

**Draft Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Mtek Building, Armagh Road, Monaghan, County Monaghan, on Tuesday 07 May 2024 at 2.00pm**

**Chair:** Cllr D. Maxwell, Cathaoirleach

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

Mr. R. Burns, Chief Executive, Mr. C. Flynn, Ms. P. Monahan, Ms. C O'Hare, Directors of Services, Mr. G. McMahan, Ms. O. McConnon, A/Directors of Services, Ms. M Little, Staff Officer, Ms. M McGarvey, Meetings Administrator.

**Apologies:** Cllr R. Truell

**June Council Meeting:**

*On the Proposal of Cllr C. Bennett, seconded by Cllr S. Coyle, it was agreed that the June Council meeting would take place in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 04 June at 10.00am and conclude at 1.00pm.*

At the outset the Cathaoirleach referred to the following motion that had been submitted by the **Carrickmacross-Castleblayney Municipal District Members:**

*'That Monaghan County Council hold a civic reception in honour of Mr. Stephen Smyth and Mr. Johnny Nelson to acknowledge their bravery in saving the lives of Ms. Mary McAllister and Ms. Shirley McMahan, following a kayaking incident on the river Fane on the 18th of November 2023 and subsequently nominate them both the National Bravery Award.'*

Following a short discussion on the motion, the Cathaoirleach put it to the meeting, and it was agreed unanimously that a Civic Reception would be afforded to Mr. Stephen Smyth and Mr. Johnny Nelson on the 04 June 2024 at 1.00pm in the Council Chamber and subsequently nominate them both for the National Bravery Award.

**Urgent Business**

The Cathaoirleach informed the members that he had received the following Notice of Urgent Business as follows:

**1. On behalf of the Sinn Féin Party Members:**

*'That Monaghan County Council calls on Eir to remove the mast recently erected in Scotstown village and to rescind plans to erect a mast in Scotshouse village. Both the mast in Scotstown and the proposed mast in Scotshouse are located close to people's homes and public consultation did not take place.'*

*On the proposal of Cllr C. Bennett, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed to enter 'into committee' to discuss whether to accept the motions submitted as urgent business.*

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

*On the proposal of Cllr S. Treanor, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that the Council revert to public session.*

## **1. Confirmation of Minutes of Meetings held on 08 April 2024**

*On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan, seconded by Cllr H. McElvaney, it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 08 April 2024 be confirmed.*

## **2. Correspondence**

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

- Letter from the Executive Officer to the Minister for Social Protection, Ms. Heather Humphreys, T.D., regarding the age limit for participants Community Employment Schemes, Rural Social Schemes and Tús Programmes.
- Email from Brendan Smith, T.D., outlining a response that he had received from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Transport, Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D., regarding Regional and Local Roads funding.
- Email from the Minister for Transport, Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D., regarding an increase in the funding allocation for Active Travel.
- Letter from the office of Minister for Social Protection, Ms. Heather Humphreys, T.D., regarding dog control policy.
- Letter from Ms. Christina Borchmann on behalf of Ms. Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, regarding the Irish Farmers Association's "Enough is Enough" campaign.
- Letter from the Principal Officer of the Rural Water Unit, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Mr. Douglas Kelly regarding Developer Provided Water Services Infrastructure.
- Letter from ICBAN with an update on their current work programme.
- Acknowledgement email from the Private Secretary to the Minister of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Mr. Patrick O'Donovan, regarding GEM students access to the SUSI Grant.
- Acknowledgement letter from the Assistant Private Secretary to the Taoiseach, Mr. Simon Harris, regarding reducing the VAT rate for the hospitality sector.
- Acknowledgement email from the office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Mr. Charlie McConalogue, T.D., regarding reconvening the national fodder committee.
- Acknowledgement email from the office of the Minister for Finance, Mr. Michael McGrath, T.D., regarding reconvening the national fodder committee.
- Acknowledgement email from the office of the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Ms. Heather Humphreys, T.D., regarding the future direction and purpose of the LCDC.
- Resolution from the Municipal District of Ballybay-Clones regarding public representation on the Ukrainian Response Forum.
- Resolution from Louth County Council regarding the Good Friday Agreement.

### **Additional Correspondence**

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

- Letter from the Private Secretary to the Minister of Further and Higher Education,

Research, Innovation and Science, Mr. Patrick O'Donovan, regarding GEM students access to the SUSI Grant.

- Letter from Matt Carthy, T.D., regarding additional funding for the road network in County Monaghan.
- Email from Ms. Rachel Kelly, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, regarding the National Grid.

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

*On the proposal of Cllr B. McKenna, seconded by Cllr S. Coyle, it was agreed that this Council, rewrites to the Minister for Social Protection to reconsider the decision not to implement a policy change that would allow participants in Community Employment Schemes (CES), Rural Social Schemes (RSS) and Tús programs to continue their valuable contributions until the age of 70.*

*On the proposal of Cllr C. Bennett, seconded by Cllr C. Carthy, it was agreed that this Council, rewrites to the to the Department to obtain clarification on the future direction and purpose of the LCDC in the county as they will be no longer required be the local action group for leader funding. There is serious concern felt by all members of the LCDC, many of whom have given up their time voluntarily. We seek direction from the Department. In awarding the Leader programme to a local development company, this change will have a detrimental impact on the LCDC which has had representatives from statutory bodies, Elected Members and Community groups in place for the last 10 years. The LCDC will be meaningless and have no input in decision making going forward for all Leader applications in the County.*

*On the proposal of Cllr P. Connolly, seconded by Cllr H. McElvaney, it was agreed that this Council, considers either purchasing or leasing a JCB Pothole Pro machine in view of the ongoing difficulties regarding potholes on roads and the value for money that could be achieved.*

*(It was noted that Cllr. PJ O'Hanlon would not be in support of this motion)*

A vote by show of hands resulted in, 3 For, 6 Against, 7 Abstained – the Cathaoirleach declared the motion defeated.

