide Members with a presentation on the Creative Monaghan Strategy 2023 – 2027. Ms D McQuaid, advised that the Creative Ireland Programme 2023 – 2027 is an all-of-government initiative committed to enhancing access to, engagement with and enjoyment of Ireland’s culture and creativity. Each LA was tasked with producing a 5-year Culture & Creative Strategy for the county.

Ms McQuaid provided members with an overview of the Co Monaghan Culture & Creative Strategy 2023 – 2027. She referred to the 5 pillars of Creative Ireland – ‘Creative Youth’; ‘Creative Communities’ and highlighted in particular, the 3 new pillars ‘Creative Industries’, ‘Creative Health & Wellbeing’ and ‘Creative Climate Action Sustainability’.

Ms McQuaid concluded by stating that over half a million people participated in the programme in 2022, 187 projects were delivered at a value of €1,777,365 of which €957,952 from CI Programme.

Members acknowledged the work of the Cultural Team and the Cathaoirleach thanked Ms McQuaid for her presentation.

*On the proposal of Cllr D Maxwell, seconded by Cllr P Treanor, the Creative Monaghan Strategy 2023 – 2027 was approved.*

## **7. To consider recommendations and minutes from Corporate Policy Group Meeting on 24 January 2023.**

The members noted the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 24 January 2023, which had been circulated.

*On the proposal of Cllr S Conlon seconded by Cllr P Treanor, it was agreed that the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 24 January 2023 and the recommendations contained therein be approved.*

## **8. To receive a Review Management Report – January 2023**

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

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

*On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr S Conlon, it was agreed to extend an invitation to Comhairle na nÓg to attend and observe a future Co Co meeting.*

*On the proposal of Cllr PJ O’Hanlon, seconded by Cllr R Aughey, it was agreed to request that Monaghan County Council deliver a presentation at the March Co Co meeting in relation to the works carried out in the county by local suppliers/contractors, how much it entails towards roads, footpaths and other works.*

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

The members noted the Report from Cllr. Coyle in relation to his attendance at the following Conference/Training event:

- Local Authority Procurement Process – Co. Cork

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

The Chief Executive informed the members there was no matters for consideration under this item. Ms C O'Hare, A/Director of Services thanked members for their engagement with the new online ethics system. She stated that Monaghan Co Co are one of two Co Council's piloting the project. She advised that all the members feedback has been taken on board.

At this point, Cllr S Conlon led the tributes to Mr J Murray, Head of Finance as he attended his last meeting of Monaghan Co Co prior to his retirement after 36 years. Cllr Conlon paid tribute to the careful oversight that Mr Murray and his team extended over taxpayers' money in the county and the great guidance he provided to members in their work. Cllr Conlon wished John a long and healthy retirement.

Ms P Monahan, Chief Executive noted Mr Murray's 36 years' service with Monaghan Co Council commencing in January 1987 as a Clerical Officer. He played a huge role in the development and advancement of Monaghan Co Council's financial system. Ms Monahan referred to the responsibilities Mr Murray had discharged in relation to housing, finance culture, IT and his role with Monaghan MD. She advised that Mr Murray was appointed Head of Finance in 2005 and Director of Services in 2014. Ms Monahan stated that Mr Murray has a wealth of knowledge of the organisation and was at all times unfailing helpful and courteous. Mr Murray's retirement will leave a massive gap in the organisation. Ms Monahan concluded by thanking John and congratulating him on his retirement.

Mr Murray commenced by stating that it was difficult listening to people say nice things about him but it was very much welcomed and appreciated. He stated that between himself, his sister, his daughter and both of his parents, who met in Monaghan Co Co, they have over 110 years of service. Mr Murray stated that he is very proud to have his sister as Director of Services and his daughter working in Planning section. He stated that he always took great joy out of seeing people getting promotion and progressing in their careers. He enjoyed working with the members, there was always good healthy interactions and some tough occasions also. He wished all members who are going forward for election in 2024 the very best of luck. He concluded by stating the Ms O McConnon will do a very good job and assured members that they are in safe hands going forward.

## **11. Matters arising out of the minutes of Council meeting held on 09 January 2023**

There were no matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 09 January 2023.

In relation to a query on food banks in Co Monaghan, G. McMahon to review and provide an update in next month's Management Report.

