

Minutes of the Meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, M-Tek Building, Armagh Rd, Knockaconny, Monaghan, on Monday 07 October at 2.00pm

Chair: Cllr C. Bennett, Cathaoirleach

Present: Cllrs Aughey, Campbell, Carthy, Clerkin, P. Conlon, S. Conlon, Flynn, Gibbons, Gilliland, Keelan, Maxwell, McAree, O'Hanlon, P. Treanor, S. Treanor and Truell

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

Urgent Business

At the outset The Cathaoirleach informed the members that she had received the following notice of urgent business as follows:

'That Monaghan Council write to Eir and Towercom calling on them to stop work immediately on the mast at Eir Exchange, Railway Road (off New Street), Conabury, Castleblayney, Co Monaghan and send a copy of this correspondence to the Minister for Transport, Communications, Climate and Environment Mr Eamon Ryan. This mast is located directly adjacent to several schools and residences, public consultation did not take place, and it has been a cause of serious concern among both the school and the wider communities.'

On the proposal of Cllr PJ O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr N. Keelan, it was agreed to enter 'into committee' to discuss whether to accept the motion 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 D. Maxwell, seconded by Cllr C. Carthy, it was agreed that the Council revert to public session.

1. Confirmation of Minutes held on 02 September 2024 and 16 September 2024

(i) Minutes of Council Meeting held on 02 September 2024

On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan, seconded by Cllr D. Maxwell, it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 02 September 2024 be confirmed.

(ii) Minutes of Council Meeting held on 16 September 2024

On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan, seconded by Cllr D. Maxwell, it was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 16 September 2024 be confirmed.

2. Correspondence

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

- Email response from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D., regarding dental services in County Monaghan.
- Email response from Mr. E. Ryan, T.D., Minister for Transport regarding funding for roads.
- Letter from Ms. Mandy Doyle, Head of Service, Primary Care, HSE, regarding the long delays that are occurring whereby children and medical card holders are having

difficulty in accessing dental services.

- Letter from Ms. Claire Gavin, Head of Secretariat, National Oversight and Audit Commission regarding the 10th annual Local Authority Performance Indicator Report.
- Acknowledgement letter from the Office of Taoiseach, Mr. Simon Harris, T.D., regarding implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.
- Acknowledgement email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Justice, Ms. Helen McEntee regarding the public enquiry into the death of Shane O'Farrell.
- Acknowledgement email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Education, Ms. Norma Foley, T.D, regarding school transport services.
- Acknowledgement email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D., regarding dental services.
- Resolution from Roscommon County Council regarding illegal dumping.
- Resolution from Sligo County Council regarding the employment of care-taker/ambassador roles in villages in Ireland.

Additional Correspondence

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

- Email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Mr. Charlie McConalogue, T.D., regarding the reconvening of the National Fodder Committee.
- Acknowledgement email from the Office of the Minister for Social Protection and Rural and Community Development, Ms. Heather Humphreys, T.D., regarding the the North-South Interconnector.

Proposals arising out of correspondence:

On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan, seconded by Cllr. S. Flynn, it was agreed that this Council writes to the Minister for Transport, Mr. E. Ryan, An Taoiseach, Mr. Simon Harris T.D., and Tánaiste, Mr. Micheál Martin, T.D., requesting additional funding for the maintenance and upgrading of our County's Regional and Local Road network, noting the NOAC report which indicated that an additional €5.9million would be required just to stand still.

On the proposal of Cllr C. Bennett, seconded by Cllr. P. Treanor, it was agreed that this Council rewrites to Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D., seeking clarity in relation to the need for additional orthodontists and dentists in County Monaghan and whether there is an ongoing recruitment drive to fill these positions.

3. To consider draft Local Improvement Scheme (LIS)

Mr. G. McMahon, A/Director of Services, gave the members a brief overview of the new draft Local Improvement Scheme 2024 and the eligibility criteria, which had been agreed by the new LIS Sub-Committee and circulated with the agenda. He stated that the most important element of the new scheme is that applications will be subject to a two-stage evaluation process as follows:

Stage 1 – will include an assessment of eligibility i.e. land size and land use. Applicants must meet the requirements under stage one to progress to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – applications will be ranked by road condition (PSCI rating) and Value for Money.

