

Minutes

SPC for Tourism, Rural and Community Development, An Ghaeilge and Cultural Services

Date: Wednesday 22 April 2026

Location: Peace Campus, Monaghan Town

Present

Cllr. Niamh McCooey	Elected Member Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Aidan Campbell	Elected Member Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Pat Treanor	Elected Member Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Raymond Aughey	Elected Member Monaghan County Council

Maureen McIntyre	Business / Commercial Sector
Emer Brennan	PPN – Environment Electoral College
Carol Smyth	PPN – Social Inclusion Electoral College
Noel Treanor	PPN – Community & Vol Electoral College
Seán Ó Murchadha	PPN – Community & Vol Electoral College

In attendance

Olga McConnon	Monaghan County Council
Nicola Payne	Monaghan County Council
Carol Lambe	Monaghan County Council
Mairéad Treanor	Monaghan County Council
Dympna Condra	Monaghan County Council
Conal McCrudden	Monaghan County Council

Apologies

Cllr. Paul Gibbons	Elected Member Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Sean Conlon	SPC Chairperson, Elected Member Monaghan County Council
Somhairle MacConghail	Monaghan County Council
Deirdriú McQuaid	Monaghan County Council
Fiona McGuinness	Business / Commercial (Tourism/Hospitality Sector)

1. Welcome

The chair, Cllr Niamh McCooey, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. New member of the Committee

Cllr Niamh McCooey welcomed a new member to the SPC; Maureen McIntyre, Clones Town Team who replaces Packie McCarville as a representative for the Business / Commercial (Tourism/Hospitality Sector) on the Tourism, Rural and Community Development, An Ghaeilge and Cultural Services SPC as ratified at the Monaghan County Council meeting held on 01 December 2025.

3. Minutes of meeting 25 February 2026

Noel Treanor noted that he was not listed as an attendee in the draft minutes. Seán Ó Murchadha noted that his comments on the forthcoming Migrant Integration Strategy were not noted in the draft minutes. With these errors amended, Noel Treanor proposed the adoption of the minutes of the meeting of 25 February 2026 and this proposal was seconded by Cllr Raymond Aughey.

4. Plan for the production of Tier 4 Village Plans and Community Plans 2026-2030 – Carol Lambe

Carol Lambe, Monaghan County Council, presented on the plan for the Preparation of Community Development and Tier 4 Village Plans over the Period 2026-2030.

Monaghan County Council first began preparing Community Plans in 2017 following the outcome of work conducted by the Community Development Officer, which mapped all funding which had been drawn down by communities around the county over the period 2013 to 2017. The mapping exercise revealed that some communities were not availing of the funding opportunities to the same extent as others, and it was decided to work closely with these communities to build their capacity to avail of funding in the future. The approach taken to capacity building in the communities was three-fold. First, staff skilled in community development engaged with the community on the ground and identified the barriers to the community availing of funding opportunities. Then they worked with the community to remove the barriers and build the capacity of local leaders to drive development locally. After this, staff guided the community through the process of examining their area's needs and putting together a plan which addressed those needs and identified projects which could be put forward for funding. The Community Development Team assesses and ranks each Community Plan based on where the need is greatest, where they can add most value and where synergies can be achieved. The current process of preparation of development plans aligns with the wider County Development Plan (up to 2031).

A proposed 'schedule of works' for the Community Development Team from 2026-2030 was presented. By the end of 2030 every community in Monaghan should have a plan in place by 2030. This will raise the capacity of groups to steer their own agenda, bring in investment and support local people to meet their own needs.

The Community Development Team remains in touch with the community following adoption of their Community Plan, and helps them to implement the actions contained therein, including the achievement of large capital projects. The model used by the Community Dept has been very successful, with the first communities to benefit from going through the process benefiting from significant investment for multiple projects and seeing many new groups, services and activities being set up.

Copies of the presentation will be circulated with minutes of the meeting.

Carol Smyth queried the relationship between the recently recruited Community Support Development Officer (CSDO) role and the wider community. Carol Lambe responded that the CSDO role was to support in whatever capacity was required. The primary responsibility was to produce plans but also to give advice and support to community groups e.g. funding clinics to help improve funding applications, developing FAQs to help groups process the applications.

Carol Smyth welcomed the plans and asked if they would be available in a central location where they are accessible. Carol Lambe confirmed that all completed plans are on MCC website in the Communities Section and that a suite of 'resource materials' are being developed, which will also be available on the MCC website.

The Chair thanked Carol for the presentation and commended the work of the Communities Section.

5. Tourism Section update

Dympna Condra, Monaghan County Council, presented an update on the work of the Tourism Unit at Monaghan County Council.

