

Ceantar Bardasach Carraig Mhachaire Rois – Baile Na Lorgan

Comhairle Contae Mhuineachain



The Municipal District of Carrickmacross – Castleblayney

Monaghan County Council

Minutes of proceedings of the Municipal District Monthly Meeting held in Carrickmacross Civic Offices, Riverside Road, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan on Monday the 23rd of September 2024 at 10:10am.

Present: Cathaoirleach PJ O'Hanlon,
Cllrs. Colm Carthy, Noel Keelan, Paul Gibbons, Peter Conlon, Aidan Campbell

Apologies: Damien Thornton, MD Co-ordinator

In Attendance: Carmel O'Hare, Director of Services, Gary Toye, District Engineer, Gemma Keenan, Senior Staff Officer, Julieann O'Reilly, Assistant Staff Officer

Cllr. O'Hanlon suggested that it would be appropriate for the elected members to make their contributions regarding the late Mary Kerr Conlon (RIP) at the beginning of the meeting. On the proposal of Cllr. Campbell and seconded by Cllr. Keelan it was unanimously agreed to do so.

Cllr. O'Hanlon spoke about the massive contribution past Councillor Mary Kerr Conlon (RIP) made to Carrickmacross GAA and recalled her involvement in the community and tidy towns. Cllr. O'Hanlon also mentioned her voluntary work for St. Josephs school during the summer months, stating that Mary Kerr Conlon (RIP) was Carrickmacross through and through and has left behind a great legacy. Cllr. O'Hanlon offered sincere sympathies to the family of Mary Kerr Conlon (RIP) on behalf of the elected members, Monaghan County Council staff and the members of Carrickmacross town and surrounding areas.

Cllr. Campbell concurred with Cllr. O'Hanlon's sentiments, remarking that Mary Kerr Conlon (RIP) was Carrickmacross to her fingertips and that she was ahead of her time in terms of her social thinking. Cllr. Campbell stated that her passing was a big loss for Fine Gael and also expressed his sympathies to the family of Mary Kerr Conlon (RIP).

Cllr. Carthy echoed the previous sentiments and spoke about how Mary Kerr Conlon (RIP) was such an active community member – a force to be reckoned with. Cllr. Carthy remarked that the name “Mary Kerr Conlon” will be synonymous with Carrickmacross and offered his sincere sympathies to the family.

Cllr. Keelan wished to be associated with the previous comments made. He stated that Mary Kerr Conlon (RIP) will always be a legendary figure in Carrickmacross and remarked that she had a golden heart and will be missed by many.

Cllr. Gibbons wished to be associated with the previous sentiments and advised that he knew Mary Kerr Conlon (RIP) by her reputation. Cllr. Gibbons expressed his condolences to the family of Mary Kerr Conlon (RIP).

Carmel O’Hare, Director of Service, expressed sympathy to the family of Mary Kerr Conlon (RIP) on behalf of Monaghan County Council staff and remarked that she left a lasting legacy through her work and family, and that she has no doubt that her son, Cllr. Peter Conlon will carry on her works.

Cllr. Conlon expressed his thanks to all for the sentiments expressed.

1.0 Confirmation of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. Keelan and seconded by Cllr. Campbell, the minutes of the July 2024 monthly Municipal District Meeting, held on Tuesday the 9th of July 2024, were adopted.

2.0 Matters Arising

Cllr. Keelan:

Queried if there is a long-term plan for the Lisagore Road and requested remedial works in the meantime.

Requested that extra signage, lining, and hedge cutting works be investigated for Essexford Bridge.

Welcomed Rossdreenagh Road works and noted that the areas on both sides of the road need attention.

Advised that members of Inniskeen Development Committee have raised water safety concerns around the River Fane.

Stated that he had previously requested that the Executive seek a meeting with Carrickmacross Chamber of Commerce, remarking that this needs to happen, possibly in October.

Stated that the Carrickmacross Thursday Market needs to be looked at in an attempt to reinvigorate it.

Welcomed the recent remedial works to the embankment immediately east of Inniskeen Pitch and Putt course.

Cllr. O'Hanlon:

Advised that he has spoken to a member of the Chamber of Commerce and remarked that he is delighted to see two premises in Carrickmacross back up and running.