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

Mr G McMahon, A/Director of Services advised that Shanarc Archaeology continues with focussed geophysical surveys along the route. The road design, including junction and

side-road design is due for completion this month. A briefing for elected representatives has been organised for 27 February 2023 at 1pm in Civic Offices, Carrickmacross. The next steps are to complete the design and then develop the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and CPO documentation. A business Case for the project is also to be developed seeking approval to proceed to Phase 4 of the Project Management Guidelines.

Mr McMahon responded to members queries.

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

The following correspondence was received in relation to the North south Interconnector project:

- Letter from the Assistant Private Secretary to the Taoiseach regarding delivery of the North South Interconnect project using underground technology.

### **14. To receive update on the Ulster Canal project**

No further update on the Ulster Canal project.

### **15. Questions:**

**Cllr C. Carthy asked:**

1. What is the current situation with the 'taking in charge' of both Conabury Hill estate, Castleblayney and Alderwood, Carrickmacross?

**Reply: Conabury Hill: A Taking in Charge application was received in April 2021 & the Local Authority carried out a technical assessment of the development. In addition, it has consulted with Irish Water and is awaiting their response. The process shall be progressed upon receipt of their comments.**

**Alderwood: The local authority remains in contact with the developer's agent and are awaiting confirmation that previously identified defects have been resolved before the development undergoes a further assessment.**

2. When is it expected that works will recommence on the Clos na Droimainne estate, Carrickmacross?

**Reply: Tuath have advised Monaghan County Council that works have recommenced on site at Clos na Droimainne estate, Carrickmacross. Tuath are hopeful that the delivery timelines below can be achieved:**

**6 houses (4 Bed Townhouses)– June 2023**

**6 houses (4 Bed Townhouses)- September 2023**

3. Has the housing section been proactive in trying to purchase private housing that is being used for HAP tenants where a landlord has indicated their intention to sell?

**Reply: The Housing Section has purchased one house with the HAP tenant in situ in 2022. A guideline policy regarding this is currently before the members for their information.**

4. How many applications were made to MCC under the 'repair and lease' scheme in 2022 and how many were successful? Will those who have previously contacted

the council about this scheme, and were refused, be notified of the new Croí Conaithe scheme?

**Reply: In 2022, Monaghan County Council received 6 submissions under the repair and lease scheme but none of the property owners proceeded with applications, some decided to go ahead with work to let their properties privately or decided to sell their property privately. In January 2023 there were 5 inquiries regarding the repair and lease scheme, which suggests that there might be increased interest in the scheme this year. Property owners who contacted Monaghan County Council regarding the repair and lease scheme are being notified of the new Croí Conaithe scheme, however as Croí Conaithe requires the owner to live in the property when finished it is unlikely this scheme will be attractive to those who wish to develop a property for the rental market.**

5. Can the Local Enterprise Office give a breakdown of specific supports it has available to:
- People looking to set up a company
  - Existing Companies looking to expand or reach a greater customer base
  - Struggling businesses in need of supports

**Reply: The Local Enterprise Office offers a variety of financial supports to assist the start-up, development, and expansion of small businesses in the manufacturing and internationally traded services sectors (based upon eligibility criteria) as follows:**

- **Priming Grant: for businesses trading <18 months**

A Priming Grant is a business start-up grant available to micro enterprises within the first 18 months of start-up.

- **Business Expansion Grant: for businesses trading >18 months**

The Business Expansion Grant is designed to assist business in its growth phase after the initial 18-month start-up period.

- **Feasibility/Innovation Grant:**

This is designed to assist the promoter with researching market demand for a product or service and examining its sustainability. It includes assistance with innovation.

- **Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters (TAME) Grant - up to €2,500 grant available**

Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters' Grants will part-fund the costs that can be incurred in investigating and researching export markets, e.g., exhibiting at Trade Fairs.

- **Trading Online Voucher Scheme – up to €2,500 grant available**

The Trading Online Voucher Scheme is designed to assist small businesses with up to 10 employees to trade more online, boost sales and reach new markets. \*This grant is open to retail and services businesses as well as manufacturing and internationally traded services who have been trading a minimum of six months.

The local Enterprise Office provides business information, advisory services and

enterprise support to businesses at all stages of development. These include;

- High-quality training to meet the needs of business at all stages including Start Your Own Business, Management Development Programmes, Marketing, Sales, Financial Management, Strategy and Business Planning.
- Mentoring services with experienced experts to address specific needs on an individual basis.
- Interventions such as Lean and Digitisation vouchers to address productivity and competitiveness.
- Supports to increase innovation within companies.
- Green for Micro to address sustainability within businesses
- Cluster development and networks.
- Promotion of entrepreneurship education in the local community.