Mr. McMahon advised that with members approval, the intention is to re-open the Scheme for one month in November. Eligible applications would be evaluated, scored and ranked in order of merit. Works will be carried out by reference to this order of merit.

On the proposal of Cllr N. Keelan, seconded by Cllr S. Flynn, it was agreed that the condition of assessment under Stage 2 of the Local Improvement Scheme 2024 be amended to “Lane greater than or equal to 50 meters” as was the case in the previous Scheme.

On the proposal of Cllr PJ O’Hanlon, seconded by Cllr C. Bennett it was agreed that this Council request a meeting with Minister Heather Humphreys in relation to the number of applications on the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS). Based on the funding available it could take in excess of 3 years for some lanes to be completed and this issue needs to be addressed.

On the proposal of Cllr A. Campbell, seconded by Cllr D. Maxwell it was agreed to re-open the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) 2024 for new applications for one month in November.

4. To note Update on Speed Limit Review 2024-2025

Mr. K. West, A/Senior Executive Engineer, Roads, joined the meeting to provide an update to members on the Speed Limit Review 2024-2025. He outlined new legislation that had been enacted in April 2024 (Act Number 10 of 2024) – Variation to the Default Speed Limits permitted by way of local authority Byelaws. He informed the members that new guidelines were published in May 2024 on priority actions (default speed limits) relating to: -

- 30km/h (Urban Areas)
- 60km/h (Rural Local Roads)
- 80km/h (National Secondary Roads)

He provided members an overview of the Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030 highlighting that the aim of the Irish Government is to cut road deaths and serious injuries by 50% by 2030, by following the ‘Safe Systems’ approach (Vision Zero), supported by international research and best practices.

Mr. West stated that the change to the speed limit from 80km/h to 60km/h for Rural Local Roads will be implemented in November 2024 and in the first half of 2025 the National and Urban speed limits would be implemented. In terms of next steps, he advised that the tender for installation of 1,282 new signs and 1,000 poles in the county had been completed and it is anticipated that these works would commence and conclude in November 2024.

Mr. K. West responded to Members queries.

The Members thanked Mr. K. West for the very informative presentation.

On the proposal of Cllr PJ O’Hanlon, seconded by Cllr C. Bennett, it was agreed that this Council write to the Minister of State, Department of Transport, Mr. James Lawless, T.D., seeking additional funding for Low-Cost Safety Schemes.

At this point, the Cathaoirleach asked the meeting to observe a minute's silence in memory of the 2nd anniversary of the Creeslough tragedy.

5. To approve nomination of Elected Members to the Strategic Policy Committees

SPC for Housing – Cllr Colm Carthy (Chair):

*On the proposal of Cllr C. Bennett, seconded by Cllr B. McAree **Cllr Sinead Flynn** was nominated to the SPC for Housing.*

*On the proposal of Cllr B. McAree, seconded by Cllr C. Bennett, **Cllr Paul Gibbons** was nominated to the SPC for Housing.*

*On the proposal of Cllr R. Aughey, seconded by Cllr C. Carthy, **Cllr PJ O’Hanlon** was nominated to the SPC for Housing.*

*On the proposal of Cllr D. Maxwell, seconded by Cllr P. Clerkin, **Cllrs Richard Truell and Aidan Campbell** were nominated to the SPC for Housing.*

As there were no further nominations, **Cllrs Sinead Flynn, Paul Gibbons, PJ O’Hanlon, Richard Truell and Aidan Campbell** were declared elected to the Strategic Policy Committees for Housing.

SPC for Transport – Cllr Raymond Aughey (Chair):

*On the proposal of Cllr S. Flynn, seconded by Cllr P. Treanor, **Cllrs Bronagh McAree, Noel Keelan and Sean Conlon** were nominated to the SPC for Transport.*

*On the proposal of Cllr D. Maxwell, seconded by Cllr R. Truell, **Cllr Pauric Clerkin** was nominated to the SPC for Transport.*

*On the proposal of Cllr P. Clerkin, seconded by Cllr R. Truell, **Cllr David Maxwell** was nominated to the SPC for Transport.*

As there were no further nominations, **Cllrs Bronagh McAree, Noel Keelan, Sean Conlon, Pauric Clerkin and David Maxwell** were declared elected to the Strategic Policy Committees for Transport.

