

Ceantar Bardasach Carraig Mhachaire Rois – Baile Na Lorgan

Comhairle Contae Mhuineachain



The Municipal District of Carrickmacross – Castleblayney

Monaghan County Council

Minutes of proceedings of the Municipal District Monthly Meeting held in Carrickmacross Civic Offices, Riverside Road, Co. Monaghan on Monday the 27th of November 2023 at 11:10am.

Present: Cathaoirleach Aoife McCooey

Cllrs. Colm Carthy, Noel Keelan, PJ O’Hanlon, Peter Conlon, Aidan Campbell

In Attendance: Carmel O’Hare, Director of Services, Damien Thornton, A/District Co-Ordinator, Gary Toye, District Engineer, Julieann O’Reilly, Assistant Staff Officer, Sinead McKinley, Assistant Staff Officer

Presentation: Update on Carrickmacross Town Centre First Plan

- **Kevin McNally, A/Town Regeneration Officer, and James Hennessey, The Paul Hogarth Company**

Kevin McNally, A/Town Regeneration Officer, advised that it is proposed to commence public consultation on the 6th of December 2023.

Cllr. O’Hanlon:

Expressed thanks for the presentation.

Commented that it would be useful to look at old videos of Carrickmacross town on YouTube to appreciate how beautiful it was and remarked that the Main Street it is one of the finest in the country.

Noted that the prominent buildings mentioned in the presentation are privately owned. Stated that it is good to see Kevin McNally, A/Town Regeneration Officer, stamping his mark. Queried the status of the proposed Shirley House Lane car park and acknowledged that there have been a lot of issues and reasons for the delays. Stated that this car park is integral for Main Street access.

Remarked that the presentation did not make mention of the potential for the development of an access route from Convent Avenue to Farney Street, advising that it would be beneficial to develop this link.

Cllr. Conlon:

Commended Kevin McNally, A/Town Regeneration Officer, on his recent presentation to the Elected Members on derelict sites.

Advised that the development of a Town Centre First Plan for Carrickmacross has created a new air of excitement and given a real impetus to the people of the town. Opined that the narrative of derelict buildings staying in private ownership could now be changed.

Remarked that the opening of green spaces in the town would have huge benefits and concurred with Cllr. O'Hanlon's comments regarding the link to the town from the Convent Avenue.

Commented that the project is an excellent Government initiative.

Cllr. Carthy:

Thanked James Hennessy and Kevin McNally for the presentation and all the work they have done, remarking how quick the process had been so far.

Noted that the Shirley House Lane car park needs to be progressed to provide additional parking.

Highlighted concerns surrounding public lighting in the town, advising that the lights on the streets and pathways need to provide head -height visibility.

Passed on his thanks to the members of the Carrickmacross Town Team.

Queried if it would be possible to provide this presentation to the public on the street during December, advising that the press and elected members should be notified accordingly.

Cllr. Keelan:

Supported Cllr. Carthy's comments on another round of public consultation.

Commented that the Town Team are working well and remarked that Carrickmacross is very lucky to have such an active Chamber and Tidy Towns Committee.

Stated that the nighttime economy needs to be revitalised.

Commented that the members have expressed concerns about the courthouse not being in use and stated that lighting it up could be a very good idea.

Highlighted the importance of backland development and said he would like to see this progressed, specifically mentioning the lands to the rear the Bank of Ireland.

Remarked that he liked the Bridewell Lane slide image and queried whether it is possible to do something of this nature quite quickly?

Asked when is it hoped to see progress and works in place?

Cllr. McCooey:

Stressed the importance of public consultation.

Kevin McNally, A/Town Regeneration Officer, stated that he would like to put together an ambitious plan. He advised that there is currently no funding available however, it is hoped that funding will become available under the likes of CLÁR, RRDF etc. He advised that he will be working in partnership with the Municipal District Executive.

James Hennessey, The Paul Hogarth Company, commented that there is a lot of work being carried out by the community and advised that it is important to remember the smaller projects.

Cllr. Carthy:

Queried if there was scope to include the current Gallows Hill project in the plan?

Reply – Yes.

Cllr. Campbell:

Requested an update on the Main Street, McGrath Road project in Castleblayney.

Reply - It is hoped to have an appointment in place before the year end with a view to beginning works early next year.

1.0 Confirmation of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. Keelan and seconded by Cllr. Carthy, the minutes of the October 2023 Monthly Municipal District Meeting, held on Monday the 23rd of October 2023, were adopted.