3.0 Correspondence

i. Response from Minister Norma Foley re: Gaelscoil Lorgan and Inver College

Cllr. Campbell:

Advised that he attended the turning of the sod event at Gaelscoil Lorgan - it is all systems go on this project and there is also plenty of works at Inver College.

Remarked that he is delighted to see a local company winning the contract for Gaelscoil Lorgan.

Cllr. Carthy:

Stated that the ball is rolling on both projects.

Advised the elected members that Inver College should be going out for planning next week.

Wished both projects well.

Cllr. Conlon:

Concurred with previous comments and remarked that the Gaelscoil Lorgan project is a testament to hard work and perseverance.

Welcomed the progress on Inver College.

Cllr. O'Hanlon:

Commented that the investment from the Department for Gaelscoil Lorgan is to be warmly welcomed and concurred with Cllr. Campbell's comment that is he delighted that the contract was won by a local company and would love to see more of this.

Wished to recognise Cllr. Carthy's passion for the Inver College project.

ii. Letter from Carrick Cruisers re: Men's National League Team

Cllr. O'Hanlon:

Asked if any of the elected members are on the CPG?

Cllr. Carthy:

Confirmed that he was and advised he will take note of this and stated that it is very important for the MD to support this.

Requested that Carmel O'Hare, Director of Service, bring it to the CPG also.

Cllr. Conlon:

Echoed Cllr. Carthy's sentiments and remarked that Carrickmacross has a strong history of Basketball.

Cllr. Keelan:

Queried if there might be an opportunity for funding via Monaghan Sports Partnership.

Cllr. Carthy:

Advised that it is his understanding that they received targeted funding for specific projects. Stated that the CPG is the appropriate route for a funding request.

Cllr. Keelan:

Stated, that at a previous meeting, he had suggested having a mechanism to have a small pot of money available for issues/requests that arise outside normal application timeframes.

Cllr. O'Hanlon:

Wished to note that he had made a proposal regarding this, and it had been agreed that whoever was re-elected would look into this.

Stated that the members will need to talk to Carmel O'Hare, Director of Service and Robert Burns, CE about this and queried where this money will come from.

Requested that Carmel O'Hare, Director of Service, bring this to Robert Burns, CE and revert to the members. Following this, all can sit down and have a discussion.

Cllr. Keelan:

Stated that he was happy with this plan.

Cllr. O'Hanlon:

Requested that a follow up letter be issued to Uisce Eireann in the coming weeks if no response is received.

4.0 MD Coordinator's Report

Cllr. Conlon:

Wished to express a vote of congratulations to Damien Thornton, MD Co-Ordinator, on his official appointment and remarked that it is great to have someone of his calibre for the district.

Requested an update on Cloughvalley Sensory Garden.

Reply -this is due to go the Procurement Team to publish next week.

Cllr. Carthy:

Echoed Cllr. Conlon's congratulations to Damien Thornton, MD Co-Ordinator.

Stated it is great to see progress at Rahans Lake.

Welcomed the new Magheraclone Community centre, advising that he attended the meet and greet yesterday, and wished all involved the very best of luck.

Requested an update on the bandstand.

Reply – it is currently with an acoustic engineer.

Cllr. Keelan:

Wished Damien Thornton, MD Co-Ordinator, well in his official appointment.

Expressed unhappiness that the Garda Commissioner Office have not responded regarding the proposed CCTV Schemes for Carrickmacross and Castleblayney and appealed to the Executive to do all in their power to drive this project forward.

Acknowledged the MD Co-ordinator report.

Spoke about the N2 Ardee to Castleblayney Scheme and stated it is one of the most dangerous roads in the country. Stated that TII are unable to provide funding and remarked that this is unfair on the people using it and on affected landowners.

Commented about potholes appearing on the N2 Broomfield over the summer where a number of vehicles were damaged as a result. Asked if there was ever a report done about this, and if not, would it be possible to get a report and revert to the members. Acknowledged that it is TII's responsibility.

Cllr. Campbell:

Acknowledged the MD Co-ordinator Report and concurred with comments made about Damien Thornton, MD Co-Ordinator.