SPC for Economic Development & Enterprise – Cllr Sean Gilliland (Chair):

*On the proposal of Cllr S. Conlon, seconded by Cllr B McAree and **Cllrs Pat Treanor, Colm Carthy, and Cathy Bennett** were nominated to the SPC for Economic Development & Enterprise.*

*On the proposal of Cllr R. Aughey, seconded by Cllr Aidan Campbell, **Cllr PJ O’Hanlon** was nominated to the SPC for Economic Development & Enterprise.*

*On the proposal of P. Clerkin, seconded by Cllr A. Campbell, **Cllr David Maxwell** was nominated to the SPC for Economic Development & Enterprise.*

As there were no further nominations, **Cllrs Pat Treanor, Colm Carthy, Cathy Bennett, PJ O’Hanlon, and David Maxwell** were declared elected to the Strategic Policy Committee for Economic Development and Enterprise.

SPC for Climate Action & Environment – Cllr Richard Truell (Chair):

*On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr N. Keelan, **Cllr Sinead Flynn and Cllr Bronagh McAree** were nominated to the SPC for Housing.*

*On the proposal of Cllr B. McAree, seconded by Cllr C. Bennett, **Cllr Paul Gibbons** was nominated to the SPC for Climate Action & Environment.*

*On the proposal of Cllr P. Treanor, seconded by Cllr C. Carthy, **Cllr Noel Keelan** was nominated to the SPC for SPC for Climate Action & Environment.*

*On the proposal of Cllr D. Maxwell, seconded by Cllr A. Campbell, **Cllr Pauric Clerkin** was nominated to the SPC for Climate Action & Environment.*

*On the proposal of Cllr PJ O’Hanlon, seconded by Cllr C. Carthy, **Cllr Raymond Aughey** was nominated to the SPC for Climate Action & Environment.*

As there were no further nominations, **Cllrs Sinead Flynn, Bronagh McAree, Noel Keelan, Pauric Clerkin and Raymond Aughey** were declared elected to the Strategic Policy Committees for Climate Action & Environment.

SPC for Tourism, Rural and Community Development: An Ghaeilge & Cultural Services – Cllr Sean Conlon (Chair):

*On the proposal of Cllr C. Carthy, seconded by Cllr B. McAree, **Cllrs Pat Treanor, Cathy Bennett and Paul Gibbons** were nominated to the SPC for Tourism, Rural and Community Development: An Ghaeilge & Cultural Services.*

*On the proposal of Cllr D. Maxwell, seconded by Cllr R. Truell, **Cllr Aidan Campbell** was nominated to the SPC for Tourism, Rural and Community Development: An Ghaeilge & Cultural Services.*

*On the proposal of Cllr PJ O’Hanlon, seconded by Cllr C. Carthy, **Cllr Raymond Aughey** was nominated to the SPC for Tourism, Rural and Community Development: An Ghaeilge & Cultural Services.*

As there were no further nominations, **Cllrs Pat Treanor, Cathy Bennett, Paul Gibbons, Aidan Campbell and Raymond Aughey** were declared elected to the Strategic Policy Committees for Tourism, Rural and Community Development: An Ghaeilge & Cultural Services.

6. To receive an update from Environment Section

Ms. P. Monahan, Director of Services, welcomed Mr. Kieran Duffy, Senior Executive Engineer and Mr. Niall Malone, Administrative Officer, to the meeting to provide an update to the members from the Environment section.

Mr. K. Duffy commenced his presentation by providing an overview of the National Environmental Enforcement Priorities which fall under the three areas, Water, Waste and Air. He outlined how the activities of the environment section align with the priorities. Key points to note were:

- Monaghan County Council met the required standard of 'strong' or 'excellent' result of 90% of the National Enforcement Priorities (NEPs) in 2023. The National average was 70%.
- The Lough Muckno Road to Recovery Project involved an 18- month assessment of the inputting loads from the catchment area and a detailed lake core analysis to determine the legacy issues within the lake sediment. The main aim of the project was to improve the understanding of the unique characteristics of Lough Muckno and to inform the development of catchment management plans.
- Excellent feedback was received as a result of recent Anti-Dumping Initiative funded projects such as the Agricultural Hazardous Waste Collection Day and the 50% Reduction Price on Bulky Goods project.
- The focus on air quality is gaining momentum with the enforcement of the solid fuel regulations and the Solvent and Paint Regulations.