The Monaghan Tourism & Recreation Forum was established in April 2024 to provide strategic leadership and oversight for the delivery of the Tourism Strategy for County Monaghan 2023–2028. The Forum brings together key stakeholders to support coordinated tourism development, strengthen outdoor recreation opportunities, and ensure sustainable growth across the county.

The Tourism Unit is responsible for tourism development, tourism promotion and visitor servicing and trade engagement. Recently completed projects include Recreational Enhancements at Black Island, Lough Muckno, Rossmore Forest Playpark Extension, Recreational Enhancements at Dartrey Forest and the development of the County Outdoor Recreation Plan. Dympna presented on a number of projects currently in progress including the Dromore River Blueway Project and the Visitor Experience at former Lennard Arms Building, among others. Recent promotional campaigns include the *C'mon to Monaghan* campaign, the *Scenic Sessions* programme, and a series of influencer visits. Other promotional activities underway include the Monaghan Masterclasses initiative and an extension of the *Scenic Sessions* programme. Examples of recent trade and visitor engagement initiatives include trade familiarisation trips, workshops and industry supports and the Incoming Tour Operators Association (ITOA) AGM, which was held in January 2026, with 80 members visiting the Peace Campus as part of the programme.

Monaghan Tourism continues to actively support and prioritise key diaspora events and gatherings across the county, recognising their importance in strengthening community connections and driving visitor numbers. Major 2026 highlights include the Treinfhir Clan

Gathering in June and the Duffy Gathering in September. Ongoing work continues to ensure that all visitor information remains accurate, up to date and widely accessible. This includes regular updates to tourism literature, distribution across hospitality providers, and the provision of information packs for conferences and events.

The chair thanked Dympna for the presentation and all the work ongoing in the Tourism Unit at Monaghan County Council.

Cllr. Raymond Aughey for PJ O Hanlon queried if there were current or upcoming plans for development of Tourism in the Carrickmacross Castleblayney MD.

Dympna noted that not all funding applications are successful. In 2025, the Recreational Enhancements at Black Island was delivered and in 2024 funding applications were successful for the Carrickmacross Workhouse, the Patrick Kavanagh Centre and Carrickmacross Lace. RRDF funding will be sought for the Carrickmacross Workhouse in July 2026; this might not be a Tourism project but there is always ongoing work in that area.

Maureen McIntyre asked if the Tourism Unit could assist with the development of a Master Plan for the Clones Marina area that would link in with wider plans for the town.

Dympna noted that work on the site of the former Lennard Arms and St Tiarnach's Park is ongoing and that these are considered within the wider plans for the town.

Maureen McIntyre asked if there exists a regular audit or assessment of signage and debris in Clones. Dympna noted that these concerns should be brought to the Municipal District.

Olga McConnon asked if there was a delivery timeline for the Sliabh Beagh walking route project.

Dympna noted that the Tourism Unit are awaiting a letter of offer, and if received, this will take 5 years to complete.

6. EUROPE DIRECT Centre update – Conal McCrudden

Conal McCrudden, Monaghan County Libraries, presented an update on the work of the EUROPE DIRECT centre at Clones Library.

EUROPE DIRECT is a network of information centers throughout the European Union tasked with raising awareness of the EU, its initiatives and its policies to local communities. The centers operate on five-year mandate and the current mandate is 2026 to 2030. In Ireland there are nine EUROPE DIRECT centers administered by public libraries. EUROPE DIRECT Clones is responsible for Cavan, Louth and Monaghan. The key requirements of EUROPE DIRECT Clones is to provide an Information Centre for the public to visit and learn about the EU and their rights as an EU citizen. Every year, EUROPE DIRECT Clones produces an Annual Communication Plan which sets out how EUROPE DIRECT Clones will inform, engage and involve local citizens throughout the year.

Recent examples of work include a series of talks on the European Democracy Shield. In January 2026, EUROPE DIRECT Clones hosted journalist, consultant and author Eimear Ní Bhraonáin to discuss media literacy, misinformation and disinformation with the public, including visits to local secondary schools and a bilingual public evening event at An Nead. In November 2025, EUROPE DIRECT Clones hosted the annual public speaking event for schools, the 'Soapbox' competition. In October 2025, EUROPE DIRECT Clones worked with the Climate Action Unit at Monaghan County Council on a series of events to promote the EU Green Deal. For 2026, EUROPE DIRECT Clones will deliver a public information event on housing and green energy supports and the annual Soapbox competition. It will also continue to provide information about the EU through the information centre at Clones, targeted social media and traditional media campaigns, and the development of partnership opportunities across local and national networks.

The chair thanked Conal for the presentation and all the work ongoing in the EUROPE DIRECT centre at Clones Library.

