

Municipal District of Monaghan

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan Municipal District held in Council Chamber, M-Tek 1 Building, Knockaconny, Co Monaghan on Monday, 16th October 2023 at 11.50 a.m.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Cathy Bennett presided.

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

In Attendance: Robert Burns, Chief Executive, Patricia Monahan, Director of Services, Donal McElwain, Municipal District Co-ordinator, Michelle Curran, Senior Staff Officer, Darren Flanagan, Assistant Engineer, Stephen Donoghue, Assistant Engineer.

Cllr Bennett welcomed Chief Executive, Robert Burns and Director of Services, Patricia Monahan to the meeting.

1. Confirmation of minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. Maxwell, seconded by Cllr. Connolly, it was agreed that the minutes of the Municipal District meeting held on 18th September 2023 be confirmed.

2. Matters Arising

Cllr Connolly advised trees out across footpath causing hazard at Cathedral View, Monaghan.

Cllr Bennett, Ramps needed at Scotstown village – request to change policy on ramps and speed limits to slow drivers. Can MCC review policy? Cllr Connolly seconded this proposal. Cllr. McKenna advised the current policy was reviewed and adopted by all members.

Cllr McKenna requested Traffic Survey for Mullen Village, Emyvale due to excessive speeding complaints received.

Cllr Bennett, Raised the issue re the footpaths between Scotstown and Ballinode villages.

Cllr Treanor, Telaydan, Housing Development, Milltown – Developer put in lighting and footpath. The council should complete this stretch to Ballyalbany Bridge.

Cllr Conlon, Staff cannot allocate resources and manpower, due to outdoor safety. My CoCo Connect App – loaded, can take significant time to address.

Staff – Tenant Liaison officer – vacant 6 months – recruitment is lacking resources to recruit properly.

3. Municipal District Co-Ordinator's Report

Cllr Connolly regarding Rossmore Park, the additional Funding for Giants very welcome and regarding the Numbers Trial, requested an update as adopted Budget at time. He recommended to use etchings in wood, as done in Smithborough. This was proposed by Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr Treanor, and unanimously agreed.

Mr. McElwain advised Application made to ORIS funding and awaiting a response.

Cllr Connolly stated the need to get started with funding agreed using trees that are to be felled.

Mr. McElwain advised no funding allocation finalised as no costings have been completed on the project.

Cllr Connolly asked to take from maintenance monies allocated to Rossmore Park.

Cllr Conlon Supported same art on trees and requested Disabled access Picnic Benches to be added as only one bench accessed from smooth surface beside.

Rossmore Toilet Block – Prone to vandalism – Redesign a purpose built complex including toilets, centre and CCTV cameras installed in area to protect.

Cllr Connolly agreed.

Cllr Aughey asked in relation to the Ash trees - are they diseased?

Mr. McElwain advised that Coillte have confirmed that substantial number of trees have ash dieback.

Cllr Maxwell requested need electricity and new toilets, knowing this is not cheap but needed within the park. Proposed power then will allow for modification of toilets and upgrade of all facilities including coffee Doc power access.

Mr. McElwain stated the Park Masterplan includes toilet block, building at a later stage. Currently Solar Panels are being installed, green power and hand dryers will be installed in toilets.

Cllr Bennett Bridges, Thanks to Municipal District on bridge restoration works done.

Cllr Connolly seconded this and asked about when Coolshannagh bridge works will commence?

Mr. McElwain advised that is most likely the Landowner responsibility to fix and that this land is currently for sale.

Cllr Maxwell regarding Legnacrieve Bridge – look for application for Low Cost Safety Measure at this location.

Cllr Aughey asked, can a raised tabletop/ pedestrian crossing be installed at Sloan's on the Glen Road.

Mr. McElwain will refer this to the Active Travel Team for consideration as part of the Cootehill Road Active Travel measures.

Cllr Conlon asked about the Event Space and potential for disruption on the lead into Christmas. Update provided.

Cllr McKenna welcomed Design stage at Emyvale RTA location.

Cllr Aughey wished Congratulations to Siobhan Sherry. Future planning for promotions.

D McElwain advised the post will be advertised.

Cllr Maxwell said thanks to Michelle Curran for taking on events.

Cllr Conlon queried Delays to the N54, Tullybryan, Realignment Scheme, due to An Bord Pleanála. Letter from Municipal District to ABP agreed.

4. Section 183 – 4/5 Mill Street Monaghan Town

The Section 183 was agreed and proposed by Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Treanor.