Mr. N. Malone provided members with an update in respect of litter management and environmental awareness programmes. Key points to note were:

- The next three-year Litter Management Plan 2024-2026 will commence in Q4 of 2024.
- A range of Environmental awareness campaigns and programmes are ongoing. The main focus is on areas such as waste, litter and resource efficiency and these are delivered through community information sessions, schools programmes, promotional events, local events and via the Council's social media channels.
- The Waste Management (Collection Permit) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2023 came into effect on 01 July 2023. This introduced incentivised charging for waste collection in the commercial sector.
- Since 1 January 2024, under new EU legislation, authorised household waste collectors are required to provide households with a brown bin collection service.

Mr. K. Duffy and Mr. N. Malone responded to members' queries. The Members thanked Mr. K. Duffy and Mr. N. Malone for their detailed and informative presentation.

7. To fix a date for Statutory Budget Meeting

On the proposal of Cllr C. Bennett seconded by Cllr D. Maxwell it was agreed to hold the Statutory Budget meeting on Tuesday 19 November 2024 at 10.00am in the Council Chamber.

8. To approve the opening of a supplementary bank account for the operation of the Peace Campus building

On the proposal of Cllr D. Maxwell, seconded by Cllr S. Conlon, it was agreed to approve the opening of a supplementary bank account for the operation of the Peace Campus building.

9. To approve nomination to Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee

On the proposal of Cllr D. Maxwell, seconded by Cllr B. McAree it was unanimously agreed

that Ms. Bridgie Joyce be appointed to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee to fill the existing vacancy.

10. To consider recommendations and minutes from Corporate Policy Group

The members noted the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 17 September 2024, which had been circulated.

On the proposal of Cllr S. Gilliland, seconded by Cllr R. Truell, it was agreed that the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 17 September 2024 and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

11. To receive Management Report - September 2024

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

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

12. To receive reports from Members attending Conferences/Training events

There were no reports received.

13. Business Submitted by the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive referred to the upcoming prestigious IPB Pride of Place Gala Awards Ceremony, that will be proudly hosted by Monaghan County Council on 02 November 2024 in the Hillgrove Hotel. It is anticipated that the event will present the concept of a 'Community Weekend' with community workshops set to take place on Friday 01 November. Further information regarding the event and official invitations will be issued to Members in due course.

The Chief Executive informed the members that he had attended a meeting on 27 September with Clones GAA and Monaghan GAA. Oireachtas members, Minister Heather Humphreys, Deputy Matt Carthy, Senator Robbie Gallagher and representatives from Ulster Council were also in attendance. The purpose of the meeting was to receive a presentation on a vision for the development of St. Tiernach's Park, Clones, being referred to as 'St. Tiernach's Quarter'. He stated that the main aim of the plans is to keep St. Tiernach's park at the heart of GAA in Ulster. They also looked at the potential for Clones to be a high-performance location, maximizing opportunities afforded by the nearby Peace Link and the Ulster Canal. It also includes the diversification of use of the stadium, potentially opening it up to other sports and social and community events. A Steering Work Group will be formed to oversee the development of the project and will include representation from local and regional stakeholders.

14. Matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meetings held on 02 and 16 September 2024

There were no matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 02 September 2024.

The Chief Executive responded to a query arising from the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 September 2024 in relation to the delivery of the Clos na Droimainne estate.

There were no further matters arising out of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 September 2024.

- 15. To receive update on N2 National Primary Road Schemes**
No further update on the N2 National Primary Road Schemes.

- 16. To receive update on North/South Interconnector project**

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

- Acknowledgement email from the office of the Minister for Infrastructure minister in Northern Ireland, Mr. John O'Dowd regarding meeting with Minister for Transport, Mr. Eamon Ryan, T.D., in respect of the North-South Interconnector.

- 17. To receive update on the Ulster Canal project**
No further update on the Ulster Canal project.

- 18. Questions and Replies**

Cllr C. Carthy asked:

- 1.** What is the latest update in relation to the Clos na Droimmaine (unfinished) estate in Carrickmacross – are we on target to offer units to those on our housing waiting list soon?

Reply: The delivery of 6 houses at the end of September has been missed by the AHB and Contractor. Monaghan County Council continues to liaise with both parties to get a revised delivery date, which has yet to be agreed.