*On the proposal of Cllr H. McElvaney, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that this Council, gives consideration to co-opting public representatives to the Ukrainian Community Response Forum following the Local Government Election in June.*

*On the proposal of Cllr. S. Conlon, seconded by Cllr. A. McCooey, it was agreed that this Council, writes to the Chairman of the newly established Stakeholder Group on Dog Control, Mr. John Twomey seeking provision of the requisite finance and resources for the purpose of implementing the recommendations as outlined in the Report published by the Working Group on Dog Control, specifically relating to the hiring of the identified 40 additional dog wardens nationally, as without adequate enforcement, the recommendations aimed at enhancing dog control by our Local Authority will be unachievable.*

### **3. To consider S183 Lease of Lands to Glaslough Harriers Athletic Club**

*On the proposal Cllr P. Connolly, seconded by Cllr R. Aughey, it was agreed that the Council approve the Lease of Lands at Derrygassan Upper, Emyvale, County Monaghan, to Glaslough*

*Harriers Athletic Club, in accordance with the terms of the notice dated 13 February 2024 and attached site location map under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001.*

#### **4. To Consider Community & Environment Funds Allocations 2024**

Members noted the Reports circulated which recommended the allocation of funding under the Community and Environment Fund 2024.

Mr. P. Sherlock, Environmental Awareness Officer, and Mr. B. Eaton, Social Inclusion Officer, Community Section advised that the total budget to support and assist in the delivery of projects for 2024 is:

**Environmental Services Fund:** €70,000, which is allocated to Tidy Towns, Residents Associations and Local Community Groups (Other).

**Community Development Fund:** €90,000, which is allocated to Community Groups.

87 applications were received under the Environmental Services Fund. It is proposed to fund 86 applications to the value of €66,150. The project not funded receives an annual allocation of funding from the Municipal District.

127 applications were received under the Community Development Fund. It is proposed to fund 96 out of the 127 applications received to the value of €90,000. Projects not funded include those deemed ineligible or applications that may be eligible to receive funding under an alternative funding source.

Members commended Mr. Sherlock and Mr. Eaton for all their work on the Community and Environment Fund.

*On the proposal of Cllr H. McElvaney, seconded by Cllr B. McKenna, it was agreed that the Council approve the allocation of funding under the Community and Environment Fund 2024 Scheme, as per the Report circulated with the agenda.*

#### **5. To Consider Funding Recommendation - Tourism Festival & Events funding**

Members noted the Reports circulated which recommended the allocation of funding under the Tourism Festival Fund 2024 and the Failte Ireland Regional Tourism Festival Funding 2024.

Ms. D. Condra, Tourism and Marketing Executive advised that the total budget to assist in the delivery of these projects is:

**Tourism Festival and Event Fund: €10,000**

**Failte Ireland Regional Tourism Festival Fund: €5,000**

15 applications were received under the Tourism Festival and Event Fund. It is proposed to fund 7 applications to the value of €10,000. Projects not funded included those deemed ineligible under the scheme i.e. those deemed more suitable under an alternative funding source such as the Community Development Fund.

6 applications were received under the Failte Ireland Regional Tourism Festival Fund. It is proposed to fund 2 applications to the value of €5,000. 4 applications were assessed but

were not proposed to be funded. 1 of the applications had been inadvertently submitted under this scheme, however, was deemed more suitable under the Tourism Festival and Event Fund Scheme. The remaining 3 projects did not meet the eligibility threshold under the evaluation criteria outlined in the guidelines advertised.

Members commended Ms. Condra for all of her work on the Tourism Festival and Event Fund and Failte Ireland Regional Tourism Festival Fund.

*On the proposal of Cllr A. Campell seconded by Cllr H. McElvaney it was agreed that the Council approve the allocation of funding under the Tourism Festival and Event Fund 2024, as per the Report circulated with the agenda.*

*On the proposal of Cllr A. Campell seconded by Cllr H. McElvaney it was agreed that the Council approve the allocation of funding under the Failte Ireland Regional Tourism Festival Fund 2024, as per the Report circulated with the agenda.*

## 6. To note the Annual Financial Statements and approve Over expenditure and Transfers to Capital Account for the Financial Year 2023

The Members noted the Annual Financial Statement for 2023 which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

*On the proposal of Cllr H. McElvaney seconded by Cllr S. Coyle it was agreed to note the Draft Annual Financial Statement (AFS 2023) and to approve over-expenditures and transfers to Capital Account, as per schedules submitted to the Members, as follows:*