Wished to put on record his thanks to Damien Thornton, MD Co-Ordinator, Gary Toyne, District Engineer, and the MD team, particularly on the works at Annadrummond. Stated that flooding will not be completely alleviated, but a common-sense approach is being used, working towards a solution. Requested an update on any further remediation works to be carried out and advised there are some slumps on this road.

Requested an update on the regeneration for the backlands in Castleblayney, noting it is likely with the Town Regeneration Team.

Cllr. O'Hanlon:

Stated that we are lucky to have Damien Thornton, MD Co-Ordinator in his role and complemented the MD team, remarking that there is a good atmosphere, led by Damien Thornton, MD Co-Ordinator.

Requested that a letter is issued to the Cavan /Monaghan Chief Superintendent, seeking an update on the CCTV schemes, and if possible, to meet with the members to provide a briefing. Complimented all involved with the new Magheracloone Community Centre.

Stated that he can see where Cllr. Keelan is coming from regarding the lack of funding for the N2 Ardee to Castleblayney project.

A robust discussion followed. Cllr. O'Hanlon voiced his displeasure and frustration at taxpayers' money being used to fund projects in Northern Ireland, outside this jurisdiction, when no funding can be found for projects such as the N2 Ardee to Castleblayney project and the potential upgrading of Clones football field.

Cllr. Carthy advised that all elected members should be cautious of language used, and to avoid falling into a trap of pitting people against each other, as it is not their fault and stated that the responsibility lies with the mismanagement of funding in the United Kingdom (UK), and it is down to the Department of Transport and the Department of Finance to provide funding for the N2. It has nothing to do with the *Shared Ireland Fund*.

Cllr. O’Hanlon wished to clarify that he is not pitting people against each other and accepted the above statement, remarking that the stance of the UK Government is causing anger. Cllr. O’Hanlon expressed his frustration about the Casement Park issue.

Cllr. Keelan stated that it is the responsibility of TII and Central Government to provide funding of less than €1 million to bring the N2 Ardee to Castleblayney project to the next stage.

Cllr. Campbell wished to put on record that he believes it does not make sense that less than €1 million cannot be found for this piece of road, stating that he 100% supports the Shared Island Fun, but it is difficult when our own projects are not funded.

Cllr. Conlon remarked that all elected members seem to be singing from the same hymn sheet and wondered if representations should be made to Jack Chambers TD as he is aware of the issue. Approximately €900,000 funding will also stop the wasting of approximately €5.8 million as well as bringing the project to the next stage.

5.0 Q&A

Questions raised by Cllr. Colm Carthy for the September 2024 meeting of Carrickmacross - Castleblayney Municipal District:

1. **What is the latest update on proposed safe pedestrian crossing works to Oriel Road, Kingscourt road and the Ballybay & Castleblayney roads (at Inver College), in Carrickmacross?**

Response:

The Executive shall apply for funding under the *2025 Safety Improvement Works on Regional and Local Roads* scheme for the provision of pedestrian crossings on each of the Kingscourt and Oriel Roads.

There are pedestrian crossings proposed for each of the Ballybay (R180) and Castleblayney (R927) roads, adjacent to Inver College, under the current Active Travel scheme for this area.

2. **When is it expected works will commence on the Masterplan for the Convent Avenue and surrounding areas?**

Response:

Monaghan County Council has appointed *The Paul Hogarth Company* to prepare a concept landscape masterplan for the Convent Lands / Bath Avenue area to the south of Carrickmacross Town Centre. The terms of reference of the proposed Masterplan are centered on the provision of improved foot and cycle linkages to the town centre, the accommodation of the potential expansion of the St. Louis Secondary School and the consolidation of recent investments in sports facilities.

Following meetings with key stakeholders, a number of options to improve the pedestrian/cycle linkages to the town centre have been developed for consideration. The Executive is currently engaging with key stakeholders to identify an optimum solution. These discussions are ongoing, and it is hoped that a preferred solution may be identified by Q4 2024.