- 2.** Similar to the County Civic Office Accommodation committee, does the Executive intend to establish a committee to work towards bringing a Swimming Pool & Leisure Centre to Carrickmacross, including representation from elected members?

Reply: S3 Solutions are continuing to progress works in relation to the Feasibility Study and Strategic Assessment for a proposed Swimming Pool and Leisure Complex in Carrickmacross. It is expected that the draft Feasibility Study Report will be completed in October 2024. The project is currently at inception stage and its progression to the next project stage (preliminary business case development) will be contingent on the feasibility report findings and recommendation. Subject to the project progressing, the establishment of a project steering committee can be considered at a future stage in the project lifecycle.

- 3.** When is it expected the updated 'online trading' voucher will be made available to businesses in County Monaghan and what plans are in place to encourage as many businesses as possible to apply for it?

Reply: On September 4th, a circular was issued by the Centre of Excellence, Enterprise Ireland, indicating that the Trading Online Voucher Scheme would be discontinued from October 31st, 2024. However, a subsequent circular issued on September 11th confirming the scheme will remain open for applications beyond this date. We have updated our website accordingly and launched a targeted social media campaign to ensure that SMEs in County Monaghan are aware of the continued availability of Trading Online vouchers.

In addition to this, a new support measure, which I believe Councillor Carthy is referring to, has been introduced and is called "Grow Digital." This initiative is

designed to assist small businesses in leveraging digital tools to enhance efficiency, expand their market reach, and strengthen their competitive position. Eligible businesses are those with 1 to 50 employees that are not currently clients of Enterprise Ireland or IDA.

The Grow Digital Voucher offers a grant covering 50% of eligible costs, with a minimum grant of €500 and a maximum of €5,000. This grant is limited to new software subscriptions for a 12-month period, covering areas such as e-commerce, customer relationship management (CRM), and accounting software. Additionally, the grant can be used for training and configuration costs associated with the new software, up to 50% of the software purchase cost.

To maximise the uptake of both the Trading Online Voucher and the new Grow Digital Voucher, we are implementing an extensive awareness campaign. This includes outreach through local business networks and ongoing digital marketing efforts. Our goal is to ensure that as many eligible businesses as possible in County Monaghan are informed about these valuable supports and are encouraged to apply.

4. Can the Housing section confirm:
 - The number of new applicants that have been added to the Council's housing list up to the end of quarter 3 (Jan-Sept) 2024?
Reply: 147 New Applications received - 101 Approved to date.
 - The number of applicants that have been allocated a house/apartment in the same time period (not including HAP/RAS Tenancies)?
Reply: 124 New Tenancies.

Cllr S Flynn asked:

5. Can Monaghan County Council please outline their plans, if any, for Traffic Calming measures for our towns and villages in the county?
Reply: Traffic Calming for the Town and Villages will be carried out in accordance with Monaghan County Council's, Non-National Urban Public Roads, Traffic Calming Policy which was adopted in March this year.
The Municipal Districts carry out traffic counts and speed surveys on foot of representations from elected members and the public. These counts and surveys are used to plan and implement traffic calming measure subject to funding. Proposed traffic calming measures/schemes are submitted for approval under the Low-Cost Safety Schemes funding strand.
6. Can Monaghan County Council, please confirm if the TII will consider reducing or extending the speed limits on the outskirts of towns and villages, particularly in residential neighbourhoods?
Reply: A national road speed limit review is to take place in 2025. Speed limit modifications proposed by MCC, Elected Representatives and Members of the Public will be considered and assessed in line with the Guidelines for Setting and Managing Speed Limits in Ireland (DOT).
7. Can Monaghan County Council please confirm what grants are available for people with disabilities and their families and for those persons of 66 years and over?
Reply: The Housing Grants Schemes are available to assist in carrying out works that are reasonably necessary for the purposes of rendering a house more suitable for the accommodation of a person with a disability or for an older person living in poor

housing conditions to have necessary repairs or improvements carried out to allow them to remain in their own homes.

The 3 grant types are:

Housing Adaptation Grant for People with Disabilities (HGD) – for all ages with a disability. Max Grant €30,000

Mobility Aids Grant (MAG)– for older people with mobility Issues. Max Grant €6,000

Housing Aid for Older People (HOP) – for people aged 66 and over. Max Grant €8,000

8. Can Monaghan County Council please update on whether there are additional services to be offered by the local link throughout the county and whether the NTA have additional services planned for other areas?