**Cllr B. McKenna asked:**

6. Please provide an update in relation to efforts to acquire the unfinished housing development at Chapel Court, Carrickroe, Emyvale which has been lying dormant this past ten years and more.

**Reply: Section 8(2) Notice of Intention to Enter the lands on the Derelict Sites Register were served on site on 28 November 2022. No representations were received within the specified time period. Monaghan County Council will pursue further action under the Derelict Sites Act to resolve the issue of dereliction on these lands.**

**Cllr S. Conlon asked:**

7. What number of 'Taking in Charge' applications have Monaghan County Council submitted to Uisce Éireann for assessment that remain unanswered, resulting in lengthy delays in providing final sign off for this Council to complete the long overdue Taking in Charge of multiple housing developments throughout County Monaghan.

Also,

- a) provide the list of housing development locations that Uisce Éireann are currently assessing.
- b) what date each of the Taking in Charge applications were finalised by the Council and forwarded to Uisce Éireann for approval.
- c) Is this Council in dialogue with Uisce Éireann seeking explanation for the delays in processing the TIC applications?

**Reply: As of January 2023, the Planning Authority have 28 estates referred to Irish Water in accordance with a 2015 Memorandum of Understanding agreed between local authorities and Irish Water. The table below details these estates.**

**In addition to the formal consolation process, the Planning Authority has, on numerous occasions, relayed the concerns of the Elected Members to Irish Water in respect of the continued delays. The planning Authority shall continue to engage with Irish Water to expedite the process.**

**UE = Uisce Éireann**

**PA = Planning Authority**

Estate	Date Referred to Irish Water	Response received from Irish Water
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Corr an Tobair, Carrickmacross.	January 21.	UE comments received May 2022 & responded to by PA in June 2022. No comments received from UE since.
Drumbear Wood (latest completed phase), Monaghan.	April 2021.	Latest UE comments received May 2022 & responded to by PA in June 2022.
Manor Crest, Manor Wood Monaghan.	April 2021.	No UE comments received.
Meadow View, Ballybay.	November 2019.	Latest UE comments received December 2019, & last responded to by PA in May 2022.
Ros Cluain, Carrickmacross.	April 2021.	Latest UE comments received May 2022 & responded to by PA in June 2022.
Telayden Heights, Monaghan.	August 2022.	No UE comments received.
Sean Mhuileann, Ballinode.	October 2022.	Latest UE comments received October 2022 & responded to by PA in November 2022.
Ferndale Heights, Emyvale.	October 2022.	Latest UE comments received October 2022 & responded to by PA in November 2022.
Millbrook, Milltown Monaghan.	March 2021.	Latest UE comments received May 2022 and responded to by PA in June 2022.
Lios a Ghoirtin, Clones.	August 2022.	No UE comments received.
An Crannog, Glen Road, Monaghan.	July 2020.	Latest UE comments received July 2020 and responded to by PA in March 2021.
The Alders, Ballybay.	November 2019.	Ongoing liaison with UE regarding site resolution Plan.
Conabury Hill, Castleblayney.	August 2022.	No UE comments received. Upgrading works to this estate is ongoing. New palisade fencing erected around Pumping Station in August 2022. New boundary fencing being tendered by MD. When at required standard TIC can take place.
Glaslough Village, Monaghan.	September 2022.	No UE comments received. Pumping Station upgrade works completed in 2022. Clarification on water supply responsibility, UE or GWS, being sought before TIC can take place.
Ardveagh, Ballybay	July 2022.	Latest UE comments received September 2022 & responded to by PA in September 2022.