3. **Will the executive confirm when it is expected hedge cutting will take place along the footpaths of the Convent Lands and will there be a review of footpaths throughout Carrickmacross to ensure that hedges aren’t blocking pedestrian passage?**

Response:

Hedge trimming works along the footpaths of the Convent lands are on-going. It is anticipated that further hedge trimming works will be undertaken over the coming weeks along footways in and around Carrickmacross and Castleblayney Towns, to ensure safer pedestrian passage.

4. What is the latest update on the Bandstand for the Carrickmacross Civic offices? Will works commence on this project soon?

Response:

The appointed consultants are currently preparing revised tender documentation for the engagement of a suitably qualified works contractor. It is anticipated that a tender shall issue to the market in Q4 2024.

Questions raised by Cllr. Noel Keelan for the September 2024 meeting of Carrickmacross - Castleblayney Municipal District:

5. What is the up-to-date position in relation to the Donaghmoynne village area and the ongoing problem of flooding, what is the expected timescale for works to commence on a flooding mitigation plan and implementation, including the need to have the access roads into the village resurfaced?

Response:

It is anticipated that a suitably qualified design consultant shall be engaged in Q4 2024. Following completion of the flood mitigation design, the Executive shall explore all potential sources of funding to advance the implementation of the identified remedial drainage works. The Executive intend to undertake significant resurfacing works to the access roads entering Donaghmoynne Village in conjunction with the implementation of flood mitigation measures.

6. What is the up-to-date position regarding this council's engagement with the Local link bus service, National Transport Authority (NTA) in relation to putting in place extra bus stops throughout the area including at Ballymackney on the Dundalk Road, and also the re-establishment of the very important bus stop at Dunard estate in Inniskeen village?

Response:

The Executive undertook a review of bus stops along the Local Link 171 service route. Having regard to the criteria set out in the NTA's "Guidance on Bus Stop Locations in Rural Areas", the Executive examined the potential of additional bus stops at the following locations:

Corvally	Raferagh Cross
Corvally	Corvally Presbyterian Church
Rakeeragh	Rakeeragh Junction
Kinallyduff	Ballymackney Cross
Inniskeen	Kednamisha Cross
Inniskeen	Lacklom
Inniskeen	Entrance to Dunard Housing Development
Inniskeen	St. Daigh's Terrace
Inniskeen	Football Field

The report has been submitted to the Roads Section to aid further consultation with Local Link representatives on the feasibility of future bus stop provisions with the Carrickmacross/Castleblayney Municipal District.

7. What is the up-to-date position in relation to the proposed public realm plan for Inniskeen village, when is it hoped to see works commence, what works is it hoped to carry out, what funding is available to deliver the plan?

Response:

The Executive is currently reviewing the draft detailed design whilst engaging with community representatives. It is envisaged that works shall commence in Q4 2024. The total available funding, including match funding, for this scheme is €283,000. The project is aimed at delivering Public Realm and Amenity Enhancements to the Village Heart and St. Mary's Space areas in the Village.

8. What is the up-to-date position in relation to the proposed parking strategy for Inniskeen village, including the provision of additional car parking and improvement to the access into Deery's terrace, as requested by local residents, what funding if any is available to carry out these works?

Response:

The Executive is currently reviewing the final draft parking analysis/strategy for Inniskeen Village. Separately, the Executive shall continue to explore all potential sources of funding to undertake site-specific upgrades at Deery's Terrace.

9. Will the council executive make contact with Eir in relation to the very poor upkeep of the Eir Exchange building and grounds located in the heart of Inniskeen village, issues including overgrown palm tree blocking the sightlines at the creche, overgrown weeds, grass, rubbish dumped etc. This exchange building has become an eyesore and is taking away from the efforts of the local community, including the tidy towns, to keep this very important village in pristine condition?

Response:

The Executive will contact Eir to relay the concerns of the residents in respect of the upkeep of the exchange grounds and building.

Questions raised by Cllr. Paul Gibbons for the September 2024 meeting of Carrickmacross - Castleblayney Municipal District:

10. The cobble lock pavement on Main Street, Castleblayney has been in place for a considerable number of years and requires attention. Can an audit be carried out assessing this paving in the context of areas like cleaning, condition of the paving bricks, presence of weeds, condition of kerbs, sections of subsidence, condition and location of manholes on the pavement and location and condition of access points to the pavement being particularly mindful of people with disabilities and people who are pushing children among other areas? If issues of concern are noted can a remedial action plan be developed and implemented?