Reply: Local link has issued Monaghan County with a list of proposed new location where local link services are to be provided. Monaghan County Council have assessed the locations from a road safety prospective and returned comments to local link for their consideration.

ClIr P Gibbons asked

9. Can the number of Monaghan County Council tenancies in houses classified as Part V be provided? These tenants are not able to purchase their properties currently. It is a source of great frustration to many of these long-term tenants. Are these tenants eligible to apply for affordable housing if/when available in County Monaghan and if so, can any discount be provided as would apply to a traditional tenant purchase?

Reply: Currently there are 182 properties classified as Part V

All first-time buyers will be eligible to apply for any Affordable Housing Scheme that may be launched by Monaghan County Council. Existing tenants that surrender a Council owned house to purchase their own home may be eligible to avail of the Mortgage Allowance Scheme which gives an allowance of €11,540 payable directly to the Mortgage provider over a 5-year period.

10. How many approved housing applicants have included Castleblayney as their area of choice? What is the breakdown as regards housing type required?

Reply:

285 Approved have Castleblayney as an Area of Choice.

1Bed = 155

2Bed = 82

3Bed = 31

4Bed = 16

5Bed = 1

11. Can the income limits for social housing be provided and when were they last amended be clarified? The last few years have seen very welcome and necessary raises in the minimum wage and Social Welfare rates to try and combat the extra ordinary rises in inflation and cost of living we have seen, and this has brought some applicants just outside the Social Housing income limits. Has Monaghan County Council any options to show discretion on a case-by-case basis to applicants slightly over the income limit having consideration of medical, compassionate, social or other relevant issues?

Reply: The income limits for Monaghan County Council were last adjusted on the 1st January 2023. Monaghan County Council does not have any discretion with these limits.

12. Can an overview on actions to tackle dereliction in the Castleblayney and Oram areas since the last Council meeting be provided?

Reply: To date there has been 25.no Section 8(2) notices (notice of intention to enter

onto the derelict site register) issued within the Castleblayney and Oram areas. The Town Regeneration Section has had several interactions and engagements with property owners over the summer which will continue to be an ongoing process.

10.no properties did not engage sufficiently and therefore have been entered onto the derelict site register. 1.no property has been listed for sale, 1.no property has applied for the Croí Cónaithe grant and 3.no properties are currently undergoing renovations. The remaining property owners have indicated they will make property non derelict and have been afforded a grace period in which to carry out these works.

13. Can an update on the proposed Ballybay to Castleblayney Greenway be provided with timelines provided for next steps?

Reply: The Route Options Selection for the Ballybay to Castleblayney Greenway has now been completed and the Preferred Route Option has been developed. Phase 2 of this project is now completed. Phase 3, a preliminary design of the Greenway scheme must now be prepared, and more precise land acquisition requirements determined. This will allow a clearer picture to emerge regarding the exact location of the Greenway route by identifying specific characteristics such as vertical and horizontal alignments, as well as the likely general impacts on individual landowners. Currently, the TII are not able to provide a funding allocation to proceed to detailed design stage however an application for funding has been made for 2025.

Cllr S Conlon asked:

14. In ensuring the 'Protecting the Right to Vote' recommendations advocated by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, aimed at assisting people with physical and intellectual disabilities at polling booths, has this Council, as a partnership agency tasked with oversight of elections, engaged with the relevant stakeholders to ensure people with physical or intellectual disabilities will have ease of access and information at polling booths?

Reply: Following the local elections in June, Monaghan County Council has engaged with the European Returning Officer, who primarily has responsibility for polling stations, and will continue to do so to assist in facilitating any necessary improvements and ensure ease of access and information at polling booths for all.

15. Following completion of the IDA advanced Technology Unit at Knockaconny almost three years ago and that continues to remain unoccupied, have Council Executive received any updates from the IDA of what marketing and promotion efforts are being made to attract business to this state-of-the-art facility?

Reply: Monaghan County Council has continuous engagement with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and the industry sector on securing new business for the IDA Advanced Technology Unit at Knockaconny. An update on progress, in this regard, will be available from the IDA over the coming weeks.

