

Municipal District of Monaghan

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan Municipal District held in Council Chamber, M-Tek 1 Building, Knockaconny, Co Monaghan on Monday, 20th November 2023 at 11.00 a.m.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Cathy Bennett presided.

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

Apologies: Cllr. Raymond Aughey

In Attendance: Patricia Monahan, Director of Services, Donal McElwain, Municipal District Co-ordinator, Michelle Curran, A/Administrative Officer, Dermot Deeney, Executive Engineer.

1. Confirmation of minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. Maxwell, seconded by Cllr. Conlon, it was agreed that the minutes of the Municipal District meeting held on 16th October 2023 be confirmed.

Opening Remarks:

Cllr. Bennett commended the Christmas Lights event performers Ms. Kayleigh Trappe, MC Mr. Sean McCaffrey, Municipal District staff especially Ms. Michelle Curran, Ms. Michelle Allister, Director of Service Patricia Monahan, Chief Executive Robert Burns and Municipal District Coordinator Mr. Donal McElwain. Cllr. Bennett praised the great event which involved An Garda Siochana, Monaghan Fire Service and Monaghan Civil Defense. Thanks were also expressed to the Men's Shed for their assistance and to the Monaghan Municipal District for the sponsorship of Monaghan Christmas Lights. These sentiments were also expressed by the other members present.

Cllr. Bennett also mentioned the upcoming events;

- Monaghan 's Christmas Street Food Festival on the 2nd of December,
- Crocus Christmas Event on the 9th and 10th of December,
- The Christmas, Free car parking in Monaghan town, after 12 noon daily from the 4th of December to the 1st of January inclusive.

Cllr. Conlon encouraged shop local to support local economy and especially for local employers to support the Christmas bonus by purchasing the Monaghan Vouchers to support the local staff and the local economy within Monaghan District.

Cllr. Treanor also praised the Halloween fireworks festival citing he had heard great feedback from everyone who attended.

2. Matters Arising

Cllr. Bennett asked regarding the traffic ramps and traffic calming policies for an overarching policy that will cover all villages throughout the county to encourage equal policies in all of the villages. Is there a new policy to be introduced regarding traffic calming and when will this be done?

Cllr. McKenna understood there is a policy already in place and this policy is already under review through the SPC. A conference was held last Saturday in which it was discussed that ramps were not the only answer, with occupants within housing estates are the ones who are speeding through their own estates and need to look at themselves however Cllr. McKenna would welcome a review of the policy in place.

Cllr. Conlon stated as a member of the speeding committee including AGS, Garda Niall Leech of the traffic core was an invaluable input and he agreed to take reasonable measures to reduce speed and protect pedestrians.

Cllr. Connolly agreed with ramps to slow traffic but using speed indicator signs & static speed cameras will improve driver behaviour. We must move into the next generation using satellite data and end-to-end speed cameras to calculate speed averaging cameras as the way forward.

Mr. McElwain confirmed that the Municipal Districts and the Road Sections have been reviewing same and a new policy will have to go to the review committee.

Cllr. Bennett mentioned three areas in which speed is a concern.

Cllr. Conlon requested speed reduction and road safety from controlled crossings and pedestrian access.

Cllr. Conlon also requested pedestrian access on the North Road, from Upstairs Downstairs to the new PEACE Campus entrance as there is a need for pedestrian crossing, also as school children will be crossing from Lidl area to the library.

Cllr. Treanor also requested that the pedestrian crossing at the credit union to be updated, the island removed, so traffic turning right is not held up due queuing traffic. Mr. McElwain advised the road section is responsible for this and pedestrian safety is of the biggest concern, it is felt the island was needed however he will ask the road section to review same.

Cllr. Brian McKenna requested ramps at Mullen village which has been submitted sometime and asked for an update on this project.

Mr. McElwain advised the traffic survey has been completed and a meeting is to be scheduled to discuss the same.

Cllr. Bennett asked regarding the motion which was passed in last month's meeting on the ASD could we please forward the same correspondence to NCSE.

Cllr. Maxwell also received correspondence with regards to the ASD and asked the Municipal District to write to schools advising them we are aware there is additional funding allocated to each primary school and ask them are they applying for the funding that is available?

Cllr. Conlon has understanding with motion to correspond to the school and send letters out now.

Cllr. Connolly also stated that yes, a number of schools would qualify for this funding and asked that all schools please apply for the funding in order to provide ASD units in all of our local primary schools.

Cllr. Bennett called the motion that the Municipal District Council will write to our primary and secondary schools in Monaghan town and NCSE in the area to provide ASD units this motion was seconded by Cllr. Conlon and passed by all present.