Response:

The Executive will conduct a survey on the condition of the footways on Main Street Castleblayney. Any defects identified will be logged on the essential repairs and maintenance list. All defects are prioritized for inclusion on the annual footway repair programme.

11. The junction at Brennans Cross at Ard Kirk on the N53 is extremely busy. Is there any update on plans for public lighting at this crossroad?

Response:

There is currently no plan for the provision at this location.

12. Are there plans to increase the number of dog fouling bins and/or signage on this issue in Castleblayney?

Response:

There are currently no plans to increase the number of dog fouling bins around Castleblayney. There are currently 4 dog fouling bins, and 7 bag dispensers located in and around the town of Castleblayney.

13. There are no playground facilities in the Rosevale, Plás an Bhrí, Knocktornagh and Coill Darach estates which are all located adjacent to each other with pedestrian pathways linking them, and with a large number of children residing there. Can the MD explore the possibility of securing funding to locate a badly needed playground in a central location to service these areas?

Response:

The Executive shall examine the feasibility of providing a centrally located playpark for residents in Rosevale, Plás an Bhrí, Knocktornagh, and Coill Darach.

Questions raised by Cllr. Peter Conlon for the September 2024 meeting of Carrickmacross - Castleblayney Municipal District:

14. What is the update on trimming the trees on the Convent Hill which are now causing a safety issue with electrical wires?

Response:

The landowner previously committed to undertaking the required tree trimming works however these works are not yet complete. The Executive are actively pursuing the landowner to provide an update. The Executive will contact the relevant utility provider to advise them of the potential safety issue.

15. What is the expected time frame for installing the low-cost safety scheme measures already allocated?

Response:

The low-cost safety schemes will be commencing in the coming weeks. It is expected that all works will be completed in mid Q4 2024.

16. What is the latest progress update on the Convent Avenue masterplan and linking the Convent Avenue to Farney St. / Convent Hill?

Response:

Monaghan County Council has appointed The Paul Hogarth Company to prepare a concept landscape masterplan for the Convent Lands / Bath Avenue area to the south of Carrickmacross Town Centre. The terms of reference of the proposed Masterplan are centred on the provision of improved foot and cycle linkages to the town centre, the accommodation of the potential expansion of the St. Louis Secondary School and the consolidation of recent investments in sports facilities.

Subsequent to meetings with key stakeholders, a number of options to improve the pedestrian/cycle linkages to the town centre have been developed for consideration. The Executive is currently engaging with key stakeholders in order to identify an optimum solution. These discussions are ongoing, and it is hoped that a preferred solution may be identified by Q4 2024.

17. Can it be determined from the court services what their intention is for the courthouse? With the court services over subscribed, there is a need for Carrick courthouse to be reopened even on a limited basis.

Response:

The Courts Service has advised that it is their wish to return to holding court sittings at Carrickmacross, and that they have been maintaining the building in readiness for a resumption of business there. The Courts Service further advised that it is a matter for the judiciary to decide when court sittings will resume in the building.

Question raised by Cllr. P.J. O’Hanlon for September 2024 meeting of Carrickmacross - Castleblayney Municipal District:

18. What is the up-to-date position with regards to the completion of the new C:TEK II building?

Response:

The Contractor’s most recently submitted construction programme indicates that the new CTEK II building is scheduled for substantial completion in Mid-October.

19. In relation to the presentation that Councillors received from the library services, we were advised that Carrickmacross Library is already operating at full capacity. What plans are in place to address this situation?

Response:

Library management has included the development of Carrickmacross Library on the council capital projects list. It has been highlighted to Management the requirement to further develop the space to meet the population growth in the area, request for additional services and development is to include sensory space, more study space, activity room, meeting room.

6.0 Notice of Motion

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

“That the MD Executive assess the feasibility of making the private road at Gorteens, Coolskeagh, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan a public road.”

Cllr. Carthy suggested that it should be put in writing why the Elected Members support this motion.