Seán Ó Murchadha praised the work and thanked EUROPE DIRECT Clones for their continued supported to the Irish language community in Monaghan through the promotion of Irish as an official language of the EU.

7. EU presidency 2026 update

Nicola Payne, Monaghan County Council, presented an update on the work of Monaghan County Council EU Presidency Steering Group (which is being led by Deirdriú McQuaid) to prepare for Ireland's upcoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

From July to December 2026, Ireland will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Each county in Ireland will be paired with an EU Member State for the duration of the Presidency, creating opportunities to build lasting local links across Europe. Ambassadors of EU Member States in Ireland, accompanied by Irish Ambassadors based in those Member States, will visit schools, libraries, sports clubs and community organisations to take part in a wide range of public events and conversations.

Monaghan County Council submitted a proposal to deliver a cultural programme to the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport. The programme in Monaghan will include support for the Kavanagh Weekend, the Scenic Sessions, Muckno Mania, Culture Night and the Clones Film Festival in 2026. Monaghan County Libraries will launch a 'Read your way around Europe' initiative, which will curate a themed collection that will include at least one book from each EU member state, available to borrow. It will also host a 'Moomins in Monaghan' programme which will spotlight Finland's beloved *Moomin* children's books and illustrations throughout the Summer Reading Programme, the Children's Book Festival and the Family Time at Your Library programme.

On 18-21 September, Monaghan County Council will host the Finnish Ambassador as part of a Cultural Weekend that will celebrate Finland's contribution to the Northern Ireland Peace Process as well as a range of cultural events and activities.

The chair thanked Nicola for the presentation and all the work ongoing to plan for the EU Presidency in Monaghan.

Maureen McIntyre noted that CMETB Youth Services will be involved in the Youth Work element of the EU Presidency, linking with Leargas and Department of Education and Youth to promote similar activities and programmes across Europe. The Department will fund a series of Youth Night events to align with the EU Presidency and focus on groups who provide programmes through the medium of Irish. The Town Team would be interested in linking in with youth workers in Finland, if there are any opportunities to do so as part of the plans for the EU Presidency.

Nicola Payne took note of this request and will forward to the EU Presidency Steering Committee to get further information.

8. Disability Steering Committee

Nicola Payne presented on progress with the development of a Disability Steering Committee to be coordinated by the Community Section of Monaghan County Council.

The proposal to establish a Disability Steering Committee and the draft Terms of Reference of the Disability Steering Committee were circulated to all Committee members in advance of the meeting.

The role of Monaghan County Council's Disability Steering Committee will be to ensure that services across the county are accessible to people with a disability. This will include the development, implementation and monitoring of a 5-year Disability Inclusion and Access Strategy. The committee will also strive to ensure the needs of people with a disability are embedded in the policies, plans and strategies of Monaghan County Council and its wider partner agencies. The Disability Steering Committee will be established as a subcommittee of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and will report to them on a quarterly basis. The Terms of Reference outlined the proposed objectives, scope, membership, roles and responsibilities, meeting format and schedule, decision making and business of the Committee.

Approval was requested from the SPC to take the proposal forward to the Council meeting, to get nominations from Councillors.

Maureen McIntyre asked if the Committee might consider a representative from a group of carers (who are sometimes not considered as part of the Disability Network). Nicola noted that this could be considered when the Draft Terms of Reference are considered for approval.

The Chair commended the work of Cllr Sean Conlon who has been tireless in advancing this proposal and, on behalf of Cllr Conlon, the Chair asked the following questions, which we answered by Nicola Payne as follows:

- Will the proposal be brought forward as an item agenda for next Council meeting?
Response: Yes.
- When will the 'Expression of Interest' form to stakeholders and key members be issued? Response: If the proposal is approved at the next Council meeting, the 'Expression of Interest' can be issued
- Will there be a consultation process like the Local Community Safety Partnership?
Response: Yes.

9. Any other business

None.

10. Meeting schedule

Nicola Payne noted that some forthcoming policies that were due to go to the next meeting of Monaghan County Council in September will need to be approved by this SPC in advance. For this reason, she requested that the SPC meeting currently scheduled for 23 September 2026 be brought forward to the first week in September.

It was recommended to check availability of Cllr Sean Conlon during the first week in September and to communicate any changes to the current schedule with SPC members by email.

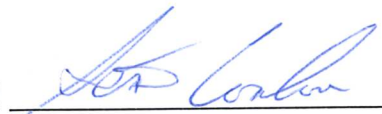
11. Meeting schedule

The current agreed meeting dates for 2026 remain follows:

- 23rd September
- 26th November

Cllr. McCooey thanked everyone for attendance.

This concluded the business of the meeting

Signed  Date: 9-9-26
Chairperson

