

Minutes of Meeting of Monaghan Municipal District held in the Civil Defence Building, Annahagh, Monaghan on Monday, 20th January 2025 at 11.00am

Present: Cllr Seán Conlon, Cathaoirleach
Cllrs Pauric Clerkin, Raymond Aughey, Niamh McCooey, Seamus Treanor and Alan Johnston

Online: Cllr Bronagh McAree

In attendance: Ms. Patricia Monahan, Director of Services, Mr. Donal McElwain, Municipal District Co-Ordinator, Ms. Liz Brannigan, Administrative Officer and Mr. Ruairi O'Neill, Executive Engineer

At the outset of the meeting the Cathaoirleach welcomed new members, Cllr Alan Johnston and Cllr Niamh McCooey, to the Municipal District of Monaghan.

1. (a) Confirmation of Minutes of MD Meeting held on 16th December 2024

On the proposal of Cllr R. Aughey, seconded by Cllr S. Treanor, it was agreed that the Minutes of the Monaghan Municipal District Meeting held on 16th December 2024 be confirmed.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Report from Municipal District Coordinator

Mr. D. McElwain, MD Coordinator, took Members through the January Report. The Members noted the Report which had been circulated with the agenda.

The Director of Services and MD Coordinator responded to queries raised by the Members:

- A photo to be arranged in acknowledgement of the funding from the Members of the Municipal District of Monaghan towards the recently opened extension to the Rossmore Playpark and a recent addition to the Giants Sculpture trail.
- Regarding disabled access to benches in the park, it was confirmed that part of the extension to the playpark included accessible benches; there are also accessible benches at Barn Lake
- Cllr Conlon noted that there was a lack of lighting inside the newly erected compostable toilets in Rossmore Park which were provided by Coillte.
- Regarding funding secured by the Tourism Dept, it was confirmed that a zipline project will require planning permission; while the project application for works to the Walled Garden is awaiting decision from the SEUPB.
- The issue of verge slippage on the Bog Road in Scotstown was raised - it was agreed that a meeting would be arranged with the Members, the MD Executive and local residents together with representatives from Road Dept.
- Macartan Road – The Aldi, Temporary Traffic Management system will be complete within one week, while nighttime works will continue for a further 3weeks. Executive will keep Members and the public updated.
- Exact date for completion of the works to the Glen Road culvert to be confirmed.
- Update to be provided in relation to a bridge, above Clontibret village entrance, one wall of which has collapsed.
- Low-Cost Safety Measures at Bogues - funding to be announced in February 2025.

- Bus parking at Peace Campus – a site has been identified which requires assessment through Road Safety Audit.
- Re: Greenway - N12 Monaghan to the Border: Consultants will be appointed in Q1 2025 to progress the scheme through the remaining Phases, including construction. It is programmed to commence construction in Q4 2025. In relation to a timeline for works, confirmation to be sought from Roads Department.
- Presentation from Active Travel Dept to be arranged for future MD Mtg.
- Full details to be sought from Roads Department on resurfacing works N12 Coolshannagh Roundabout to Tyholland

A lengthy discussion followed in relation to the urgent need for a bypass of Monaghan Town, citing traffic congestion, a need for traffic calming measures, safety of pedestrians using footpaths along the Clones Road as serious concerns for our town and its citizens. A lack of funding from Government was raised and the need to contact local, newly elected TD's, in relation to this issue, was discussed. A request was made, by the Members, for an update on the status of the Monaghan Town Mobility Plan and confirmation on how the items listed under Active Travel, were decided upon and whether the Clones Road issues raised previously were considered.

Mr. McElwain confirmed sales of Monaghan Town Voucher reached two milestones in December:

- €10 million sales point in Dec 2024 from its inception in 2016.
- Over €2,000,000 sales in one year.

Mr. McElwain congratulated Monaghan Town Team on reaching these milestones and for their work throughout the year on the Monaghan Town Voucher Scheme; thanks to Monaghan County Council's Motor Tax staff who are involved in the hugely cumbersome task of redeeming the vouchers; also Monaghan MD staff for their work in administering the paper vouchers and in payment of vouchers redeemed.