Cllr P Treanor asked:

16. What company is contracted by Monaghan County Council to repair and maintain the Public Lighting system throughout our Towns and Villages? What is the agreed waiting time to repair light out, when reported? Coming into the winter months, can they be asked to monitor all Public Lights in the interest of Community Safety?

Reply: MCC have signed the contract for the Public Lighting maintenance with Killaree Lighting Services Ltd, who will commence maintenance works in October 2024. The time frame for repairs is on a case-by-case basis as the works may require third party (ESB) involvement.

Cllr N Keelan asked:

17. While we are awaiting funding to advance the N2 project from Ardee to Castleblayney, what plans have the council in conjunction with TII to improve road safety on this very dangerous stretch of road, including revisiting the previous plan to improve the Tullyvaragh junction?

Reply: The right turn lane proposal was previously refused by TII on the basis that traffic volumes turning off the N2 were not high enough to warrant inclusion of a right turning lane. MCC are currently in discussion with TII and up to date traffic counts have been organised to gauge if traffic volumes may have increased since 2021 and thus reach the threshold required. As per TII Design Standards, collision data and near side passing opportunity at this location is also considered when assessing road safety.

18. What is the up-to-date position in advancing an affordable housing scheme across the county, what will be the approximate cost of an affordable home? What plans have the council to provide social and affordable housing units in some of our village areas such as Inniskeen, Donaghmoynne and Lisdoonan village?

Reply: The Housing Section are finalising an application for an Affordable Housing Scheme for Monaghan Town. Once Departmental approval is given for the Affordable Housing Subsidy, Monaghan County Council will be able to announce the price range for the houses. There are currently no approved social or affordable housing projects in Inniskeen, Lisdoonan or Donaghmoynne.

19. What funding is currently available for active travel schemes? What active travel schemes will we see commenced in the coming 12/18 months across the county and can we get a breakdown per electoral area?

Reply:

- **Monaghan MD, UCG- Monaghan to Border (N12). Anticipated that construction will commence in Q3 2025, subject to approvals and provision of funding.**
- **Monaghan MD, N2 Cyclepaths, Emyvale Village and Corlat to Collegiate, construction to commence in Q4 2024 and continue through 2025, subject to approvals and provision of funding.**

The Active Travel unit are continuing to work on over 20 Active Travel across the county with a budget of €3 million for 2024 from the NTA. The schemes are progressing through the 7 phases of the NTA Cost Management Guidelines and the necessary approvals at each phase.

The list below shows schemes that are expected to have construction work commenced and/or completed by end 2025. This funding allocation is for 2024, and continued funding is dependent on the NTA.

Project Code:	Project Name	2024 Allocation	MD
MN/21/0001	Upgrade of Monaghan Town Greenway	€200,000	Monaghan
MN/21/0010	Carrickmacross- Castleblayney Rd Active Travel	€75,000	CMX/CBY
MN/21/0013	Monaghan Town Horseshoe Bridge Active Travel	€500,000	Monaghan
MN/21/0014	Monaghan Town Ballyalbany Bridge Active Tavel	€70,000	Monaghan
MN/21/0020	Low Cost Junction Tightening/Pedestrian Crossing Scheme	€100,000	All 3
MN/21/0021	Light Segregation Cycle Scheme- Castleblayney	€35,000	CMX/CBY
MN/22/0001	Clones Peace Link Active Travel Scheme	€479,000	Clones/Ballybay
MN/22/0002	Monaghan Town Local Transport Plan	€60,000	Monaghan

MN/22/0004	Lough Egish Village Active Travel Scheme	€332,000	Clones/Ballybay
MN/23/0005	Clones – Tirnahinch Road Footpath	€30,000	Clones/Ballybay
MN/23/0007	Carrickmacross R178/Oriel Road Active Travel Scheme	€60,000	Carrickmacross/ Castleblayney
MN/23/0016	SRTS St Louis GNS & St Louis Infant School - Monaghan R1	€50,000	Monaghan
MN/23/0017	SRTS St Marys Boys NS R2	€50,000	Monaghan
MN/23/0018	SRTS St Tiarnach’s Primary School, Clones R2	€50,000	Clones/Ballybay
MN/23/0019	Ulster Canal Greenway Link (Mall Road)	€190,000	Monaghan
MN/23/0020	Urban Mobility Plans- Castleblayney, Ballybay, Clones & Carrickmacross	€60,000	CMX/CBY Clones/Ballybay
MN/23/0102	Woodview to Glen Road connectivity - Monaghan Town	€200,000	Monaghan

20. As discussed at a previous meeting of the last council, is there any indication from the department or the line minister that the Croi Conaithe grant aid will be reinstated for agricultural type buildings?