5. Questions and Motions

Questions:

Cllr. Paudge Connolly asked:

- With a view to improving safety for children, what plans have Monaghan Municipal District to erect speed ramps on the straight stretches of roads at Canal View?

Response:

The Monaghan Municipal District will carry out an appraisal of the location in accordance with the current Traffic Calming Policy to determine the need, or type of traffic calming measures that are required.

Cllr. Raymond Aughey asked

- Can you give us an update on the Town and Village renewal 2023?

Response:

14 Expressions of Interest were received for the County.

MCC is currently examining the Expressions of Interest received to determine their eligibility & potential for delivery under the criteria of the scheme, while actively looking at potential projects within each of the Municipal District areas. Following the evaluation of all proposals a recommendation will be made to the Management Team for approval for onward submission to the Department for their consideration.

The maximum level of grant available for 2023 remains at €500,000 in respect of one application from each local authority and a maximum of €250,000 will apply in respect of a further 4 applications.

Detailed applications must be submitted to the Department by Friday 10th November 2023.

- Can we have an update on progress on the upgrade to Hollywood Park?

Response:

The construction stage tenders have been evaluated and the preferred tenderer contacted for the relevant documentation. All queries raised have been clarified. It is proposed to commence works on site in November 2023.

- How is the new car park progressing at Broad Road and when will the new car park in the Peace Campus open to the public?

Response:

The new Broad Road carpark construction has progress well, ducting, drainage, kerbing complete, with macadam to be laid next week. Works will be substantially completed by November. The new car park will have 88 parking spaces. 66 long Stay, 18 Short Stay & 4 D.P spaces. Off the 18 short stay it is planned that 8 of these will be EVs in the longer term and off the 4 D.P. spaces 1 will be an EV in the longer terms.

The Peace Campus Carpark is planned to be completed by end of year and to open in early 2024. The Peace Campus Carpark will have 120 parking spaces, with a split of 50:50 between short and long term parking.

Cllr. Sean Conlon asked:

- For the purpose of improving traffic movements exiting the Park Road onto the Clones Road beside the Coral leisure centre, will the Council agree to install a yellow traffic junction box on the road to relieve congestion and enhance safety at this busy location?

Response:

The Road Section will request the National Road Office /TII to investigate this junction of the N54 and Park Road.

- Following the appointment of consultants last November to progress the Preliminary Design stage of the Dublin Street Regeneration Project, and extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders, what progress is occurring that will realise commercial and residential development at this location?

Response:

The Dublin Street North design team prepared Preliminary Design proposals based on the Variation 3 of the current County Monaghan Development Plan 2019-2025 for the purposes of stakeholder consultation. Monaghan County Council opened a Public Consultation period between the 4th and 21st July with a presentation and viewing event in the Market House in Monaghan on the 4th of July. At the Event on the 4th of July there were two dedicated timeslots one for Landowners and one for Public Interest Groups with the General Public viewing in the afternoon/evening.

After the Public Consultation period ended the design team collated all the public feedback and re-examined the Preliminary Design proposals and presented some alternatives to Monaghan County Council. The Preliminary Design is currently being finalised prior to presentation to Monaghan Municipal District before moving to the next stage in developing the design and preparing EIAR for a Planning Submission to An Bord Pleanála next year.

- Has a schedule of demolition works been finalised for the derelict Forest Walk housing development at Killyconnigan, and what plans are in place for additional housing at this site?

Response:

Following a competitive tendering process Monaghan County Council are currently appointing architectural consultants to design a number of new rapid-delivery homes on four sites own by MCC as follows;

Latlorcan Site 1 – Monaghan Town

Latlorcan Site 2 – Monaghan Town

Killyconnigan – Monaghan Town (Forest Walk/Slí na Choille)

Old Scoil Croí Ro Naofa Site – Clones Town

It is proposed that preliminary designs will be completed during quarter 1 of 2024.

- With the Mall Rd. in Monaghan Town (LP1412) dropped from the 2022 and 2023 Roads Restoration Programme due to delays by Uisce Eireann, and now included in the 2024 schedule, will the Council agree to initiate tarmac patch works in the interim to alleviate the severity of this sub-standard road?

Response:

The Municipal District will carry out temporary repairs on the Mall Road as an interim measure until full restoration works are completed in 2024.

Cllr. Cathy Bennett asked:

- Can Monaghan County Council please review their policy on the need for Ramps in Villages and close to schools. Several Villages are awaiting ramps as these are very much needed to slow traffic down.

Response:

Monaghan County Council is currently reviewing their Traffic Calming Policy in line with National Guidance. An initial meeting was held between the Districts and the Road Section. A draft policy will be brought before the members for consideration and adoption.