Members joined with the MD Coordinator and congratulated Monaghan Town Team for their volunteer work throughout the year, acknowledging the benefits of the voucher to the local economy. Gratitude was also expressed to local businesses who participate in the scheme.

4. Correspondence

There were no items of correspondence circulated.

5. Questions and Motions

Cllr Bronagh McAree asked:

1. Could I get an update on Emyvale playground? Are any upgrades planned in 2025?

Response:

The Municipal District of Monaghan carried out some maintenance work to the Emyvale Playground in 2024. A larger refurbishment will require grant funding. The Monaghan Municipal District will explore any possible grant funding in 2025 for this playground.

2. Could I get an update on traffic calming measures for Mullan road and at the new Meadows Estate in Emyvale?

Response:

The Municipal District of Monaghan have carried out some initial road markings on the Mullan Road Emyvale. There are still additional roads markings and signs to be installed and it is expected that this will be completed in the coming weeks. The road along the Meadows Estate will be subject to a reduced speed limit (60km/h) in February 2025 as part of the national speed limit reduction initiative.

3. Can Monaghan Co Council please consider traffic calming measures at Knockconan/Ballyoisin?

Response:

In accordance with the adopted Traffic Calming Policy the road at Knockconan (L-5210) does not meet the criteria for assessment for traffic calming measure as it has a speed limit greater than 50km/h. However, as part of the surface dressing works carried out on this road in 2024 additional road markings were installed in this area. This road will be subject to a reduced speed limit (60km/h) in February 2025 as part of the national speed limit reduction initiative.

4. Could I receive an update on shelter at Emy Lough which funding was secured for in 2024.

Response:

Funding was made available in 2024 via Sport Ireland and the Healthy Ireland Fund under a new scheme to support Outdoor Swimming Infrastructure. Emy Lough was identified as a viable project given the use by local swimmers / dippers and the need for a shelter to assist changing requirements. Monaghan Sports Partnership and MCC Engineers have been liaising with members of Donagh Development Association and Emy Dippers regarding the nature of such a structure that will accommodate local needs, while also meeting planning regulations or special conditions associated with this scenic area.

The project requires development, design, compliance with statutory requirements, procurement and installation. The project to be progressed early 2025.

5. Can Monaghan MD consider providing regular maintenance of Cuir Uí Mheith in Emyvale village? Including gardening work, maintenance of grass verges/hedges, provision of dog fowl bins and road surface in estate.

Response:

The Monaghan Municipal District will investigate what further maintenance works is required in this estate.

Cllr. Niamh McCooey will ask:

1. Can Monaghan MD consider repair works to the fence at the entrance on the N2 to Castleshane Forest?

Response:

The fence at this location is the property of Coillte and is not within the remit of the Monaghan Municipal District to repair. The Municipal District have forwarded this request to Coillte for their consideration.

2. Similar to the traffic calming measures carried out on the R213 at Garron National School, can the Council consider implementing these measures in the vicinity of Castleshane Village, due to the excess speed of vehicles?

Response:

The traffic calming measures at Garron National School were installed to complement the existing periodic speed limit that operates at this location during School drop off and pick up times. Castleshane village does not meet the criteria for assessment for traffic calming measure in accordance with the adopted Traffic Calming Policy as it has a speed limit greater than 50km/h. However, the Municipal District will investigate to determine if additional road markings could be installed at this location.

3. Is the completion of the last 500m of overlay works on the approach to Killyneill Crossroads on the 'Old Armagh Road' L1402 due to be completed in this calendar year?

Response:

Currently there are no overlay works planned for the L 1402. This road is not on the current adopted Roads Programme (2024 -2027).

4. Currently how many applicants are on the LIS list in the Monaghan MD and at the current rate of investment what is the waiting time for completion on these applicants?

Response:

There are currently 32 lanes left on the 2017 list and 9 of these are within the Monaghan Municipal District. At current funding levels the estimated time for completion of these lanes is 6 to 7 years.

5. Can the Council consider regular general upkeep of the Ardbannagher Estate in Glaslough and also the provision of traffic calming measures in the vicinity of the play park?

Response:

The Monaghan Municipal District will investigate what further maintenance works is required in this estate. Traffic calming in the form of ramps are already in place adjacent to the playpark in Ardbannagher.