3. Coordinators Report

Cllr. Conlon asked regarding Park Street and Market Street, could we write to the owners of the private premises in order for them to upgrade their streetscapes as well. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. McKenna

Mr. McElwain advised he the council liaised with the private owners and the project has already started. Cllr. Connolly stated this project was due to start in Q2 of 2023 with buy in from all owners in this area, why was this project held up until now? Mr. McElwain advised, consultation and buy-in and all documentation of tender for the contractor, along with some modifications delayed the start until now.

Cllr. Connolly stated in relation to the CCTV, he was delighted to see that work had commenced. In relation to Active Travel, he asked that the seating locations be agreed and installed as soon as possible. Cllr. Connolly also noted that seating areas along the Greenway can attract rubbish to the area and therefore asked for locations to be located halfway through as he felt this will prevent antisocial behavior.

Mr. McElwain agreed that antisocial behaviors can occur at seating areas, however Active Travel are looking to install new seating as there are people that require seating along the path and A.T. are picking locations taking antisocial issues into consideration.

Cllr. Connolly praised the works that have commenced at Ballyalbany Bridge.

Cllr. Conlon asked in relation to the CCTV data processor, was this already agreed and is there a potential of delays and could this stall the project.

Cllr. McKenna said the CCTV had gone through JPC approval and was unaware of any delays.

Mr. McElwain advised there is no major issues with the CCTV project. Civil works have commenced on the ground and are progressing on site with no issues to date. The second part is the tender is the cameras which is due to go up shortly. We have received An Garda Commissioner approval and the procurement office is reviewing the tender documents for the cameras and software equipment.

Cllr. Bennett noted in relation to the Scotstown/Ballinode link, that this project had started, stressing the importance of this link to encourage safe travel between the two villages.

Cllr. Maxwell left the meeting at 11:44am.

Cllr. Connolly asked if a walkway along the river between Scotstown and Ballinode was being considered in the feasibility study which could be done in two parts if necessary.

Mr. McElwain advised regarding the link, Active Travel department have started the feasibility study and the Municipal District have meet with them. All options are being considered including a possible route along the river.

Cllr. McKenna asked regarding patching works- noting the patching works and RI works saying that they have improved the roads immensely especially between Scotstown and Balinode.

Cllr. Bennett would also like to commend Municipal District and Road Section on the roads work, the bridge repair works and how well they are being maintained.

Cllr. Connolly asked for an update with regards to the Numbers Trail in Rossmore Park. He advised the motion was approved, identified and funding was to be applied. He suggested the use of the same theme as Smithborough and he would like progression as soon as possible on this project.

Mr. McElwain advised that the Municipal District are already at capacity to deliver all projects within Rossmore Park, so far this year, the first of the three giants has been unveiled, a second is currently in construction due to be finished soon and a third should be in place by the end of the year. Other projects have also included solar panels which will provide hand driers to the toilets. Under the Communities Recognition Fund the playground is to be extended along with additional picnic tables. The numbers trail will progress within the capacity of the Municipal District team.

Cllr. Bennett commended Bats Festival Committee and the Municipal District on the sponsorship of the event including the fireworks.

Cllr. Bennett also encouraged businesses to support the Monaghan town voucher scheme.

4. Questions & Motions

Cllr. Raymond Aughey asked:

1. Can you Can the MD give an update on the progress with regard to Monaghan Town as the selected Decarbonization Zone (DZ). for the county?

Response:

The Draft Monaghan County Council Climate Action Plan (2024-29) was published on the 19th of October for public consultation. Section 4 of the plan details the Monaghan Town Decarbonising Zone. A register of opportunities and suite of specific actions has been developed for Monaghan Town to detail the proposed projects, technologies, and interventions including mitigation, adaptation, and biodiversity measures, to deliver the targets set for energy and emission reductions across the DZ. The Council actively invites submissions or observations on the proposed plan before the closing date of 5.00pm Monday 4th December 2023 via the dedicated consultation webpage.

<https://monaghan.ie/environment/the-draft-monaghan-county-council-climate-action-plan-2024-2029/>

2. With reflection on the recent "Make Way Day" and access for people with disabilities, has the council any reported concerns or concerns of its own with regard to footpath accessibility in Monaghan Town or any of the villages?

Response:

An engineer from the Municipal District took part in the walk around Monaghan Town for Make Way Day. A number of issues were raised on the day. The District has also a program of works ongoing with many repairs completed over the last two months.

3. With regard to funding secured by the Environmental Awareness Officer via the EPA (Local Authority Prevention Network) for water stations, when will the water station promised for the Greenway be installed and which particular location on the Greenway is planned for its installation?

Response:

The Water station is be installed at the Ulster Canal Park off the Glen Road. The Active Travel Team have a contractor on site and will install the base for the Water station in the coming weeks. It is anticipated to have the unit in place by mid-December.