### Over Expenditure

Approval of over expenditure is required for Divisions A, B, D, E, F & H

Division		Expenditure	Income	Net Position
		(Over)/Under	Over/(Under)	
		Estimates	Estimates	2023
		2023	2023	
		€	€	€
A	Housing and Building	-1,413,751	2,440,139	1,026,388
B	Roads Transportation & Safety	-6,086,776	5,734,407	-352,369
C	Water services	-1,600,183	1,807,889	207,706
D	Development Management	-62,423	594,861	532,438
E	Environmental Services	-245,425	413,737	168,312
F	Recreation & Amenity	-397,541	87,405	-310,136
G	Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	8,083	91,487	99,570
H	Miscellaneous Services	-162,028	-880,167	-1,042,195
		<b>-9,960,044</b>	<b>10,289,758</b>	<b>329,714</b>

### Transfers

			Transfer Amount	Budget Provision	Difference
ZCB01031	1	New Offices Provision	€652,303	€1,856,258	€1,203,955
04580057	2	Clones Sports Project	€50,000	€50,000	€0
04782001	3	Clones / Ballybay MD Allocation	€252,733	€252,733	€0
04783001	4	Monaghan MD Allocation	€252,733	€252,733	€0
04785001	5	Carrickmacross / Castleblayney MD Allocation	€252,733	€252,733	€0
05310001	6	Civil Defence General	€15,000	€15,000	€0
04580069	7	Peace Campus Running costs	€182,500	€182,500	€0
06410003	8	Peace Campus Loan charges	€15,516	€15,516	€0
06480025	9	Patrick Kavanagh Exhibition Centre Operation	€25,000	€25,000	€0
08420001	10	Local Election	€20,000	€20,000	€0
08880018	11	Transfer to / from Capital Account	€100,000	€100,000	€0
ZCA02018	12	Disability Initiatives	€10,000	€10,000	€0
05410018	13	Fire Service Gratuities	€50,000	€50,000	€0
08890009	14	Members Gratuity Scheme	€100,000	€100,000	€0
ZPC03011	15	Maintenance of Networks & PC's	€183,867	€183,867	€0
08330001	16	Irrecoverable Rates	€538,000	€538,000	€0
04580092	17	Wifi4EU	€525	€0	-€525
04110010	18	Application Fee Planning Permission	€2,280	€0	-€2,280
04580002	19	Community and Enterprise	€6,881	€0	-€6,881
02152002	20	Local Lighting Running Cost	€161,787	€147,975	-€13,812
02140002	21	Regional Lighting Running Cost	€95,861	€76,095	-€19,766
08246001	22	Central Stores overhead Charges	€23,467	€0	-€23,467
ZFS06011	23	Financial Accounting Administration	€43,855	€0	-€43,855
05114001	24	Landfill Scotch Corner Operation	€143,825	€0	-€143,825
02320005	25	Monaghan Town Improvement (Parking Surplus)	€172,679	€0	-€172,679
04780099	26	Industrial and Economic Development Budget Only	€650,000	€150,000	-€500,000
08216099	27	Workshop & Overheads	€533,856	€0	-€533,856
			€4,535,401	€4,278,410	-€256,991

## 7. To receive a presentation from Waterways Ireland on the proposed opening of the Marina, Clones

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Mr. Garret McGrath, Regional Manager, Northern Region, Waterways Ireland, to the meeting to update Members on the Ulster Canal Restoration Project. He informed the meeting that he had recently received a tour of the new marina facility in Clones alongside Cllrs, McElvaney, Treanor, Truell, Gilliland, Coyle and he commended all those involved in the project.

Mr. McGrath commenced by providing Members with a brief background in relation to the work of Waterways Ireland and history of the Ulster Canal. He stated that Waterways Ireland are the cross-border navigational authority responsible for the management, development, maintenance, and promotion of over 1000km of inland navigable waterways, principally for recreational purposes, across Ireland.

Mr. McGrath advised the members that the Ulster Canal restoration is a flagship North-South project, supported by the Shared Island Fund, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and the Department of Rural and Community Development and is managed by Waterways Ireland.

He provided an overview of the project in terms of progress to date, current status and future works to be completed on a phased basis: Key points to note were:

- **Phase 1 – Lough Erne to Castle Saunderson** is complete. This involved the restoration of 2.5 kilometers stretch of the Ulster Canal from Upper Lough Erne in County Fermanagh to Castle Saunderson near Belturbet in Co. Cavan, dredging of the Finn River and installation of a new floating jetty.

- **Phase 2 – Clones to Clonfad** which is nearing completion involved the development of a new 42 berth marina in Clones, two new access bridges, repairs to an existing masonry arch bridge, and a sustainable water supply. It also included approximately 1km of restored canal and towpath, with a looped walk and an amenity area on the route of the 180-year-old Ulster Canal in Clones. The amenity area will include a car park with EV charging, service block and picnic area and will be connected to the town and the existing playground. The Marina works are due to be completed by early June 2024.
- **Phase 3 – Castle Saunderson to Clonfad** is the major blueway stage of the restoration project, connecting a 10 kilometres cross-border route between Castle Saunderson and Clonfad and linking the town of Clones by navigable waterway to the Erne System and onward to the wider waterway network of the Shannon-Erne Waterway, Shannon Navigation and the Royal and Grand Canal.