Cllr. Seán Conlon will ask:

1. In my continued efforts at seeking the repaving of the unsatisfactory road surface at the Diamond Centre car park, especially to facilitate those attending the National Learning Network, what progress has occurred aimed at resolving this long-standing issue?

Response:

The Municipal District have agreed a lease with the new owner and as soon as this lease is in place it is proposed to resurface the carpark. Works expected to be completed by Q2, 2025.

2. What upgrades are due to occur at the Belgium Park Football Field during the year with the Sports Capital Grant allocation of €111,453?

Response:

The application for the Sports Grant funding detailed a number of upgrades. The extent of the upgrades will be determined when the full project is tendered and actual costs obtained. The top priority is the upgrade of the playing pitch to improve the drainage/playing surface. The next priority is replacement of the perimeter fencing and sports equipment followed by a grass mower and dugouts.

3. What progress is occurring with the provision of serviced sites at Latlorcan? What is the qualifying criteria for someone seeking to purchase a site and build a house? Also, what level of civil infrastructure is provided to facilitate a potential buyer / homeowner?

Response:

The Housing Section plan to re-advertise the sites in Latlorcan during the second half of 2025. The qualifying criteria has yet to be determined and finalised. The sites are serviced with water and electricity.

4. Following requests dating over a year ago, when are traffic calming measure measures scheduled to be installed at:

a) The North Road between Lidl and the Peace Campus?

Response:

Construction to commence in Q2 2025. A controlled crossing to be provided i.e. traffic lights between bus station and Peace Campus and a zebra crossing adjacent to Flacks garage.

b) On the Dublin Road between the Latlorcan residential area and Bogue's garage?

Response:

An application for funding for a pedestrian crossing and traffic calming measures at this location was submitted to Department of Transport in November 2024 as a Low Cost Safety Scheme. Successful applications under this funding stream will be announced in February 2025.

c) On the stretch of road servicing Latlorcan Close, Latlorcan Court, Latlorcan Way, Latlorcan Glen and Plas Lorcáin.

Response:

The Monaghan Municipal District have appointed a Contractor to install additional traffic calming measures on the road adjacent to the playpark in Latlorcan Estate. These works are expected to be completed in February 2025.

Cllr Alan Johnston will ask:

1. Can the Council outline the traffic congestion mitigation plans that were implemented as part of the following developments which would result in the interruption of the free flow of traffic along the Clones Road coming into town:
- The realignment of the Margaret Skinnader roundabout where the Clones Road entrance to the roundabout reduced the vehicle space from two cars to one car;
 - The installation of a pedestrian crossing at the Margaret Skinnader roundabout;

- c. The new Convent car park which requires all exiting vehicles to turn left and proceed to the Margaret Skinnader roundabout

Response:

The following answer applies to Qs 1a, b & c. When designing infrastructure within an urban built-up environment, such as Monaghan Town, the main aim is to design and implement a highly connected street which allows people to walk and cycle in a safe manner, by providing a comfortable street environment for pedestrians and cyclists. To do this, measures have to be put in place that focus the driver's attention and make them more aware of their environment. Traffic calming measures were implemented at the Margaret Skinnader Roundabout, in the form of reducing the number of lanes on the Roundabout to one. This has the effect of reducing both approach and exit speeds at the Roundabout, thereby facilitating the safe crossing of pedestrians. In addition, a one lane Roundabout is much safer than a two-lane Roundabout for cyclists to navigate. The exit/egress arrangements at the Convent carpark were designed to reduce waiting times for exiting right turning vehicles, by directing them to the Margaret Skinnader Roundabout to join the N54.

To ensure that the above initiatives did not have a significant adverse impact on vehicular traffic flows on the N54, a vehicular capacity assessment was carried out before the plans were adopted. The results of this demonstrated there would be no significant impact on vehicular traffic flows along the N54 through Monaghan Town. It must be acknowledged that the volume of traffic on all roads has increased in recent years, to levels that surpass the pre-covid traffic volumes. Evidence of this can be found on TII's traffic counters which are published on the TII website. All in all, if there had been no works carried out at the Margaret Skinnader Roundabout, there would still be a slight increase in congestion along the N54, through Monaghan Town, due to this natural traffic growth.