On the proposal of Cllr. Keelan and seconded by Cllr. O’Hanlon, the minutes of the In Committee meeting between the elected members and Tuath Housing, held on Monday the 23rd of October, were adopted.

On the proposal of Cllr. Carthy and seconded by Cllr. O’Hanlon, the minutes of the In Committee Draft Budget meeting , held on Monday the 13th of November, were adopted.

2.0 Matters Arising

Cllr. Conlon:

Queried whether the Tuath Housing statement was made public as requested?

Cllr. Carthy:

Suggested that the Executive draft a statement, confirm with Tuath Housing that they are happy with same, and release it to the public.

Cllr. Keelan:

Requested that we seek a follow up meeting with Tuath Housing in the new year.

Cllr. Carthy:

Asked if there has been any progress made by the Executive regarding the possibility of a future Camper Van facility?

Reply – The potential site previously highlighted by Cllr. Carthy could be further explored as part of the development of the proposed Masterplan for the Convent Avenue area.

Regarding the response to Question 1 of the Councillors' Question – the shuck has been on a planned list of works and it has previously been assured that it would be done. It needs to be cleared as a matter of urgency.

Cllr. Keelan:

Stated that the enforcement of HGV by laws in the town remains an issue and queried who is responsible for same? Requested that the matter be raised with the local AGS.

Reply – Traffic Wardens cannot stop a moving vehicle. The vehicle needs to be stationary for a Traffic Warden to take action.

Cllr. McCooey noted that this issue has already been raised with AGS.

Advised that there is a damaged barrier at Essexford Junction and the signing and lining needs to be reviewed again.

Acknowledged that the hedge trimmer was recently out working. The junction at the Killanny Road, where you access the N2, needs to be looked at.

Cllr. O'Hanlon:

Noted the positive response to the recent B&C houses and asked if the MCC website has been updated with news of the C:Tek II facility. Advised that the facility needs to be marketed, remarking that it is hoped that it will open in July 2024. Carrickmacross has accommodation and working facilities available, making it an attractive place to live and work, particularly to those who have moved away and wish to return.

3.0 Correspondence

i. Response from Minister for Transport Office re: lighting on the N2

ii. Response from TII re: lighting on the N2

Cllr. McCooey queried what a "grade-separated" junction is, to which Damien Thornton, A/Municipal District Coordinator provided a explanation. Cllr. McCooey wondered how lighting was provided at Hackballscross and asked if there are any other options available.

Cllr. Carthy noted that the Castleblayney to Ballybay junction has poor lighting, and it had an application refused.

Cllr. O'Hanlon stated that it a dangerous junction, particularly in foggy weather conditions, and wondered if it could be funded from Capital Projects?

Damien Thornton, A/Municipal District Coordinator advised that TII need to approve any works on national roads.

Cllr. O'Hanlon suggested that a formal letter issue to the Minister and requested each member to put pressure on local representatives.

Cllr. Keelan queried whether it would be possible to meet with a TII engineer about the issue?

Following the above discussion, on the proposal of Cllr. McCooey and seconded by Cllr.

O'Hanlon, it was unanimously agreed that the elected members "*propose that MCC apply for a departure to consider the provision of lighting at the Toome junction on the N53 and Ministers Cross on the N2*".

iii. Response from Minister for Health office re: Ambulance response times

Cllr. Carthy acknowledged that the HSE held their hands up and commented that he hopes it doesn't happen again. He passed on best wishes to the young gentleman in question and hopes he makes a speedy recovery.

4.0 MD Coordinator's Report

Cllr. Keelan:

Acknowledged the on-going works of the MD staff.

On the proposal of Cllr. Keelan and seconded by Cllr. Carthy, the following motion was unanimously agreed:

"That we write to the Garda Commissioner requesting an update on the proposed CCTV schemes for Carrickmacross and Castleblayney towns".

It was agreed that the JPC will be cc'd in this letter.

Spoke about a recent radio interview in which he spoke about the proposed Inniskeen Bike Rental scheme. Following this, a call was received from a local Monaghan business who expressed interest in the project. Cllr. Keelan advised that he passed along the contact details to Damien Thornton, A/Municipal District Coordinator, and requested confirmation that contact was made.

Reply – contact was made using the details provided.

Commented that he is anxious to see progress on the Inniskeen Public Realm.