Mr. McGrath advised that the primary areas of focus at present, in relation to Phase 3 will be on land acquisitions in the Northern Ireland section of the project and the resubmitting of planning applications in relation to the land that falls under Irish jurisdiction. He informed the members that subject to funding and land acquisitions the estimated completion date for phase 3 is estimated to be 2028/2029.

Mr. McGrath responded to queries from the elected members.

The members joined the Cathaoirleach in commending Waterways Ireland, the Contractor and all those involved in the Ulster Canal Restoration Project and thanked Mr. McGrath for his presentation.

#### **8. To consider recommendations and minutes from Corporate Policy Group 23 April 2024**

The members noted the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 23 April 2024, which had been circulated.

*On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, it was agreed that the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 23 March 2024 and the recommendations contained therein be approved.*

#### **9. To receive Management Report – April 2024**

The members noted the Management Report for April 2024 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 PJ O’Hanlon, seconded by Cllr C. Carthy, it was agreed that this Council writes to the Minister for Transport, Mr. Eamon Ryan, T.D., in relation to reviewing the funding allocation for Low-Cost Safety Schemes. The figure this year is €259,380, which is down on last year. These figures were not increased which is very disappointing considering that costs are rising significantly.*

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

The members noted the reports from Cllrs Carthy, S. Conlon, and B. McKenna, in relation to their attendance at the following Conference/Training events:

- AILG, Local Election 2024, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024, Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

- AILG, Local Elections 2024, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024, Hotel Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny
- LAMA, Spring Seminar, 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> January Abbey Hotel, Donegal Town, Co. Donegal
- Association of Irish Regions, Regions in Focus Seminar, 7-8<sup>th</sup> February 2024, Woodlands Hotel, Co. Limerick
- AILG, Annual Conference 2024, 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> February, Arklow Bay Hotel, Co. Wicklow

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

There were no items for consideration under this item.

#### **12. Matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meeting held 08 April 2024**

In response to a query from Cllr N. Keelan in relation to the review of the speed limit that had been announced last year, Cllr R. Aughey advised that a meeting of the Speed Limit Committee had taken place last week and that an update would be provided to members at the next meeting.

There were no further matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 08 April 2024.

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

Mr. G. McMahon, A/Director of Services gave the following update in relation to the N2 National Primary Road Schemes:

- The Ardee to Castleblayney road scheme remains suspended.
- Environmental surveys continue on the Clontibret to the Border Road scheme. The ground investigations work is scheduled to take place later in the year and will inform the detailed design. The current design phase that will see the corridor reduced to a designed road alignment, is scheduled to conclude in late 2025 or early 2026.
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#### **14. To receive update on North/South Interconnector project**

No further update.

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

No further update.

#### **16. Questions and Replies**

Cllr P. Connolly asked:

**1. In relation to the proposed new building of a County Council office**

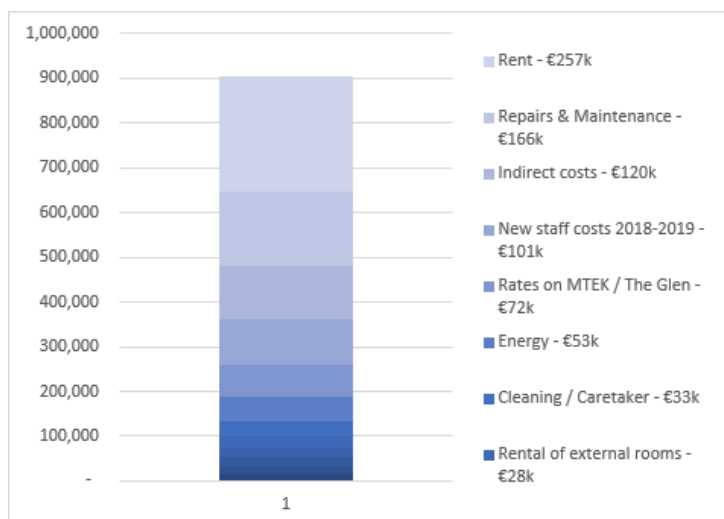
- A) Which offices currently occupied by Monaghan County Council will be vacated in the event of the new County Council Offices being built?**

**Reply:** The Glen, Mtek 1, Mtek 2 and the Motor Tax offices.

- B) What savings will accrue, per building, as a result of vacating these buildings currently occupied by Monaghan County Council?**

**Reply:** The Preliminary Business Case prepared by GT (Grant Thornton) and presented to the Elected Members on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2021 estimated an overall potential saving of €900,000 per annum. The Cost Benefit Analysis estimated the following cost savings, categorised by expense type:





There may also be cost savings circa €15-22k each on areas such as Security, travel, storage and IT which are not detailed on the above table.

**Cllr C. Bennett asked:**

- Can Monaghan County Council please provide me an update on plans for the Sliabh Beagh area, a summary of the recent consultation and what income streams are being applied for to ensure that this area is invested in.**

**Reply:** Monaghan County Council's Biodiversity Officer, in conjunction with partners, submitted an application under Peace Plus in March seeking funding of €3.25M for a peatland recovery and hen harrier management project for Sliabh Beagh. This aims to restore 608ha of peatland, remove Sitka spruce regeneration; control predators and enhance Hen Harrier habitat on Sliabh Beagh with the involvement of the local community and stakeholders. The outcome is expected in Autumn.