4. Can the Municipal District arrange to meet with Reprs and stakeholders from the Private Coach industry locally about coach drop off area and designated coach parking areas in Monaghan Town?

Response:

The Municipal District will contact the representatives from the local private Coach industry regarding the drop off locations to seek a solution for a designated parking area.

Cllr. Sean Conlon asked:

1. In anticipation of the Peace Campus opening in the months ahead, what progress is occurring between the Council's Road Section and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), in relation to advancing the installation of controlled crossings or zebra crossings at the intersection of Glaslough Street and the North Road?

Response:

Currently this location is not under consideration by roads section, however, there's a pedestrian crossing being installed on Plantation Road as part of the peace campus project.

2. For the purpose of minimising traffic disruption, as witnessed in Monaghan Town in recent weeks, will this Council and the Roads Section give a commitment that no non-emergency road works requiring road closures or diversions will take place over the month of December?

Response:

The Council has completed a significant amount of important work in the town in November to ensure all is completed prior to the Christmas period. Much of the important road works on Macartan road and the main traffic lights was scheduled to reduce for night-time to reduce the disruption. The council will make every effort to avoid works in the town during December.

3. In relation to the recent 'Do Not Consume Water' notice, that had a major impact on both commercial and residential customers in the Killyconnigan and Tullyherim areas of Monaghan Town, what commitments have the Council secured from Uisce Eireann that overdue replacement of inferior water supply pipes will be initiated in order to ensure a repeat occurrence throughout the Town's network will not be repeated?

Response:

Uisce Éireann are looking at the Coolshannagh area network to consider implementing a programme similar to the programme of works under way at Deven Reilly Terrace and McKenna Terrace. The next phase of similar works will take place in the Tully estate which is currently at design stage.

The Coolshannagh network upgrade when approved will move into the design phase and then to construction phase. There is no timeline for this work at this time but will be post the Tully construction works phase.

4. Following the recent announcement of additional measures aimed at promoting responsible dog ownership and control in public, including the Support Initiative allocation of 60,865 euro to this Council, will improvement measures be undertaken at the Carrick Dog Shelter as previously requested? And has the Department approved the recruitment process to hire an additional dog warden for the County?

Response:

The Department of Rural and Community Development allocated a sum of €60,865 last week to Monaghan County Council. This sum is to be spent by the end of the year on structures, vehicles and/or equipment used to provide the Dog Control service. The Council is currently considering how best to spend this funding in line with the conditions governing the grant and within the narrow window available.

Monaghan County Council does not have any plans at present to appoint an additional Dog Warden.

5. In line with the creation of 44 Local Healthy Age Friendly Homes Co-ordinator posts across the State, what progress have Monaghan County Council made in introducing this role? And also, what will the priority objectives be of this new position?

Response:

The recruitment for the Monaghan Coordinators is being organised by Meath County Council as the lead authority for Age Friendly Ireland. While a small number of coordinators are starting on the 27th of November it is likely that the Monaghan coordinator will not be starting until 8th January at the earliest.

It is the priority of the Age Friendly programme to target supports at older people in the form of improving their living conditions, access to continued health and social care supports and other tailored community supports.

5. Votes of Sympathy

It was proposed by Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr McKenna and unanimously agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to Peter Hughes and the Smyth Family on the passing of Anne Watterson, manager of the Northern Standard.

6. Votes of Congratulations

It was proposed by Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr Treanor that congratulations be extended to the HSE on the opening of the new Primary Care Unit in the grounds of St. Davnets and compliment them on the excellent restoration of the 120 year old building for this service.

7. A.O.B.

Cllr. Connolly asked for clarification with regards to the ownership of the car park at Tyholland Chapel and for the council to resurface surface this car park. Also stated that the church has clarified that they do not own this car park and state that the council owns both car parks on each side so could repair works be completed on both?

Cllr. McKenna stated this was raised previously at council meetings and we were unsure of ownership then. If the ownership now resides with the Municipal District then we must resurface same as soon as appropriate funding is available to us.

Mr. McElwain asked for clarification on the exact location in question in order to clarify ownership.

Cllr. Connolly advised he will forward the e-mail and location to Mr. McElwain.

Cllr. Conlon referred to the Greenway extension from Monaghan to Tyholland including Middletown. Could the council include picnic benches and a car park facility to compliment the Greenway facilities?

Cllr. Conlon asked in relation to the Barrick Lane access into Belgium square there is derelict stores and fencing in this area. It is a cul-de-sac. However patching work needs to be done in order to address this area within the Municipal District.

Mr. McElwain stated the Municipal district will patch this lane.

Cllr. Aughey arrived at 12:06PM

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Dated this 20th day of November 2023

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Signed: _____
Meetings Administrator