Requested an update on the Creevy Lough Recreational Masterplan.

Commented that the recent meeting with Minister Eamon Ryan was not positive, remarking that the Ardee – Castleblayney road scheme seems to be shelved.

Asked if the Executive can re-examine the pedestrian access in Inniskeen as the NTA have advised there is no funding, and it is not a priority for Active Travel.

Reply – the MD Executive will request the Active Travel Unit to re-visit this issue with the NTA.

Cllr. Conlon:

Warmly welcomed funding from Minister Humphreys for the Creevy Lough Masterplan and sought clarification on the project.

Reply – The project is aimed at developing a recreational masterplan for the facility.

Asked how long it will be before the Gallows Hill Masterplan will be progressed after December? Similarly, how long before works progress on Rahans Lake and Carrickmacross Workhouse?

Reply – Both the Gallows Hill and the Workhouse are project development schemes and are scheduled for completion 12 months following the appointment of consultants.

Commented that he hopes that Cloughvalley play park will be ready for next Spring/Summer/Autumn, noting that it is currently out for tender. Remarked that there are a lot of children with additional needs who also need to be looked after.

Cllr. Carthy:

Commended the MD staff and Executive for the recent Parnell Street works.

Spoke about a recent incident on Oriel Road where a child was knocked down. Advised that the child is recovering well and there is an urgent need for a pedestrian crossing. Noted that it has been added to the LCS application, which is welcome.

Regarding the Creevy Lake Masterplan, noted that the issue of lighting has been raised numerous times and requested that consideration be given to lighting the old Castleblayney road.

Sought clarification that Safety Improvement works are completed?

Reply – completed on Friday last.

Asked if there will be provision for a pedestrian crossing to access the Ballybay Road from the school as there are quite a number of young people crossing this busy road.

Reply – this will be considered.

Cllr. Campbell:

Welcomed the Creevy Lough funding.

Spoke about Minister Humphreys recently opening the new library in Castleblayney - €3 million funding was provided from her department with the balance being funded via LPT and MCC. Cllr. Campbell complimented all involved.

Warmly welcomed Minister Humphreys announcement of the opening of RRDF again and commented he is looking forward to an application being submitted and more progress.

Asked where we are in terms of re-surfacing the avenue to Hope Castle, considering the Christmas market is on this weekend?

Reply – there will be no works until next year.

Expressed disappointment that there is no response to the letter sent to Newry & Mourne Council regarding funding for Ballynacarry Bridge.

Cllr. O'Hanlon:

Commented that, in relation to the recent Parnell Street works, he cannot understand why the Department can't have funding available earlier in the year, in better weather.

Commended Gary Toye, District Engineer on how the works were handled, advising that the Chamber of Commerce were very impressed with how the works were carried out.

Clarified that CTek II hopes to be opened in July 2024.

Remarked that Shirley House car park remains with the planning section.

Asked what the timeline is for Carrickmacross Workhouse development project.

Reply – Scheduled for completion 12 months following the appointment of consultants.

Acknowledged the Creevy Lake funding.

Cllr. McCooey:

Regarding Active Travel and the Mile Hill junction, asked if the purpose of tightening the road is an attempt to slow down traffic?

Reply – The re-design of the junction is to reduce speeds and provide a junction that is self-regulation.

Asked if Oram can be considered for similar Active Travel projects.

Reply – Oram has been put forward for a pilot Traffic Calming scheme next year.

Commented on the recent fantastic days in Castleblayney with specific mention of the new extension to Our Lady's Secondary School and the opening of the new library. Wished to encourage the public to utilise the new library.

Requested that elected members and local businesses are notified about future road closures, particularly in the towns.

Cllr. Carthy:

Informed the members, that at a recent meeting he attended, an Active Travel official confirmed that priority is given to projects in larger, urban areas.

5.0 Q&A

Questions raised by Cllr. Colm Carthy for the November 2023 meeting of Carrickmacross/Castleblayney Municipal District Council:

1. When is it expected road marking touch-ups will be carried out on the Culloville/Donaghmoynne road, Carrickmacross, at the entrance to Cluain Alainn housing estate (turning lane has faded significantly)?

Response:

The Executive intend to renew the road marking on the R179, at the entrance to Cluain Alainn housing estate, under the 2024 road marking programme.

2. When is it expected works will be carried out to repair the boundary fence and potholes in Woodvale estate, Carrickmacross?