The recent Shared Island feasibility study developed detailed plans for walk/cycle linkages to existing trails to provide up to 60km routes on Sliabh Beagh, in addition to directional and gateway signage and a business case for eco-tourism investment. These developments are required to be submitted to An Bord Pleanála because of the designations in the area and funding opportunities are being explored by the three partner councils.

- Can Monaghan County Council please provide me with a summary of upcoming funding applications that are available to all communities.**

**Reply:** Administered through the Community Section we currently have the following call for applications open:

Monaghan Sports Partnership's Sports Club Small Grant Scheme  
 Open to registered sports clubs in the county  
 Max of €500 per application for sports equipment, education / training  
 Opened 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024  
 Closing date – 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024

However, there are a number of other grants programmes in specific areas that are currently open to community groups but not administered through the Community Section, see below:

Festivals Investment Scheme from The Arts Council: Apply from 30 April 2024.  
 Closing date 17:30, Thursday 30 May 2024  
 Maximum awarded €45,000

Artform and practice(s) Architecture, Arts participation, Circus, Dance, Festivals, Film, Literature, Music, Opera, Spectacle, Street arts, Theatre, Traditional arts, Visual arts, YPCE  
 For more information and to apply click here. [https://visualartists.ie/.../open-call-festivals.../...](https://visualartists.ie/.../open-call-festivals.../)  
 The Ireland Funds' Heart of the Community Fund is open to applications until May 3.  
 details at <https://irelandfunds.org/grants/>

Local Youth Club Grant Scheme Online Application is now Open. CMETB Youth Services are delighted to announce that the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme is now open and local volunteer led youth groups are invited to apply online for funding via <https://cmetb.submit.com/show/10>. The Local Youth Club Grant Scheme is provided by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and aims to support voluntary youth club/group activities and engagement for young people; with priority given to volunteer led clubs/groups catering for young people aged 10–21 years. The primary focus of the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme is to assist local volunteer-led youth clubs/groups that provide a programme of youth work activities for young people. In addition, other clubs/groups that work with young people, but are not specifically providing youth work, are also entitled to apply for funding under the Scheme.

Closing date for receipt of applications is Friday, 26 April at 5pm.

(Maximum grant allocation per group – €3000)

For further information – please contact our local CMETB offices:

Cavan – [Unarudden@cmetb.ie](mailto:Unarudden@cmetb.ie) or Telephone – 049 4331044

Monaghan – [Sonyamcquaid@cmetb.ie](mailto:Sonyamcquaid@cmetb.ie) or Telephone – 047 30888 ext. 2

Funding now available for Parent & Toddler groups under the Government's 'First 5 Strategy'.

Particular emphasis is on groups supporting parents from Ukraine.

Two grants available:

1. Funding of €800 for existing Groups and €1,000 for the establishment of new Groups.
2. Funding of up to €300 to establish and operate Buggy Walking Groups. Can be by a new or existing groups. Must be 6 or more walks.

Funding can be used towards:

- Toys, equipment and books for indoor and outdoor activities, and children's refreshments.
- Storage for equipment.
- Training for parents, e.g. paediatric first aid, committee skills, parenting courses, facilitate sessions.
- Promotional Leaflets including any required translations.
- Children's activities, e.g. arts and crafts, music.
- Limited funding will be available towards insurance or rent, up to a maximum of 50% of total funding for existing services.
- Limited funding will be available towards insurance or rent, up to a maximum of 70% of total funding for new services and buggy walking groups.

Applications must be made through your local County Childcare Committee. Contact Monaghan County Childcare Committee 047 72896 for further info.

Funding available for community groups dealing with the issue of suicide amongst vulnerable groups of people:

HSE Connecting for Life Cavan Monaghan - Call for applications for funding 2024

HSE Cavan Monaghan Mental Health Service and HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention are seeking applications for once off funding of a minimum of €8,000 from local community and voluntary groups. This funding is aimed at initiatives to reach at risk/vulnerable groups in relation to improving their mental health and wellbeing and reducing the risk of self-harm and suicide.

Specific at risk groups to be targeted include:

- (1) Young People (particularly young men);
- (2) People who have been bereaved by suicide;
- (3) Travellers;
- (4) Members of the LGBTQ+ community;
- (5) Victims of domestic violence;
- (6) Other groups to be determined by local need (this could include people with alcohol or drug misuse problems, gambling addiction, Refugees & Asylum seekers, people with mental health difficulties or chronic physical health conditions etc).

Overview of the type of projects that may be funded:

- Initiatives to support wellbeing and access to supports and services, including early intervention and postvention supports for people/groups at risk of mental health difficulties, including self-harm or risk of suicide;

- Initiatives, programmes, group activities, support groups – to reach at risk groups in relation to supporting their mental health, and reducing risks of suicide and self-harm. Such events/activities could, for example, address known risk factors such as:

§ Alcohol or drug misuse

§ Sense of isolation

§ Lack of social support

§ Losing a loved one through suicide

§ Relational or social losses

§ Stressful life events

§ Stigma associated with help-seeking behaviour.

Applications on behalf of a number of small organisations working collaboratively are welcome.

Further information, including the Application form, can be obtained from Emer Mulligan, HSE Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention at [emer.mulligan@hse.ie](mailto:emer.mulligan@hse.ie).