Mullaghglass, Monaghan.	November 2021.	No UE comments received. Wayleave agreement negotiation ongoing with current owner for access to upgraded pumping station. Agreement required before TIC can take place.
Scotshouse Close, Scotshouse.	March 2021.	Latest UE comments received May 2022 & responded to by PA in July 2022.
Knocknamaddy, Ballybay.	July 2022.	UE comments received January 2023 & responded to by PA in January 2023.
Lough na Glack, Carrickmacross.	July 2022.	No UE comments received. Works ongoing by the receiver to bring the estate to the required standard before TIC can take place.
Killycard (Radhairc an Bhri), Castleblayney.	August 2022.	No UE comments received.
Bramley Crescent, Castleblayney.	July 2020 and August 2022.	UE have previously indicated water & foul services would not be TIC. PA comments sent in August 2022 to try resolve.
Killycard Manor, Castleblayney.	September 2022.	No UE comments received.
Eanaigh Ealta, Millbrook, Clones.	September 2022.	No UE comments received.
Sruthan Claddagh, Ballybay.	September 2022.	UE comments received January 2023. PA addressing comments at present.
Crann Nua, Carrickmacross.	September 2022.	UE comments received October 2022 & responded to by PA in November 2022.
Dartry Court, Rockcorry.	October 2022.	UE comments received January 2023. PA addressing comments at present.
Cois Locha, Doohamlet.	October 2022.	UE comments received October 2022 & responded to by PA in November 2022.
Carrowbarra Island, Smithborough.	September 2020.	UE comments received April 2021. In legal negotiations since to pursue bond.

8. Is this Council's Planning Section adequately resourced to follow through with planning applications that will ensure building inspections are undertaken at appropriate intervals during construction phases for the purpose of mitigating against future building and material defects and potential claims against the State, as experienced through the recent defective construction remediation allocation of €5 billion by the Government, the cost to be borne by the taxpayer?

**Reply: Monaghan County Council has 1 Building Control Officer in a fulltime capacity and 4 delegated Officers to fulfil its obligations in accordance with Building Control Act 1990 and subsequent Building Control Regulations. The Building Control Act 1990 makes provisions for all building works (with some minor exemptions) to comply with the Building Regulation (Part A-M) and explicitly places responsibility on the owner/developer to ensure compliance.**

**From 2014 all owners/developers undertaking building works, except for those who apply for an opt-out (single house development) must appoint an Assigned Certifier in accordance with Building Control Regulations 2014. An Assigned Certifier has a statutory obligation to submit an inspection plan to the Building Control Authority (via BCMS) and conduct a minimum number of inspections during the construction phase of works to ensure compliance with the Building Regulations. Upon completion of works the Assigned Certifier has a statutory obligation to submit a Certificate of Compliance on Completion (CCC).**

**Last year Monaghan Building Control Authority inspected 42.1% of building works (i.e. Buildings Inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to the local authority), in 2021 the average inspection rate for Local Authorities was 25.7%.**

9. Recognising that the issue of neglected and abandoned domestic animals is of a national and local concern that requires immediate attention, and that the growth in dog and cat ownership has not been matched by an increase in this Council's financial and personnel resources in implementing legislation regarding dog control, micro-chipping, muzzling of so-called dangerous breeds, and associated animal welfare and citizen safety issues, will this Council:
- a) employ an additional Dog Warden that will ensure no gaps exist in this essential service across the county?
  - b) reopen a North Monaghan animal welfare shelter by way of a grant scheme in support of voluntary led efforts, or Council operated?
  - c) provide explanation to figures provided in the Local Authority Control of Dogs Statistics 2021 that state that of 75 on-the-spot fines imposed in County Monaghan during that year, only 17 were paid by offenders.
  - d) In an effort at reducing sheep worrying incidents, will this Council engage with the relevant farming organisations for the purpose of ensuring the optimum protection of vulnerable livestock, and farmers livelihoods?

**Reply: a) Two additional staff are to be trained for Dog Warden duties in order to provide cover for when the Dog Warden is sick or on leave.**

**b) The numbers of dogs being admitted to animal welfare shelters in Monaghan has decreased steadily over the past 15 years. The numbers of stray dogs admitted to the MSPCA shelter that operated in Killydonagh until 2021 had decreased to less than 10 annually in 2020 and 2021. This was one of the reasons for the MSPCA decision to close the shelter. The existing facility at Carrick Dog Shelter near Carrickmacross has more than enough capacity to house all stray dogs in the county presently.**

**c) The Dog Warden can issue on-the-spot fines to dog owners for a range of offences under dog control legislation, including keeping a dog without a licence, and failure to keep a dog under effectual control. The on-the-spot fine is a notice to the dog owner stating that they are alleged to have committed an offence and offering them the opportunity to avoid prosecution for that offence by paying the fine. Nationally over the last 4 years the percentage of fines issued by Dog Wardens, which have been paid, has ranged between 36% and 50%. While the percentage of fines paid in Monaghan in 2021 was particularly low, the**

percentage in the previous 3 years 2018-2020 ranged between 40% and 60%, which was similar to the national average. In 2021, 15 of the 75 fines issued were cancelled as the dog owners produced evidence that no offence had been committed. A further 6 fines were not pursued because the person was no longer resident at their address or because the dogs had been surrendered to the Dog Warden. No dog owners were prosecuted by Monaghan County Council in 2021, due to Court restrictions because of the pandemic.

d) The County Veterinary Officer recommends that such initiatives should take place on a national basis and suggests that this proposal be forwarded to the Dogs Working Group of the County and City Management Association.