Response:

The boundary fence at Woodvale has been added to the maintenance repair list. The potholes located at the first junction within Woodvale housing estate will be patched in the coming days.

3. Following an appeal by residents in Ard na Lorgan, Castleblayney, does the council intend to carry out removal of overgrowth to boundaries of the estate to deal with concerns around potential fires (similar to Thorndale project carried out in 2021 – which also needs to be looked at again)?

Response:

The Executive will carry out an assessment of the overgrowth adjacent to the Ard Na Lurgan housing estate and consult with Monaghan County Council's Horticulturist, to determine the most appropriate treatment to remove the gorse. The Executive shall endeavor to carry out these works in early 2024.

4. Following the change made to speed limit signage on the Castleblayney Road, Carrickmacross (between Inver College and the roundabout), will the executive consider carrying out a speed/traffic count in this area to establish if further traffic calming is needed?

Response:

The Executive will carry out a speed survey on the Castleblayney Road (R927), Carrickmacross, between Inver College and the roundabout, to ascertain the need for any further traffic calming measures in this area.

5. What is the up-to-date situation with the Gallows Hill Masterplan – has the tender process begun and when does the executive envisage that they will be awarding the contract?

Response:

A tender for the engagement of an Urban Designer/Landscape Architect -led Multidisciplinary Design Team has issued to the market. The closing date for receipt of tender submissions is the 4th

of December 2023. Pending the outcome of this procurement process, it is envisaged that a Design Team shall be appointed in early 2024.

Questions raised by Cllr. Noel Keelan for the November 2023 meeting of Carrickmacross/Castleblayney Municipal District Council:

6. What is the up-to-date position in relation to the roll out of the proposed CCTV camera system for Carrickmacross and Castleblayney town, how long is this proposal with the Garda Commissioner for a decision?

Response:

Following a presentation on both schemes to the National CCTV Advisory Committee on Friday the 19th of May last, the Committee advised that they would be recommending the approval of both schemes to the Garda Commissioner's Office. The Executive continue to await approval or otherwise from the Commissioner's Office.

7. What progress, if any, has been made in relation to the roll out of the bicycle rental scheme for Inniskeen and the wider south Monaghan area? My understanding is we may now have at least one interested party that will run the scheme?

Response:

The Municipal District Executive has initiated negotiations with a prospective Operator for the scheme. Discussions to date have been positive.

8. Will the council examine the possibility of putting extra car parking facilities in place at Deery Terrace in Inniskeen village as requested by the resident association, including making the area more accessible for emergency vehicles?

Response:

The Executive shall carry out an assessment/survey of the existing site to ascertain the need for any additional parking and enhanced accessibility requirements.

9. Will the council examine the possibility of putting in place some traffic calming measures along the Donaghmoyne road (R179), adjacent to Longfield cross, as requested by the local residents and other road users, given the excessive speeding at this location which the Garda Síochána are also aware of?

Response:

The Executive shall arrange for a speed survey to be undertaken on the R179 Donaghmoyne Road in the vicinity of Longfield Cross, to determine any required road safety remedial measures.

10. Given the problems associated with flooding events on public roads across the County and Country, have we as a council an ongoing programme of maintenance of our drainage network?

Response:

The Municipal District Executive carry out ongoing maintenance works to the drainage network within Carrickmacross/Castleblayney Municipal District, with priority given to problematic locations.

Questions raised by Cllr. Peter Conlon for the November 2023 meeting of Carrickmacross/Castleblayney Municipal District Council:

11. What is the update on trimming the trees at the bottom on the Convent Hill?

Response:

The landowner previously committed to commencing the tree-trimming works in early November however, these works have not yet commenced. The Executive are actively pursuing an update from the landowner.

12. Can a development masterplan be developed for the Convent Avenue area of the town, to include the areas along the Convent Avenue Walk?

Response:

The Executive are currently exploring potential sources of funding to advance the development of a masterplan for the enhancement of the Convent Avenue area of the town, including areas along the Convent Avenue Walk.

6.0 VOS/VOC

Votes of sympathy were extended to Anthony Watterson and the extended Smyth family on the death of Anne Watterson (RIP); PJ Duffy on the death of Margaret Rooney (RIP); Irene Connolly & family on the death of Mary Connolly-McMahon (RIP); Bernard Cunningham on the death of Luke Cunningham (RIP); John Byrne and Joan Byrne on the death of Kathleen Byrne (RIP); John Marron & family on the death of Canon Patrick Marron (RIP); Barry Kirkpatrick on the death of Moya Kirkpatrick (RIP); Dermot, Mark, and Eimear Conlon on the death of Bernadette Conlon (RIP).