- Can the Monaghan Municipal District please give me an update on the cleaning of moss from footpaths in Ballinode village. With a Halloween celebration happening soon, this is urgent.

Response:

Monaghan Municipal District have investigated these footpaths again and have carried out initial treatment. The footpaths will be fully cleaned by mechanically brushing within the next two weeks.

- Can Monaghan Municipal District please let me know who is responsible for the upkeep of Donagh old Graveyard, Glaslough and has there been any funding allocated for the upkeep.

Response:

Donagh Parish are allocated a yearly grant of €1,000 for the upkeep of the old graveyard from the council through the Environment Section.

- Can Monaghan Municipal District please provide me with a list of Bridges recently fixed and which bridges are on a list to be fixed.

Response:

Under the planned Bridge Works 3 bridges were planned this year

L-1510 Legnacreeve, works ongoing.

L-5500 Cordevlis, works complete.

L-20201 Tirnaskea South, works complete.

Proposed for 2024, subject to funding.

L1113, Derrygorry (emergency works 2023, remaining works 2024)

L5431 Tiravray by end of November

L1004 Lennaght by end of November

- Can Monaghan Municipal District please provide me with an update on works at Hollywood Park.

Response:

The construction stage tenders have been evaluated and the preferred tenderer contacted for the relevant documentation. All queries raised have been clarified. It is proposed to commence works on site in November 2023.

Motions:

That Monaghan Municipal District call on Minister Norma Foley and the Department of Education to make the appropriate overdue intervention that will ensure the provision of ASD and/or Early intervention classes in primary and secondary schools in Monaghan town.

This is currently not the case and needs to be addressed immediately.

Cllr. Cathy Bennett, Cllr. Brian McKenna and Cllr. Sean Conlon

The Motion was proposed by Cllr Bennett, seconded by Cllr Conlon that the Motion regarding the provision of ASD and/or Early interventions classes. Motion Adopted.

6. Correspondence

None

7. Votes of Congratulations

It was proposed by Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr McKenna that congratulations be extended to the IT Section of Monaghan County Council, particularly Director of Services Carmel O'Hare and Geraldine McManus on the recent National Award recognising the Monaghan County Council Connect App.

8. Votes of Sympathy

It was proposed by Cllr Bennett, seconded by Cllr McKenna and unanimously agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to Dermot Brannigan, CFO on the passing of his father.

It was proposed by Cllr Connolly seconded by Cllr. Bennett that the sympathy of the Council be extended to the family of the late Mrs Maggie McQuillan, 103 Tullygoney, Tydavnet.

9. AOB

That Monaghan Municipal District write to Minister of Finance regarding the extortionist interest rates being charged by Vulture Funds in our Country up to 10% while the average bank rate is around 4%.

When the banking crisis hit some years ago, some lending institutions off-loaded their mortgages to cash rich vulture funds that was disgraceful. The banks should have offered these mortgages to the householders to give them first refusal but the banks with the blessing of the Government went ahead and sold out to the vulture Funds.

We sent a motion from Monaghan Town Council pleading with the Government to give the mortgage holder first refusal but this motion was ignored.

If this had happened, the mortgage repayment would have been €700 to €900 a month today. These unfortunate families are being made pay up to €1700 a month. This is totally unsustainable. The tactics of these Vulture Funds leave a lot to be desired. Some years ago, Vulture Funds sent bully boys to take photographs of mortgage holders houses. They had Northern registered vehicles and covered in tattoos. When confronted, one of the bully boys said he was from Londonderry, possibly an Ex-Paramilitary. This was a very frightening experience for all the families that they have all this confidential information on citizens of the Republic of Ireland. You can imagine how these mortgage holders feel when they read in their newspapers the write-downs that Ireland Elite get when they can't make a repayment on their millions of euros loans back to banks. Billions has been written down, I could name thousands, but let's take last week; one accountant got a write-down from €5million to €15000 – where is the fairness in that?

Let me say here I have no time for any mortgage holders who make no effort to pay back their loans, but I believe the Government should rein in these Vulture Funds, and I call on mortgage holders to stand together against the bully boys tactics of the Vulture Funds. Don't try to fit this on your own.

Cllr Seamus Treanor

Motion: That Monaghan MD write to Minister of Finance regarding the interest rate charged by Vulture Funds – Interest Rate 10% compared to Banks at 4% - Minister of Finance.

This motion was seconded by Cllr Paudge Connolly.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Dated this 16th day of October 2023

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Signed: _____
Meetings Administrator