Closing date is Friday 26th April 2024

(please note applications received after this date will not be considered).

**4. Can Monaghan County Council please provide me with numbers waiting on the Local improvement Scheme.**

**Reply:** There are currently 76 live applications waiting on the LIS. 36 of these applications have been assessed and prioritised based on the eligibility criteria prior to the ministers 2024/2025 LIS announcement and funding allocation this month. There are 40 applications that have been submitted this year since MCC reopened the application process and they are awaiting assessment.

Due to the recent changes to the eligibility criteria Monaghan County Council intend on reviewing the deadline for 2024 applications.

**5. Can Monaghan County Council please update me on a grant that is available to upgrade septic tanks. Is this available to all households that cannot avail of a public sewage scheme.**

**Reply:** On 1 January 2024, [the Domestic Waste Water Treatment System \(DWWTS\) Grant was updated](#). The grant increased from €5,000 to €12,000 and the qualification criteria changed so people could get the grant even if they hadn't registered their septic tank by 1 February 2013. The Grant is available to repair, upgrade or replace Domestic waste water treatment system if required. The Grant funding is 85% of the cost of the repairs to the system or a new system, up to a maximum of €12,000. There are 3 different types of septic tanks grant schemes in Ireland, please note that this is not a universal Grant and is subject to the household meeting the criteria for each septic tank grant are different as outlined below.

- DWWTS grant under the National Inspection Plan - In order to be eligible for this grant, works to the DWWTS must arise directly from an inspection carried out under the National Inspection Plan, and the subsequent issue of an Advisory Notice to the householder by the local authority. Monaghan County Council are required to carry out a minimum of 41 inspection this year as per the EPA National Inspection Plan, Monaghan County Council will exceed this number. This year's inspections are targeted in a area where there is the greatest risk to human health and water quality from DWWTS. Monaghan County Council will carry out additional inspections where there is evidence that individual DWWTS or clusters of DWWTS are causing particular water quality problems in an area.
- DWWTS grant in Prioritised Areas for Action - In order to be eligible for this grant, the DWWTS serving a house must be situated in a Prioritised Area for Action in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021, and the applicant must have received a letter from the Local Authority Waters Programme Office (LAWPO) on behalf of the local authority, confirming eligibility to apply for a grant.
- DWWTS grant in High Status Objective Catchment Areas - In order to be eligible for this grant, the DWWTS serving a house must be situated in a High Status Objective Catchment Area in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021, and the applicant must have received a letter from the local authority confirming eligibility to apply for a grant.

**6. Can Monaghan County Council please provide me with their plans to lead public consultation on Village Plans. Which villages have received plans and which villages are yet to be done? Is there a timeframe for these?**

**Reply:**

While it is an ambition of the Council to provide community plans for each community group that would benefit from one, their delivery requires significant financial and resource investment. In the

past funding has come through the DRCD Town and Village fund and this fund was used to develop the Drum and Rockcorry vision plans. Currently there is no funding scheme that MCC can avail of to assist in the development of village plans however the Community section is developing a framework that will facilitate an efficient bottom up approach to plan development. The communities identified with the greatest need through analysis of the CSO and Pobail statistics will be prioritised in this regard. All avenues for financial assistance will also be investigated.

The Community section is currently working with the community of Smithboro and it is hoped that a draft plan will be developed by the end of the summer. The community of Emyvale also has a plan at an advanced stage of development and it is intended to produce a draft plan in Q4 of this year. Plans have already been developed for Oram; Newbliss/Killeevan; Aughnamullen; Scotshouse; and Ballinode.

**Cllr A. McCooey asked:**

- 7. Can Monaghan County Council provide the latest update and status of the 10 year masterplan for the Hope Castle and Lough Muckno?**

**Reply:** A tender for consultants to provide professional services has been advertised, with a deadline for submissions of 24 May 2024. Following the appointment of the successful consultants, formal work on the preparation of the Masterplan and Framework shall commence.

- 8. Can Monaghan County Council provide an update on plans to put a roof on Hope Castle, Castleblayney?**

**Reply:** The Council has engaged the professional services of a Structural Engineer and Conservation Architect to inspect the current condition of the Hope Castle building. Having regard to the professional reports prepared, the Council intend to commence preparation of tender documents in May to procure a contractor to clear out and remove all existing internal materials/debris from the building. Following completion of the clear out works, survey companies will be engaged to carry out relevant surveys of the building to inform design proposals for remedial works. Subsequently, the Council will commence procurement of professional consultants to prepare design proposals and an associated part 8 planning application for remedial protective works inclusive of a new roof structure to secure and stabilise the building.

- 9. Can Monaghan County Council provide details on what reports and surveys are being undertaken for Hope Castle and the Annex? Particularly in relation to the structural integrity of each?**

**Reply:** Structural Inspection Reports and Asbestos Survey Reports have been completed for the Hope Castle and Annex buildings. Following completion of proposed clear out works to remove the significant quantities of internal materials/debris, it is proposed that a detailed topographical survey (floor plans/elevations) and wet/dry rot timber survey will be completed to inform design proposals for remedial protective works to both buildings. It should be noted that the design consultants may require other surveys to be completed during the design development given the current building conditions.