Votes of congratulations were extended to Ciaran Marron, Active 8 on being named EY Best Established Entrepreneur of the Year; Castleblayney Hurling Club on winning the Ulster Championship; Killanny GFC on winning the Intermediate Championship; Castleblayney Faughs Ladies team and management on winning the Intermediate League Final; Maisie Flanagan on winning the Ulster Boxing Championship 39kg Division.

The elected members expressed their sympathies to the family of Ben Dunne (RIP) following his recent passing. Cllr. O'Hanlon thanked all for their kind comments.

7.0 A.O.B

Cllr. O'Hanlon:

Noted that the new EV charging points at the Civic Offices came about because of the East Border Region group and commented that they are fast charging points. Requested that the MD carry out an audit on the town regarding future points, stating that it is vital to have this infrastructure in the town.

Spoke about the Local Rural bus scheme, commenting that it is a fantastic service. Stated that more stopping points should be investigated, particularly around Inniskeen.

Reply – this MD understands that the route is currently under review.

On the proposal of Cllr. O'Hanlon and seconded by Cllr. McCooey, the following motion was unanimously agreed:

"In relation to the Local Rural Bus Scheme from Shercock to Dundalk, that the number of stops is reviewed and that more are added to make it more convenient for people to access this service".

Cllr. Campbell:

Commended the MD outdoor team for their recent works on the Christmas lights in Castleblayney and commented that there has been a great crowd in attendance. Also wished to commend AGS for their great work.

Advised that Castleblayney Drama Club are hosting the All-Ireland One Act Drama finals. 9 different clubs are coming to Castleblayney and staying over the weekend. The lontas is booked out for all nights.

Wished to send the message out to attend this weekend's Christmas Market in Muckno. Stated that he has received calls about road safety concerns on the Shercock Road, Castleblayney – at the junction of the industrial estate.

Also has received calls about the Dundalk Road, Castleblayney – people speed up once around the corner- traffic calming measures are needed.

Cllr. McCooey:

Stated that it is very dangerous coming out of the Bree Estate and that this needs to be investigated.

Cllr. Conlon:

Commented that there should be a Local Link bus stop located at Corduff Cross.

Welcomed Sinead McKinley, Assistant Staff Officer to the MD.

Expressed congratulations to Carrickmacross Chamber of Commerce for the Christmas Lights and switch on event.

Commented that he is looking forward to the Christmas Market in Castleblayney.

Remarked that he attended the recent Christmas Market in Killanny which had outstanding products available.

Cllr. Carthy:

Concurred that the Local Link bus service needs additional stops, particularly Inniskeen and Corduff Cross.

Commented that a draft proposal has gone to the department from the LGMA re: CCTV at bottle banks and is hopeful this will help resolve issues in the new year.

Concurred with previous comments on the success of the Christmas Lights switch on events in the towns.

Mentioned signage for the Collective and Lace Gallery at Market Square. Suggested that another mechanism may need to be used due to the buildings listed status and gave the example of laser lighting.

On the proposal of Cllr. Keelan and seconded by Cllr. Conlon it was unanimously agreed that the meeting go in committee at 13:14.

On the proposal of Cllr. Keelan and seconded by Cllr. Campbell it was unanimously agreed that the public meeting resume at 13:18.

Cllr. Keelan:

Advised that there are drainage issues causing flooding on the Shercock Road, from Kelly's Cross to Corduff Cross.

Stated that the Finger Post on the Ballybay Road requires re-signing.

Cllr. McCooey:

Concurred with previous comments about the events in the locality – the Christmas Lights, All-Ireland Drama Final and the upcoming Christmas Market in Muckno.

Requested an update on the outdoor gym at Oram.

Requested an update on signage showing the plans for the Market House.

Advised that there is congestion at the Dundalk Road junction in Castleblayney. Can the MD explore the feasibility of a roundabout at this location?

Wished to put the message out to the public to Shop Local this Christmas.

It was unanimously agreed to hold the December monthly meeting in Castleblayney Library on the 18th of December 2023 at 10am.

The meeting concluded at 13:25.

Cathaoirleach

Date

Meeting Administrator