Reply: It is understood that the terms of the grant are being reviewed and that consideration is being given to the inclusion of agricultural type buildings within the scheme. Once the terms of this review have been announced details will be provided to the members.

21. In relation to the council policy on the 20% rates levy, which will help deal with vacant commercial property in terms of encouraging owners to rent and sell property on, is the 20% been levied on all vacant commercial property, particularly in our town centres? Is there an appeal process in place to allow for the 20% levy to be waived in cases where a genuine, verifiable effort is being made to rent or sell a commercial property?

Reply: For budget 2023 and 2024, it was agreed that the level of refund of Rates on vacant commercial premises that are available for rent or lease or undergoing refurbishment would be reduced from 100% to 80%. This acts as a deterrent to commercial properties being left vacant and provides an improved economic stimulus to our local towns and villages. Vacant properties that are available for sale are benefiting from the 80% abatement on rates due. Our Revenue Collectors work closely with all customers in relation to vacant properties and Rates collections. No appeals have been issued to Monaghan County Council since the inception of this scheme.

19. Notices of Motion

Cllr B. McAree proposed, Cllrs C. Bennett and S. Flynn jointly seconded –

1. *“That Monaghan County council write to the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D., calling on him to extend government policy of providing free contraception to include all women of childbearing age or anyone prescribed contraception by their GP.*

It is important that we support all women in providing equitable and easy access to services that allow them to control their reproductive health.”

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

Cllr B. McAree proposed, Cllr S. Flynn, seconded-

2. *“That Monaghan County council writes to the Taoiseach, Mr. Simon Harris, T.D., and Minister for Education, Ms. Norma Foley, T.D., calling on them to meet with Special Needs Active Parents-SNAP Monaghan to discuss the failure of government to provide adequate services for families and children with special needs in Co Monaghan.*

The Taoiseach stated in the Dail on June 18th of this year that he and Oireachtas colleagues would meet with families of children with special needs and hear from them directly. This has yet to come to fruition.”

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

20. Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations

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

- Darren Flanagan, Assistant Engineer, Monaghan Municipal District on the death of his mother, Margaret Flanagan, Cremartin House, Castleblayney.
- Fergal and Aengus O’Rourke on the death of their mother Mary O’Rourke, former Fianna Fáil Minister.
- The family of the late John Naughten, Ardkeen, Drum, Athlone, Co. Roscommon, Chair of the North West Regional Assembly and Roscommon County Council Councillor.

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

- Carrickmacross Emmets Ladies LGFA on winning the Intermediate Championship.
- Emyvale Ladies GFC on winning the Senior Football League Semi-Final.
- Aughnamullen Sarsfields Ladies on winning the Junior Championship Final.

28. Conferences

On the proposal of Cllr D. Maxwell, seconded by Cllr N. Keelan it was agreed that the Council be represented at the following training events by the members listed below:

Promoting Authority	Subject/Theme	Venue	Dates	Members Selected
LAMA	Autumn Seminar	Newgrange Hotel, Navan, Co. Meath	17 & 18 October	David Maxwell Richard Truell Bronagh McAree Sean Conlon Colm Carthy Seamus Treanor
Celtic Conferences	Corporate Governance	O’Donovan’s Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork	22-24 November	Richard Truell

Urgent Business:

- 1. Cllr P. Gibbons proposed, Cllr N. Keelan seconded that Monaghan County Council write to Eir and Towercom calling on them to stop work immediately on the mast at Eir Exchange, Railway Road (off New Street), Conabury, Castleblayney, Co Monaghan and send a copy of this correspondence to the Minister for Transport, Communications, Climate and Environment Mr Eamon Ryan. This mast is located directly adjacent to several schools and residences, public consultation did not take place and it has been a cause of serious concern among both the school and the wider communities.*

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

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Signed: _____
Meetings
Administrator

Date: _____