10. Following the withdrawal of SEUPB finances towards the construction of the 22km Ulster Canal Greenway from Middletown to Smithborough, are this Council negotiating with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) for replacement funding that will see this project commence, and to a standard being constructed on all Greenways in the country that includes a tarmac finish?

**Reply: The Council are currently liaising with TII as an alternative funder for the project and recent discussions have been positive. We are currently awaiting confirmation from TII on the matter. The surface finish will be dependent on the Approving Authority's design standards and requirements for Greenway's.**

**Cllr A. Campbell asked:**

11. Regarding the water quality of Lough Muckno and the ongoing work by Environmental staff around the "Muckno Road to Recovery Plan"
- (a) In line with the national water quality priorities communicated to all local authorities in December 2021, What the update on the Environmental Services measures in the Muckno catchment in addition to progressing the "Muckno Road to Recovery Project"?
- (b) What is the update on the targeted septic tank inspections under the National Inspection Plan for the catchment area of Muckno?
- (c) With Phase 1 of the "Muckno Road to Recovery Plan "being essentially a scientific study aimed at collecting data and carrying out investigative work on the lake body to help inform the development of the Integrated Catchment Management Plan. What stage is this process at and has there been any major changes since this process started?
- (d) With the increase in testing the water quality over the past number of months, has there being any trends showing?
- (e) What is the next milestone on this very important project?

**Reply: a) In addition to the Muckno Road to Recovery Project Monaghan County Council's Environmental Services section is continuing to progress other areas of work which will help in the overall aim of achieving improvements in water quality in the catchment and ultimately in the lake itself. Since the lake coring which took place in Muckno last May, staff have undertaken additional measures in the catchment which have included the following:**

- **Delivered a program of targeted farm inspections in the Muckno catchment including in the Annahale\_10 and Gentle Owens10 waterbodies. The focus of these inspections was on slurry and soiled water collection and storage. There was a significant amount of**

engagement with farmers on a one-to-one basis around the water quality issues in the catchment.

- River walks and catchment assessment work on tributaries feeding into Muckno.
- Some assessment of storm water discharges commenced in the urban area.
- Targeted enforcement of Section 4 discharge licenses in the catchment.
- In addition, MCC has made a submission to the Department to have Lough Muckno included as a Catchment Project Area for Action in Ireland's RMBP 2022-2027 to be led by Monaghan County Council and supported by LAWPRO.

b) During 2022, 14 targeted septic tank inspections were carried out under the National Inspection Plan in the Muckno catchment area. At initial inspection stage, 11 systems were found to be complying whilst 3 were found to be non-compliant. Following the issuing of advisory notices and completion of remedial works by the householders, 13 out of the 14 systems inspection are now deemed as compliant.

c) The first phase of the project is essentially a scientific study aimed at collecting data and carrying out investigative work on the lake body to help inform the development of the Integrated Catchment Management Plan and this work is progressing as planned. This involves identifying the baseline reference status of the lake by determining the historical status conditions of the lake using diatom and sediment dating analysis. It also involves assessing the inputting tributaries to the lake to determine the current pollutant loads entering the lake. It is expected that this part of the project will be completed in Q4 2023. Work is progressing as expected with no major changes noted since its commencement.

The most recent Water Framework Directive (WFD) Status of Lough Muckno 2016-2021 has been released by the EPA and this is showing a 2-class improvement in status for Lough Muckno from Bad (2013-2018) to Moderate (2016-2021). Macrophytes which were previously driving the lake status improved in the latest cycle from Bad to Moderate. Phosphorus levels remain at moderate and require reduction. It is not yet known if this is temporary improvement or a sustained improvement. The monthly monitoring of Lough Muckno due to be carried out until the end of Q4 2023 will assist in telling the story.