2. Can the Council outline the traffic congestion mitigation plans that will be implemented upon the completion of the Aldi development?

Response:

A Traffic and Transport Assessment which contains a Traffic Impact Assessment was provided by Aldi as part of their Planning submission which concluded that traffic flows generated by the Aldi development would remain within acceptable levels as per national guidelines. A right turning lane into the development along the N54 will be provided to allow through straight ahead traffic to flow unrestricted. Other measures include the upgrading of the traffic light system to a MOVA type, which is specifically designed to maximise the operational efficiency of a traffic signal-controlled junction.

3. What is the Council's plan for the provision of a safe active travel route along the Clones Road from the Scotstown junction to the Retail Park?

Response:

There are currently no active travel proposals along the N54 from the Scotstown Junction to the retail park. However, the Local Transport Plan, which is currently being developed, is carrying out an assessment of transport demand for Monaghan Town and will play a central role in informing the overall scale of development, phasing and design/ delivery of supporting transport infrastructure/ services across all modes of transport. The section of N54 referred to in the question is being considered integrally as part of that assessment.

Cllr Raymond Aughey will ask:

1. Can the Council give an update on the Horseshoe Bridge Active Travel project and when is the proposed construction start date?

Response:

Tenders have been received and the formal tender assessment process to appoint a contractor is currently underway. Once this tender assessment process is completed, approval to proceed to construction and appoint the contractor will be sought from NTA.

2. Can the Municipal District give an update on the progress with the replacement of the footpaths in Ballinode?

Response:

Tender submissions for the replacement of footpaths between Cappog bridge and the village have been received and have been assessed. The preferred contractor has been appointed. It is expected that these works will commence in March 2025.

3. Can the Municipal District keep the outside of the property, Redboys in Emyvale clean and tidy while we go through the planning process?

Response:

The Municipal District will include the upkeep of the outside of this property in their programme of works.

Motions:

Cllrs Bronagh Mc Aree proposed, seconded by Cllrs Niamh Mc Cooley and Seán Conlon:

That Monaghan Co Council write to the Minister for Health and to the HSE to expedite the process of approval for extension works to take place at the Errigal Truagh Special Needs site at Knockconan.

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

Cllr Alan Johnston proposed, seconded by Cllr Pauric Clerkin:

That the Monaghan Municipal District submit a letter to the new Environment Minister, copying to the National Transport Authority requesting a review of the tax license regulations in order to increase the supply of taxis in the Monaghan Municipal District in particular by:

- a) Reviewing the regulations requiring every taxi vehicle to be wheelchair accessible vehicles at excessive cost to new entrants which is a significant barrier to entry; and
- b) Reviewing the archaic geography test by modernising the SPSV driver entry test to take into account digital and technological advances which assist geography based knowledge requirements.

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

6. Votes of Congratulations and Sympathies

On the proposal of Cllr N. McCooey, seconded by Cllrs S. Conlon & B. McAree it was agreed that Monaghan Municipal District extend its congratulations to Conor McManus on his retirement from County football. Acknowledging his outstanding contribution to Monaghan GAA and his exemplary dedication to the sport. His commitment, skill and leadership have left a mark on this county, inspiring countless players and supporters a like.

On the proposal of Cllr S. Conlon, seconded by Cllr N. McCooey, it was agreed to extend a vote of congratulations to Ms. Laura Hannon, Monaghan MD, and her partner, David, on the birth of their baby son.

On the proposal of Cllr P. Clerkin, seconded by Cllr. A. Johnston, it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to the family of the late Ann Driver, noting that Anne was a popular Monaghan hotelier and was best known locally as the former owners of the Westenra and Lakeside Hotels in Monaghan Town.


On the proposal of Cllr A. Johnston, seconded by Cllr P. Clerkin., it was agreed that the sympathy of the Council be extended to the family of the late Helena Garvey, mother of Kieran Garvey, Roads Dept, Monaghan County Council.

7. A.O.B.

There were no matters raised under AOB.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: 
Cathaoirleach

Signed: 
Municipal District Coordinator

Dated this 17th day of February 2025