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

“That this MD calls on Minister Helen McEntee to instruct the Court Services to place the Courthouse building in Carrickmacross town under the control of Monaghan County Council. The building has been lying idle of the last number of years and it is not in the public interest for a repeat of what happened in Castleblayney with the Market House which is costing the taxpayer €11 million to refurbish. “

All Elected Members discussed the importance of this building.

Cllr. O’Hanlon requested that a copy of the motion be sent to Minister Heather Humphreys, Matt Carthy TD and Senator Robbie Gallagher.

7.0 Director of Service Orders

Orders Cmx-Cby 40/2024; Cmx-Cby 41/2024; Cmx-Cby 42/2024; Cmx-Cby 43/2024; Cmx-Cby 44/2024; Cmx-Cby 45/2024 and Cmx-Cby 46/2024 were noted.

8.0 VOS/VOC

Votes of sympathy were extended to the Hanley family on the death of Martin Hanley (RIP); the Callan family on the death of Patrick Callan (RIP); the family of Kitty Crosby (RIP), the McDonnell family on the death of Séan Óg McDonnell (RIP; Sean Donaghy and family on the death of Ann Donaghy (RIP); the Kirk family on the death of Ownie Kirk (RIP); the Ward family on the death of Thomas Ward (RIP), the McSkeane family on the death of Mary McSkeane (RIP) and Rosaleen Kerley and family on the death of Patjoe Kerr (RIP).

A Vote of congratulations was extended to Ciaran Marron, staff and family on Acitve8 Energies winning at the Deloitte 2024 Best Managed Companies of Ireland awards.

9.0 A.O.B

Cllr. Conlon:

On the proposal of Cllr. Conlon and seconded by Cllr. Campbell it was unanimously agreed to write a letter to Minister Jack Chambers regarding funding for the N2 Ardee to Castleblayney project, in order to bring it to the next stage.

Cllr. Carthy:

Requested that the Carrickmacross Thursday Market is looked into regarding encouraging trading and the car parking issues that can occur on market day.

Requested a report on the breakdown of parking tickets issued re: long term parking in Carrickmacross.

Reported that a wheelchair user reported facing difficulty at the new footpath at Lurgans Hill.

Reply – this will be investigated.

Cllr. Keelan:

Concerns have been reported from various local groups regarding issues with the Parking Strategy as part of the Inniskeen Public Realm Draft Plan.

Asked when the metal barriers in Inniskeen which were damaged recently by a car will be replaced.

Advised that a culvert seems to have been crushed at the back of Aughnafarcon School and requested that this be investigated.

Cllr. Campbell:

Wished success to all involved with the Big Tom Festival and Castleblayney Fair Day.

Cllr. Conlon:

Stated that he is looking forward to attending the Big Tom Festival as Leas Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. Keelan:

Informed the group that Kavanagh Weekend is happening next weekend.

Mentioned a fantastic event attended recently in the Round Tower featuring portraits of local people.

Thanked all involved in organising Culture Night.

Cllr. O'Hanlon:

Acknowledged all the great Culture Night events throughout the county, remarking that he had attended one in the Peace Campus.

Queried who pays for the Traffic Warden in the district and asked if it is done equally.

Stated that the Traffic Warden does a great job using a very sensible approach. Commented that he believes it unfair that Monaghan have 2.5 Traffic Warden cover, and the towns of Carrickmacross/Castleblayney/Ballybay/Clones have only 1 and requested that this be investigated.

Wished to note the substantial amount of rate payers in the 4 towns and stated that all he is seeking is fair play.

Carmel O'Hare, Director of Service, stated that she will always do her very best for the district and advised the elected members to be mindful that Monaghan Town has pay parking in place which contributes to the costs of their Traffic Wardens.

Gary Toye, District Engineer, advised that the Traffic Warden is allocated 3 days per week within Carrickmacross – Castleblayney District.

Date of next meeting:

Due to the fourth Monday of October falling on a Bank holiday, it was unanimously agreed to hold the next monthly meeting of Carrickmacross – Castleblayney MD on Tuesday the 29th of October at 10am in Carrickmacross Civic Offices.

The meeting concluded at 11:00.

Cathaoirleach

Date

Meeting Administrator

Date