No improvements however were noted in the inputting tributaries in the 2016-2021 WFD Status iteration. One tributary the Gentle Owens\_10 waterbody dropped from Good Status (2013-2018) to Moderate in (2016-2021).

d) Testing will continue for the next 12 months but initial data is showing that Phosphorus levels are elevated in the inputting tributaries. Flow monitoring in conjunction with the testing on these tributaries will allow a load determination to be carried out at the end of the monitoring period. This will assist in attaching a significance to each of the tributaries and inform a catchment management plan.

e) The next milestone will essentially be the completion of the data collection and sampling works by Q4 2023 and compilation of the data thereafter.

12. What is the update on the development in Castleblayney of the old fire station and council yard at the commons?

(a) Has the procurement team been appointed?

(b) When is it hoped to have work commencing?

**Reply:** An Architectural design competition was launched by the Minister for Housing on 27 January 2023 for the appointment of an architect led design team for the design of a proposed sheltered housing development on the site of the old

fire station and Council yard at the Commons in Castleblayney. The site is one of four sites to be included in the prestigious "Town Centre Living" Architectural Design Competition that is being run by the Department of Housing in conjunction with the Royal Institute of Architects Ireland (RIAI).

The closing date for entries to Architectural design competition will be in March 2023. Detailed design will be completed during 2023 and it is intended that the project will be on site in 2024 and completed in late 2024 / early 2025 subject to programme and funding.

13. Under the Serviced Sites for new homes Scheme where the potential site discount up to a maximum of €30,000 per site. What plans has Monaghan County Council to make serviced sites available in the towns of Castleblayney, Carrickmacross and the villages of Oram and Inniskeen?

**Reply: In September 2019, Monaghan County Council advertised 6 serviced sites for sale at Latlorcan in Monaghan town, to date only four of the 6 serviced sites have been sold and the two remaining serviced sites had to be advertised again for sale in January 2023. When all of the serviced sites available at Latlorcan have been sold, consideration will be given to the provision of additional serviced sites.**

At present Monaghan County Council does not have suitable land for the provision of serviced sites in other areas of County Monaghan. In July 2022 Monaghan County Council advertised on e-tenders and in the Northern Standard for expressions of interest from property owners who are interested in selling property to Monaghan County Council. In November and December 2022 Monaghan County Council advertised again in the Northern Standard for expressions of interest from landowners who are interested in selling property that could potentially be used by Monaghan County Council for the provision of serviced sites. Only one submission has been received so far and the land proposed was unsuitable. Serviced sites will be made available subject to availability of suitable land and subject to demand and funding.

14. Regarding vacant or derelict properties around the Market Square and Muckno Street in Castleblayney. What is the update on the current works being carried out by the Housing Section in Monaghan County Council in this area? What level of engagement is ongoing with the property owners? Has there being any update on the Repair and Lease Scheme for property owners in this area?

**Reply: Housing Section has received valuations for 8 properties identified as vacant and of interest to the Council to develop on Muckno Street/Market Square. 6 offers have been made to landowners and left with them to consider. The other 2 valuations are to be discussed with property owners in February. If a proposal for Repair and Lease on any property is brought to the Housing Section it is considered.**

15. What is the update on the Planning and Environment review on the plans for Lough Muckno and Hope Castle?

**Reply: Work is continuing on this Phase 1 Planning and Environmental Assessment and a report is due to issue by end February.**

**Cllr N. Keelan asked:**

16. What is the up to-date position in relation to the taken in charge process by Monaghan County Council of the Sliabh Dubh estate at Corduff?

**Reply: The Planning Authority have completed the advertising of its intention to take this estate in charge. A report will be put to a Council meeting on the matter as soon as possible.**

17. What is the up to-date position in relation to the proposed upgrading and improvement of the Dundalk to Shercock town regional roadway ( R179 ) given that public meetings were held with effected residents and landowners many years ago and given that much of the land along this route remain sterilised in terms of development, and also given the countless numbers of heavy goods vehicles ( HGV s ) that have crashed along this route in particular the area from Carrickmacross to Shercock town which is clearly not fit for purpose?

**Reply: The Department of Transport (DOT) and County Council Senior Engineer working group meet regularly to identify strategically important routes that require upgrade works that can be advanced in the coming years. The R179 between Dundalk and Shercock is included in these considerations. Currently the entire Regional Road network is being analysed to identify schemes. This analysis will be brought to the elected representatives when completed. The Roads section will apply to DoT for funding for identified priority schemes when this process is completed.**

18. In relation to the (Croí Cónaithe) vacant and derelict property refurbishment grant, how many applications have been made to date, how many have been granted, how many have been refused and for what reasons?