**Cllr S. Conlon asked:**

- 10 With only a limited supply of industrial / commercial zoned lands, seven hectares in total, owned by Monaghan County Council available to attract and provide future commercial / industrial development, and increased employment opportunities, will the Executive initiate an advertisement campaign seeking expressions of interest, and potential purchase from landowners to provide such a land-bank, similar to the Housing Section's efforts at seeking lands for social housing?**

**Reply:** Monaghan County Council are currently actively pursuing the acquisition of zoned industrial land across the County.

- 11 For Housing Adaptation Grant applications that are submitted by families with a child or family member(s) with profound autistic diagnoses, and where existing living accommodation precludes internal modifications, does the eligibility criteria extend to providing grants to build extensions for sensory rooms, or stand-alone habitable units located in rear gardens?**

**Reply:** Extract from the Guidelines for the delivery of the Housing Adaptation Grants states that:

- "Local authorities should note that all applications for grant aid in respect of people suffering from Autistic Spectrum Disorders shall be considered under the Housing Adaptation Grant for

People with a Disability, provided that the works are reasonably necessary for the purposes of rendering a house more suitable for the accommodation needs of that person”

- “Grant aid may be considered for the provision of infrastructural and safety related adaptations to create appropriate space for applicants with specific sensory needs. Applications of this nature should be supported by a multidisciplinary assessment of the applicant by specialist healthcare professionals. This should outline who will be responsible for therapy services and/or the provision and upkeep of sensory related equipment. The Department does not fund the provision of sensory equipment.....”
- “The types of works allowable under the scheme can be varied and can include the provision of: (FYI - this covers types of works for the whole scheme not specific to Autistic Spectrum Disorders)
  - access ramps;
  - stair lifts;
  - downstairs toilet facilities;
  - accessible showers;
  - fixed track hoists (excluding any servicing, maintenance or training costs);
  - adaptations to facilitate wheelchair access;
  - extensions (typically a bedroom and/or bathroom);
  - Any other works that are reasonably necessary for the purposes of rendering a house more suitable for the accommodation of a person with a disability”

**12 Considering the substantial investment of Monaghan County Council and Municipal District funds in building the Bio-Connect Centre at Knockaconny:**

- a) **what is the anticipated date of commencement of operations at Bio-Connect? The Construction Contract is programmed for substantial completion in Quarter 3, 2024.**

**Reply:** Operations will commence over the months following substantial completion.

- b) **at commencement, what number of employees will occupy the building, and what is the forecast for expansion of staff?**

**Reply:** BioConnect will build an initial team of 4 direct employees (one in place now) to enable operations to begin. Further recruitment to build a wider team to deliver biotechnology projects for partners and biotechnology training will be dependent on securing further funding. Various large funding opportunities have been identified and are in progression. Leasing of the upper floor of the facility and expansion of direct project and training activities is expected to generate up to 150 new jobs.

- c) **Has a promotion / recruitment drive been initiated to attract employees to take up posts at this highly specialised facility?**

**Reply:** Soft promotional activities have commenced ahead of the formal launch.

- d) **Who are the committed industry stakeholders, and what level of finance / resources have they committed to the project?**

**Reply:** Multiple industry partners have committed to almost €500k of cash support in addition to committing to carrying out projects at BioConnect once operations commence. Initial member companies contributing to BioConnect include MBio (Monaghan Biosciences) Lakeland Dairies, Manor Farm, BioMarine Ingredients, Herbel Crest, SilverHill Foods, Dutch DNA.

- e) **What are the core objectives, and anticipated outcomes, of Bio-Connect?**

**Reply:** The core objective of BioConnect is to support companies (start-ups, existing SMEs and large organisations) seeking to innovate using state-of-the-art biotechnology to develop new high value products and processes with a clear focus on reduction of environmental impact (reduced carbon

emissions, waste minimisation / valorisation). Such products/processes will include biogas / biomethane, products from precision fermentation eg enzymes, novel foods etc. Outcomes will be companies commercialising new products with lower carbon footprint, a vibrant hub for innovative biotechnology in the region and a pipeline of skilled talent.

From day 1, BioConnect will form a key part of the national bioeconomy strategy across the island of Ireland along with existing programmes at the Irish Bioeconomy Foundation, multiple Universities, Teagasc and industry with a particular focus on activities in and needs of the local region. BioConnect will also provide training in state-of-the-art commercial biotechnology to ensure the delivery of a skilled workforce to support these new opportunities in member and partner companies.

**f) what agency / stakeholder will have managerial oversight, and on what basis will annual running costs of the facility be met?**

**Reply:** BioConnect will convert its existing board into a governance board and techno-commercial advisory board.

The role of the governance board will be managerial oversight and will comprise existing board members from MoCoCo, industry partners and representatives of Enterprise Ireland and government agencies. Additional members will be invited from key academic and education partners. The advisory board will be created to advise BioConnect on activities, partnerships, technical matters and commercialisation. Its membership will include industry technical experts, key academic partners and innovation specialists. Operational costs will be met through a combination of income from customer projects, rental income from first floor leasing, training income and large strategic grant funding.