**Reply: Under the (Croí Cónaithe) vacant and derelict property refurbishment grant 31 applications have been received so far. Please see the following breakdown: -**

**7 have been rejected for the following reasons: -**

- 1 not vacant for at least two years.
- 1 currently occupied.
- 1 proposal to demolish & replace with a new build.
- 4 not within a town or village boundary – All ineligible applicants were notified that the scheme had been expanded to include rural areas.

**2 currently being considered.**

**15 requests for further information request have been sent out.**

**7 Approved in Principle.**

19. In relation to disability rights and access to employment, is Monaghan County Council meeting our statutory obligations in terms of employing those in our community that happen to have a disability?

**Reply: Section 48 (2) of the Disability Act 2005 states that public bodies must collect data on employees and especially employees with disabilities on an annual basis. The 3% target for the employment of people with disabilities in the public service is a positive action measure designed to ensure public service employers are proactive in providing employment and career opportunities for a group who face a higher-than-average risk of exclusion from employment.**

**A census of all employees in Monaghan County Council was taken as at the 31st**

**December 2021, where each employee is invited to identify themselves as having a disability or not. Monaghan County Council returned a figure of 7.58% of employees having a disability as at the 31st December 2021.**

**20.** In relation to the recent announcement by minister Eamonn Ryan TD regarding a national electric charging point infrastructure strategy and funding, what plans have the council to draw down the funding available and play our part in rolling out this much needed infrastructure across the county?

**Reply: It has not been decided who will be responsible for the roll out of the national infrastructure. The funding initiatives have not been published.**

**Cllr P. Connolly asked:**

**21.** In view of the fact that the Department of Housing have announced a €150m fund under the Urban Regeneration Fund, what plans have Monaghan County Council to buy vacant/derelict properties under this scheme?

**Reply: Prior to the announcement of the €150million fund, Monaghan County Council has been proactive since 2016 acquiring vacant/derelict properties in County Monaghan and returning properties to use as social housing and for other purposes. Monaghan County Council acquired 25 properties compulsorily under the Derelict Sites Act since 2016 and to date 54 social housing units have been constructed on sites that have been provided through this process. In anticipation of funding becoming available Housing Section commenced acquiring vacant and derelict properties in the main areas of housing demand. Monaghan County Council is always proactive in utilising all available schemes to make use of funding in areas of need.**

## **16. Votes of Sympathy / Congratulations**

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

- Martin Clerkin, Ballybay/Clones MD, on the passing of his sister Susan Feeney RIP
- The family of the late Stevie Hughes, Clones, retired employee of Monaghan Co Co.

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

- Congratulations to Tyholland native, Conor Curley and the band Fontaines DC on winning 'International Group of the Year' category at the annual Brit Awards

## **17. Conferences**

*On the proposal of Cllr S Gilliland seconded by Cllr R Aughey it was agreed that the Council be represented at the following training events by the members listed.*

<b>Promoting Authority</b>	<b>Subject/Theme</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Members Selected</b>
<b>Celtic Conferences</b>	Protecting Your Mental Health as a Public Representative	O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> March 2023	
<b>LAMA Spring Seminar</b>	TBC	West Lodge Hotel, Banty, Co. Cork	2nd – 4 <sup>th</sup> March	Cllr. Richard Truell



				Cllr. Paudge Connolly  Cllr. Pat Treanor  Cllr. Brian McKenna  Cllr. Noel Keelan  Cllr Seamus Coyle  Cllr Sean Conlon
<b>AILG</b>	Elected Member Training Programme Module 1 (In-Person) – A Briefing on the Electoral Reform Act	Tullamore Court Hotel, Co. Offaly	23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2023	Cllr. Richard Truell  Cllr. Paudge Connolly  Cllr. Colm Carthy  Cllr. Brian McKenna  Cllr. Pat Treanor  Cllr. Seamus Treanor  Cllr. Sean Conlon
<b>AILG</b>	Elected Member Training Programme Module 1 (In-Person) – A Briefing on the Electoral Reform Act	Radisson Blu Hotel, Limerick	25 <sup>th</sup> February 2023	Cllr. David Maxwell

The meeting concluded.

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

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

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