**Cllr C. Carthy asked:**

- 13. Can the Housing Section give an update on our housing waiting list with a breakdown of MD areas? Can we also have a list of the numbers of applicants in receipt of HAP & RAS, again, by MD area?**

**Reply**

<b>SOCIAL HOUSING WAITING LIST - as at 23.04.2024</b>			
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>HAP</b>	<b>RAS</b>
Monaghan MD	532	263	35
Carrickmacross/Castleblayney MD	367	133	10
Clones/Ballybay	146	70	7
	<b>1045</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>52</b>

- 14. What is the latest update on ‘taking in charge’ of Alderwood (Carrickmacross) and Conabury Hill estate (Castleblayney)?**

**Reply:**

**Alderwood:** Following completion of assessment by the Water Services section, consultation commenced with Uisce Eireann. Uisce Eireann raised several queries which have been passed to the developer’s agent for action.

**Conabury Hill:** Uisce Eireann have requested that that ownership of the waste water pumping station in the estate be transferred to Monaghan County Council / Uisce Eireann before the taking in charge can be progressed. It is noted that the pumping station lands are in the ownership of a company which is dissolved. The local authority is currently investigating the compulsory purchase of the lands.

## 17. Notice of Motion

### **Cllr D. Maxwell proposed, Cllr P. Treanor seconded –**

1. *That Monaghan County Council request independent legal advice on whether the planning permission for the proposed North South interconnector has expired.*

*Secondly that the independent legal advice should be sought from a Senior Counsel who has not previously engaged with EirGrid and who has experience in planning and development matters with the qualifications necessary to interpret the planning legislation for strategic infrastructure in Ireland.*

*Thirdly, to ascertain legally who is responsible for compliance with the conditions of the development approval granted to EirGrid as "the undertaker" for the proposed North South interconnector. EirGrid as a standalone legal entity cannot endorse a separate legal entity ESB Networks to undertake construction as ESB networks wasn't granted the planning permission in the first instance by Board Pleanala.*

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

### **Cllr S. Coyle proposed, Cllr PJ O'Hanlon seconded –**

1. *That Monaghan County Council requests the Government and the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage, Mr. Darragh O'Brien, T.D., to immediately review and increase the rates of grants/payments to applicants to the Housing Adaptation Grant for Older People and People with a Disability, under the Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability, Mobility Aids Grant and Housing Aid for Older People Grant in line with the increase in construction costs, since the Covid Pandemic, shortage of materials, shortage of skilled labour/trades people, rising labour costs, increase in the cost of construction materials, geo political issues, war in Gaza, Ukraine, transport costs etc. as the applicants to these grant schemes are among the most vulnerable in Irish Society.*

*In line with this increase in rates, Monaghan County Council request an increase in our overall annual grant allocations so we can continue to support the same number of applicants annually as we have been over the last number of years (or more if possible). We further request that grant allocation is increased from 80% to 90% to assist the Local Authority in providing this financial assistance to this vulnerable group.*

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

### **Cllr D. Maxwell proposed, Cllr P. Conlon seconded –**

2. *That Monaghan County Council re-examines its policy of putting dogs to sleep at 14 days of being in the pound. This can be too short of time to get the info out about a dog that could be given a loving home this timeframe needs to be increased to give a dog every chance of being re-homed.*

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

**Cllr A. McCooey proposed, Cllr PJ O’Hanlon seconded -**

3. *That this council writes to Minister for Education, Ms. Norma Foley TD, urging that the procurement of materials for the fulfilment of the 'Free Education Scheme' will be at the autonomy of each individual school to tender for their own supplier. For ETB schools to have one centralised supplier it will have an enormous impact on local suppliers who depend on the back-to-school season to keep their doors open.*

*We ask that, if passed, this motion be circulated to all Local Authorities and to our local Oireachtas members.*

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

**18. Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations**

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

- Ruairi Duffy, General Operative, Municipal District of Monaghan on the death of his sister, Genevieve (Jenny) Duffy, late of 168 Beechgrove Lawns, Monaghan Town.
- Michael Leonard, GSS, MD of Ballybay-Clones, on the death of his brother, John Leonard, former employee of Monaghan County Council, late of Annagoes, Newbliss, Co. Monaghan.
- Jim Duffy, General Operative, MD of Carrickmacross-Castleblayney, on the death of his father Alo Duffy, late of Garybawn, Latton, Castleblayney, Co Monaghan.
- Caroline Hunt, Community and Enterprise, on the death of her mother, Della Hunt, late of 20 Glenview Drive, Monaghan Town, Co. Monaghan.
- Siobhan Mallon, Assistant Engineer, Water Section on the death of her mother, Susan Murnaghan, late of, Garrybawn, Latton, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan.
- Chris Mallon, Ganger/Driver A, Ballybay/Clones MD, on the death of his Mother-In-Law, Susan Murnaghan, late of, Garrybawn, Latton, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan.

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

- John Deery, on his appointment as Chairperson of the National Ploughing Association.
- Colm Birdy, on being voted the Translink Ulster GAA Coach of the Year 2023.

**Urgent Business**

*Cllr C Bennett proposed, Cllr P. Treanor seconded, that Monaghan County Council writes to the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Mr Eamon Ryan and the Cavan and Monaghan Oireachtas members, to call on Eir to remove the mast recently erected in Scotstown village and to rescind plans to erect a mast in Scotshouse village. Both the mast in Scotstown and the proposed mast in Scotshouse are located close to people's homes and public consultation did not take place.*

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

The Cathaoirleach concluded the meeting.



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

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

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